

# Huckleberries

**Stories from the American Indian Experience**

**for research, writing, pedagogy and our humanity**



Rodney Frey and a host of Elders  
6/21/2012



Alan Old Horn Announcing  
at a Give Away, Crow Fair. Photo: Frey 1974



Cliff SiJohn Photo: Frey 2002

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Dedicated to all my students,  
and to you, who now holds this essay in hand.

### Gathering Huckleberries: Preparations for the Journey

Before we begin, let's first prepare to gather some huckleberries. Over the years I've had Cliff SiJohn, a Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene Indian) elder and spiritual man, visit with my students and speak on a variety of topics dear to him, on the "Indian ways" of his family. Among the topics he'd inevitably address would be the significance of gathering huckleberries. He'd talk of the importance of mending the cedar baskets and preparing for the long trip to the mountain, of knowing when the berries were ready, and upon arriving on the mountain, of picking the berries with such care so as not to harm the bush. Cliff would then speak of the critical importance of sharing those hard-earned berries with those who are in need, with those who couldn't make it to the mountain, and of properly storing the huckleberries for future use. My students and I would come to learn of the nourishment only the huckleberries could provide.



The Huckleberries.  
Photo: John Hartman 2011

Then, as if changing the subject, Cliff would ask the students, "Why are you in school, taking these courses, what are you going to do with this education?" After letting each student respond, Cliff would pause. Breaking the silence and looking out into the class, as if speaking to each student individually, Cliff would affirm, "You know, your education is a



Elysia Moran and Victoria Spino,  
about to go huckleberrying with  
Grandpa, Rob Moran.  
Photo: Frey 2003

gathering of the huckleberries. With your huckleberry basket firmly strapped to your side, gather what your teachers, what your textbooks, what your fellow students and friends, what your life-experiences, in and out of the classroom, have to offer you. Be attentive, listen, with all your mind, with all your heart (patting his hand on each). With great care place those berries in your basket. Cherish them. And then when you or someone you care for is in need, facing a challenge, needs a little nourishment, needs a little guidance, a little help, pull out some berries and use them. Cherish your education, cherish your huckleberries."

### Re-telling the Stories: Setting the Stage

Prior to reading an earlier draft of this essay in 2010, Georgia Johnson, a colleague of mine, asked what sort of writing is this? The Apsáalooke (Crow) term for the act of storytelling, of sharing the narrative oral traditions of Coyote and the other First Peoples, is *baaéechichiwaau*. The phrase literally means, “re-telling one’s own.” As applied to so many of the most cherished Apsáalooke narratives, an individual could re-tell such a story only if he or she had the right to do so. It was a privilege granted by others. In re-telling a story, there were considerations of etiquette and ethics.

In addition, it had been the practice, still widely followed by the Apsáalooke and by other Tribes today, that upon some great deed or event occurring in one’s life, he or she would be invited by elders to re-tell that significant accomplishment or event in the company of family and friends and perhaps the entire community. This practice was certainly exemplified in such great stories as told by two of my teachers – Lawrence Aripa’s “Four Smokes” and Tom Yellowtail’s “Burnt Face” (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:15-20, 108-22). And this is what Alan Old Horn, an Apsáalooke “announcer,” did for many others who, because of their youthful age or inexperience, could not speak aloud in public for themselves. The great deed would be brought to life again, distinctly re-told by Alan in front of those assembled. It was integrated into and made an essential part of the fabric of the entire community, each person of that community thus re-defined in relation to that deed. A gift received was re-told and, in turn, gifted to others.

In response to my colleague’s question, this essay is very much a narrative, a re-telling of my own story, *baaéechichiwaau*. It is a series of story vignettes and story phrases, embedded within a life story, and presented in a style and manner reminiscent of some of the qualities of an oral-nuanced, re-telling. I’ve been fortunate to have experienced so many great stories shared with me by numerous great storyteller “hosts,” who, in turn, have invited me to re-tell them. Pivotal among these shared vignettes and story phrases and embedded throughout the following narrative are the Tin Shed, *té-k’e* – “to give and share with others,” *dasshússua* – “breaking with the mouth,” *baaxpée* – spiritual power, *ashammaléaxia* – “as driftwood lodges,” the Rainbow, and the Wagon Wheel. None stand alone, as each is

interwoven with and supportive of the others, as indeed observed along a river's bank, the driftwood lodges in that strong current of life's river to create a steadfast and enduring whole. These are stories that have defined and brought meaning to both my professional and personal life. They have oriented how I go about researching, writing, and teaching, oriented me as an ethnographer. They have guided me in my personal life, most critically while on my journeys of healing while facing my own mortality with cancer (Frey, Yellowtail and SiJohn *in* Crawford O'Brien 2008:185-205). These are stories that have created my world and re-defined me in relation to my Indigenous hosts and my academic colleagues, my students and my family. And perhaps for us all, these are stories for communications and collaborations with others, stories for building community with the many strangers amongst us – “stories that make the world.”

Among these many stories there were some that were so mysterious, so challenging, leaving me at times off-balance and uncertain, searching for meaning and understanding. My own healing journey is one such story. While personally witnessing many, knowing them as true, experiencing them as real, they remain a mystery. Nothing in my middle-class, Euro-American upbringing, and nothing in my formal education, including that of anthropology, fully prepared me for these certain stories. Interspersed throughout much of the first half of this essay is a number of vignettes, illustrating some of this mystery. Each is designated in its **bolded font**.<sup>1</sup> As you engage these vignettes, ask yourself what might be discovered embedded within? Ask how each might relate to the others and with the larger text within which they are a part? What do they share in common, a quality that characterizes the varied relationships explored between the peoples within the stories? Discover what awaits for you.

\* \* \*

**He stands there, in Eagle-feather headdress and beaded buckskin regalia, with an Eagle-feather fan in hand, sharing the podium with some of the world's foremost religious leaders, including the Dalai Lama. First speaking in his Apsáalooke language and then in English, he offers words of prayer for world peace and compassion for all. He is an *akbaalía*, “one who doctors others,” a medicine man, a Sundance Chief, and his words are readily**

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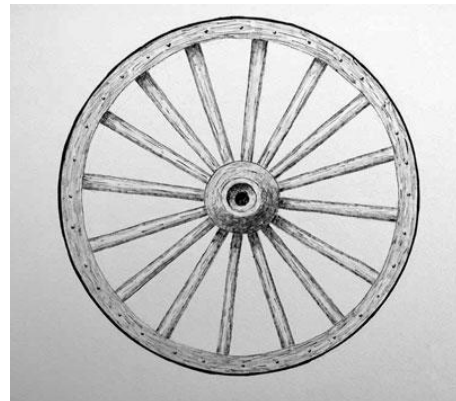
1 For a discussion on how I define and use “vignettes,” see page 38 of this essay.

received by the over 8,000 in attendance – Christian, Muslim and Jew, Hindu, Buddhist and Taoist alike. Like many others from his own community in Montana, he demonstrates an uncanny ability to speak and travel multiple and distinct paths simultaneously, for him the ways of both the Sundance and of Christianity. While in the Sundance Lodge, he dances with Eagle-plumes, blows the Eagle-bone whistle and prays to *Akbaatatdía*, “the Maker of All Things First.” While in the “Little Brown” Baptist Church he reads from the Good Book, partakes of the Lord’s Supper and prays to Jesus Christ. He is able, with competence, to effectively communicate and participate with others, indeed nurture and support others, from diverse communities, so distinct and seemingly mutually exclusive.

\* \* \*

Waiting to be discovered in Alan Old Horn’s Tin Shed and Tom Yellowtail’s Wagon Wheel, along with other wondrous stories, from the Apsáalooke, Nimíipuu (Nez Perce), Schjitsu’umsh and a host of other Indigenous peoples of this land, are the *mi’yep* – essential teachings and lessons – huckleberries that would nourish. These are lessons that would help guide ethical, partnered, and applied ethnographic research of the landscape within which these stories are embedded and emanate; teachings that would, in turn, help format and contextualize these cherished stories for an authentic and appropriate presentation through publication and in the classroom; lessons in how we can

effectively communicate and collaborate, how we can build and sustain community. And from the Tin Shed and Wagon Wheel there would be lessons to apply while on a healing journey. These are teachings with implications for us all, for our humanity. As the Tin Shed and Wagon Wheel and other great stories, now



re-told here, were gifted to me by my hosts and intended to be shared with others, may they now be gifted to you, becoming part of your own story, huckleberries to be placed in your basket. In 1993 while at his cabin accessible only after miles of dirt road, upon completing the re-telling of his most cherished oral narratives including his favorite, “Burnt Face,” Tom Yellowtail turned to me and said, “if all these great stories were told, great stories will come!”



### The Tin Shed: the Story

I remember it being a warm and very pleasant afternoon, that June of 1974. I had just begun my first ethnographic research, with the Apsáalooke (“children of the large beaked bird”) or known in the colloquial as the Crow of Montana. He and I sat together on a well-worn wooden bench, under the shade of an old cottonwood. Alan Old Horn, an elder and “announcer,” one who has a Medicine Bundle pertaining to the proper use of “words” and the right to speak aloud in public for others, was a man well experienced in the ways of his people. He would stand with those who needed someone to speak publicly for them. Perhaps they were young, inexperienced in the use of words, fearful of abusing them; perhaps they needed the words of a respected elder. At a giveaway, during a Sundance, at the half-time of a high school basketball game, or some other public event or celebration, and with his deliberate and projected voice, Alan would relay to all those assembled what another wished conveyed. I had surmised that if Alan was willing he’d be a wonderfully, well-informed interviewee for the project. Now, as we sat there under the cottonwood, Alan was very patient with my many questions. With the tape recorder on, I asked about kinship, ceremonies, language, and my questions kept coming, bombarding him with youthful enthusiasm to learn.

But after awhile, enough was enough, and Alan held out his hand, stopping my next question in mid-sentence, and he pointed to a corrugated-metal building, some fifty yards to



The Tin Shed, Crow Agency  
Photo: Frey 1974

the north. It likely housed highway equipment, trucks and tractors, or so I imagined. I would now be the one questioned. Alan said, “*You see that tin shed? . . . it’s kinda like our way of life . . . you can sit back here and talk about it . . but not really understand . . . . it’s not til you go inside . . listen . . . feel it . . feel the damp . . see it from the inside looking out . . that you really know what it’s all about*

*. . . . you’ve gotta go inside*” (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:5-8).

In 1990, as I began my ethnographic work with the Schitsu’umsh (“the ones that were found here”), also known as the Coeur d’Alene of Idaho, I again sat with an elder, Cliff SiJohn.

Like Alan, Cliff would often be seen at public events and situations where he would represent and speak for his family and people, sharing his Schitsu'umsh oral traditions and history with those assembled. As we visited over lunch in a local restaurant, I was struck by how remarkably similar Cliff spoke of the "sweat house" (also referred to as the "sweat lodge") in a manner almost identical with that of Alan's "tin shed." He would pose questions of me, before I could pose any of him. Over the weeks, months and years that followed, the gifts of the "tin shed" and "sweat house" have oriented my research, publication and teaching endeavors. I've attempted to "go *inside* . . . *listen*," . . . "see it from the *inside* looking out" . . . "*feel it* . . . feel the damp" . . . with Alan and Cliff first asking, "*you see that tin shed?*" . . . as "we sat together . . . under the shade of an old cottonwood."

At this early juncture of my own career, it seemed most fitting that I would have the opportunity to orient my own ethnographic techniques, writing style and teaching methods based upon two men who, in essence, were themselves "Indigenous ethnographers." Alan and Cliff had carefully listened to the stories and witnessed the deeds of their elders, and then, in turn, re-told those cherished stories, with authenticity and appropriateness, to a large and potentially diverse audience, to me and, through me, to you. Let's now consider the questions posed by Alan's "tin shed" and Cliff's "sweat house" story a little more fully, beginning our journey into the interior and discovering some of its meanings and implications.

**"You see that tin shed?"** As I began my interview with Alan, as with Cliff years later, he could have chosen to terminate the conversation with me right then and there, got up and walked away, not pointing the way to and within his Tin Shed. But instead he re-directed the questioning back to me. Alan and Cliff were asking, in essence, if I'd be a good guest in their home? Would I honor and respect the hospitality of my host in a manner I would expect from any guest in my home? Had I even been granted permission in the first place to enter their home? Questions of propinquity varied from those asked by one's Institutional Review Board.

When we attempt to engage in researching, publishing and teaching, seeking to learn about the lives of others, does it not all begin with us first, with being honest with ourselves? Re-directing the questions, what are my intentions? Why have I sought to learn about and then re-tell the stories of others? Am I acting from a position of social and political power and

privilege over those I seek to study, and, if so, how might that affect the host community, as well as my research and teaching? Or am I acting from a position of equitable collaboration and partnership with a host, and what might then result? What do I intend to do with that which is about to be entrusted to me? And as a guest in the home of another would I honor the wishes, authority and sovereignty of my host? It all begins with honesty.

There are the ethical issues associated with conducting research, publishing, and teaching about the lives of others. Fundamental to those ethical issues is the inherent, as well as treaty-based, federally recognized sovereign status of the American Indian, of our hosts, and their resulting cultural property rights. Alan and Cliff were asking, who “owns” the “culture” within my Tin Shed? Who has the right to access and then re-tell my stories? Alan and Cliff would hold that it is the Indigenous communities that are the “owners” of their knowledge, an assertion of tribal sovereignty, and not the Euro-American academy, nor its individual scholars. As established by the Indigenous communities themselves, if their Tin Sheds are to be entered, we must first be granted approval to conduct research, and following the completion of that research, adhere to a final review by the appropriate Cultural Resources Office, Culture Committees and Tribal Councils of materials acquired and about to be disseminated (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:286-88). In the example of the Schitsu’umsh Life-Long Learning Online (L3) Project, these ethical considerations are nicely articulated in its Tribal Council Resolution and Cultural Property Rights (CPR) Agreement, as well as Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent Form used in interviews (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2002). As I drafted the language of this CPR for Tribal review, the challenge was in providing some level of formal safeguard for the Tribe’s collective, place-bound, traditional knowledge, something ignored within a United States legal environment predicated on protecting individually authored, be it discovered or invented, intellectual property, defined in terms of a commodity. Attorneys from both my university, sponsoring the research, and the Coeur d’Alene Tribe were consulted. The Coeur d’Alene Tribe has subsequently formalized a comparable review and approval protocol, in a “flow-chart,” that anthropologists and other researchers seeking to conduct research with the Tribe need to follow. You can review these documents, and their stipulations, in the essay’s Appendices. Ethnographic research is done with honesty, and by the consent of our host.

\* \* \*

His *biilápxe*, “clan uncle” is singing his “praise song” for a “clan son,” as they ride through the huge tipi encampment in this Crow Fair Dance Parade, over a hundred riders, they and their horses in full beaded regalia. The clan son had just returned from “active duty,” serving his family and country in the armed forces with pride and distinction. Throughout his life, whenever an achievement of note had occurred – a birthday, a graduation, service to others – it would be through the strong voice and deliberate words of one of his *biilápxe* that this young man’s deeds and honors would be conveyed to family and friends, to the entire community. He would never speak for himself, never boast in any way about himself, but the deeds were always made known through an elder’s voice. Following the ride, an *ammaakée*, a “give away,” is held, with Pendleton blankets and other gifts given to the *biilápxe*, and to so many other family members, thanking them. It is also a subtle but deliberate acknowledgment that an individual’s accomplishments are only the result of the efforts made by so many others. Perhaps it is a *biilápxe*, who in a “Medicine Bundle ceremony,” has provided an “Indian Name” that nurtures and protects. And certainly in the prayers during a Sweat or the Sunday Mass it is one’s many clan uncles who send words out to the Creator that look after and guide a young clan son or daughter (Frey 1987:40-57).

\* \* \*

In this review and approval process – a review of what can be of the most cherished and revered traditions and practices, of what elders sometimes refer to as “the Old Ways” or “Heart Knowledge” – the evaluative criteria applied is critical. Among the key standards implicitly or explicitly used and deemed important by our host reviewers are such criteria as “trustworthiness,” involving qualities of credibility, dependability and confirmability, and “authenticity,” involving the inclusion and acknowledgement of the multiplicity of the elders and collaborators, of “voices” relied upon and conveyed in the research.<sup>2</sup> In addition, I’ve found that my collaborators and various Culture Committees typically consider “appropriateness” as critical to this evaluative process. There is a vast amount of cultural

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2 For a further discussion of such ethnographic evaluative criteria see pp. 87-90 below, as well as for “trustworthiness” and “authenticity,” see Denzin and Lincoln (2000).

knowledge and practices that are not meant, for various reasons, to be shared outside a family or tribal community with the general public.

Used by Cultural Committees and Tribal Councils, this is evaluative criteria we as ethnographers need to fully acknowledge and incorporate into our work. And if our intentions are to publicly disseminate this research through a peer-reviewed, academic publication, having gone through an Indigenous review process involving the criteria of trustworthiness, authenticity and appropriateness can help legitimize that research within the academy. These forms of evaluative criteria should be differentiated from and not confused with measures used to evaluate what elders refer to as “Head Knowledge.” Head Knowledge measures include reliability (using a systematic and standardized method, the ability repeat the observations, data collection and findings of someone else’s study), internal validity (the ability to correspond the theoretical description of the data with the actual data collected), and external validity (the ability to apply and generalize the results of one study to other studies). These are measures all premised on objectivity and the Cartesian dualism. As will be discussed further, there are significantly different standards by which research based on Heart Knowledge should be evaluated and assessed.

Given the cultural property rights and sovereignty of our host, the ethical issues associated with research continue into publication and classroom pedagogy and content. Our host should have a predominate voice in how, where, when and even if Heart Knowledge is to be disseminated. Some stories are just not meant to be accessed through our research, and others are not meant to be shared publicly through our publications or in our classrooms.

When a paper is being proposed for a conference presentation or journal publication, it should first be reviewed by the host, be it by specific collaborators and/or a Cultural Resources Office. When the content, pedagogy and delivery methods of a new course are being proposed it should first be reviewed by the host, be it by specific collaborators and/or a Cultural Resources Office. When such a review is not possible, a good faith effort should be made to adhere to the standards established in the Indigenous academy, as developed in Indigenous journals and publications, and as extrapolated from any previous experiences working with other hosts. As we have peer-reviewers in the academy, so, too, do we have reviewers from

the Tin Shed. The efforts to include them can only help avoid the inappropriate use of culturally sensitive materials.

This brings up the critical issue, sometimes voiced by essentialists – just who should tell the stories of the American Indian? As will be suggested in the example of the Life-Long Learning Online “L3” projects discussed below, tribal member co-researchers were more than capable of telling their own tribal stories. During the L3 projects, from 2001 through 2003, the Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs had their own Cultural Resources Offices, with their own “tribal ethnographers.” The Coeur d’Alene Tribe had yet to establish their program, though staffing some comparably trained personnel in their GIS and Language Programs. Hence much of the Nimíipuu (Nez Perce) and the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute L3 interviews were conducted by tribal ethnographers, while I held the video camera very still. In 1994, soon after I had been asked to assist the Coeur d’Alene Tribe with their Natural Resources Damage Assessment I was visiting with Chairman Ernie Stensgar. He relayed to me a question asked of him by another tribal member, “why are we hiring a non-Indian to do this sort of work for us?” Chairman Stensgar’s response was something to the effect, “if we had an ethnographer on staff with the Tribe, we’d have him do it, but we don’t.” The Coeur d’Alene Tribe has subsequently established its own Cultural Resource Management Program, with a Schíitsu’umsh director and Euro-American staff, all trained in ethnography. Questions arise. What is the role of a university in training ethnographers to do work with Tribes? What is the role of a university faculty member in doing ethnography for Tribes? Who is to “don the regalia” of an ethnographer and travel into the Tin Shed, conducting research on what is held most cherished – Heart Knowledge?

The word “ethnographer,” whether applied to a tribal or university faculty member, derives from the Greek, “ethnos” referring to a people, and “graphein” meaning to record in a written format. An ethnographer is someone skilled in gathering, recording, preserving and disseminating a people’s story of themselves, for the purpose of informing and benefitting, for addressing a specific need, or just for the “greater good.” The university can be a place that prepares ethnographers to work with Tribes, especially when coursework is co-taught and student research is done in collaboration with tribal hosts. There are many capable of

donning the ethnographer's regalia. We come back to where we began and the critical issue first posed by Alan and Cliff – “*you see that tin shed?*” While a university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) can consider the ethics of doing ethnography, who is to be trusted to re-tell the cherished stories is a decision only the caretakers of those stories can make. Whether the skilled ethnographer is an enrolled member of the Tribe or not, an employee of the Tribe or not, university trained or not, who dons the regalia and is permitted to travel the territory of the Tin Shed is a question to be ultimately answered only by a sovereign Tribe.

**“We sat together . . . under the shade of an old cottonwood”** Was there a lesson or two in sitting “together,” on that well-worn wooden bench, under the cooling “shade,” of that hot June day? Did not that person I sat with, at that place under the tree, offer a promise of guidance and a degree of comfort? What huckleberries might there be on the branches beneath that cottonwood?



With Alan and others at my side, we did get off that bench together, and they guided the way through the interior of the Tin Shed. For Alan and Cliff, research, publication and teaching should entail developing collaborative partnership with our hosts (Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001:269). Our host-guides can best lead the way into and know the territory of the Tin Shed. It can be a dark and foreboding shed otherwise, riddled with misrepresentation and distortion. And our host-guides would insist that we “give back,” seek to bring comfort and support to others, a collaborative endeavor in the pursuit of application. Alan and Cliff knew all too well of the many who had come, but only to take.

From the beginning of a proposed research project, it is so essential to invite the potential hosts to participate, providing them opportunity to effectively collaborate in the development of the key topics of research and the research design itself. Likewise, if you are asked to participate in a project emanating out of a host's community, the host taking the initiative, there is a reason; offer your skills and perspectives. The most relevant research questions posed and the best research designs that address those questions can be informed only with the help of our hosts. As co-researchers, our hosts can be more than capable of conducting some of the best interviews. When disseminating research, be it at a conference or through a publication, seek to do so collaboratively, as co-authors with our hosts. A course

based in part or in full upon our host's knowledge is best team-taught. How research is designed, what and how questions are posed, how and what is observed in the field, even the willingness of people to participate in the research and how that research is then disseminated and taught are all rendered more meaningful and insightful with our host as a co-researcher, co-writer and co-teacher.

In the Life-Long Learning Online "L3" projects, I experienced a great example of just how research can be completely transformed and rendered that much more meaningful, when grounded in an Indigenous perspective, done collaboratively (Frey and the Nez Perce 2001; Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2002; Frey and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs 2003). Funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the grant sought to celebrate the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark's "Corps of Discovery" expedition in conjunction with NASA's exploration of Mars. The project reached out to the area Tribes, asking if they were interested in participating in the "celebration" by sharing their experiences. Of course for the Tribes, Lewis and Clark represented anything but a point of celebration, but the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Nez Perce Tribe did want to partner, doing so for a very different reason. After cultural property rights agreements were established, giving each Tribe full ownership and control over content, each Tribe began correcting the official account that had been erroneously established in the written journals of Lewis and Clark. There was a rich oral heritage, kept remarkably alive through the generations, which challenged many of the events as characterized by the "official" written accounts. And equally important, each of the Tribes went about telling the world that they were not going to be defined in terms of a Lewis and Clark "discovery" and, for that matter, refuting altogether being defined as a people under any Euro-American historical guise. They were and continue to be sovereigns. The Tribes are not peoples of the past, but peoples with their own viability and dreams for a future. So each Tribe used the project to tell their story in their own manner, dealing with a complete range of topics, from tribal sovereignty, health care, natural resources and gaming, to language, oral traditions, arts and dance, to the landscape and the seasonal round, to contact history and, of course, the expedition itself.



Each of the L3 tribal partners approached what they wished to share publicly a little differently. The Nimíipuu, for example, chose to limit information on places and sites of cultural importance, as well as information on spiritual practices and ways. Having just completed an elaborate Geographical Information System (GIS) Names-Place Project, the Schitsu'umsh wanted to share their extensive knowledge of how and where they had interacted with their landscape. Critically in this collaborative project, it was my co-researchers who were able to identify the best interviewees, who in many instances did the best interviews, knew and asked the best questions, already had garnered the trust of the interviewees, while I on many occasions was relegated to the role of holding the video camera very still while taping their interviews. Subsequently, I would then edit, upload and stream the interviews on the Internet module. Let our host lead the way. My role in this project was thus, in part, that of a "culture broker," facilitating the negotiation and mediation between the interests of the funding agency and university, and that of the Tribes. I am pleased to have assisted my hosts in realizing their desired intentions and allowing their resulting "voices" to be conveyed through the L3 modules without them being hindered and compromised, while at the same time gratified that the "final product" met the expectations of the NASA funders.<sup>3</sup>

These sorts of collaborative relationships are only built with great care, upon mutual trust and respect. Enter all relationships with complete sincerity and honesty, with no hidden agendas, no ulterior motives. The elders know what's in the heart. Upon beginning my first project with the Schitsu'umsh in 1990, I was having lunch with an elder critical to the project and whom I had not met previously. In an attempt to validate my ethnographic credentials for him, I went through a laundry list of work I had successfully done with the Apsáalooke over so many years. But he would hear none of it; what mattered most for Cliff SiJohn were not the experiences I brought to this proposed project, but what was in my heart. Would I bring a personal honesty and integrity to the various relationships that I sought to develop with the Schitsu'umsh? Could I be trusted with what was about to be shared?

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3 In the Nimíipuu L3 project, 27 interviews were conducted by my co-researchers, while I did 9 interviews. In the Schitsu'umsh project, 12 interviews were conducted by my co-researchers, while I did 11 interviews. And in the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute project, 22 interviews were conducted by my co-researchers, while I did 10 interviews.

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It took some time to locate what we were seeking, but there, between the gravel road and plowed field, is a patch of the blue-flowering plants. As we approach, the elder takes out some tobacco and places it beside the first of many she soon will be digging with her *pitse*. Bending over and in a deliberate but quiet voice, she addresses the *Amotqn* – the Creator – and the Camas. She asks them for permission to dig into the earth and pull the small bulbs from these plants; she tells of the family’s desire to use these cooked roots, to provide nutrition in body and spirit to others who will be attending her family’s Jump Dance this coming winter. And as the steel *pitse* pierces the soil, opening the plant’s roots to light and an elder’s hand, she pulls the Camas out and replaces it with an offering of tobacco. Each of us continues throughout the afternoon, with a *pitse* in hand and a growing bag of Camas. The Camas will provide for the needs of many others (Frey and the Sch̓itsu’umsh 2001:155-64).

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As a collaborative effort and given cultural property rights, any research, publication and teaching of our host’s knowledge should seek to serve the wishes of the host’s community, as defined by our host. Inevitably asked on a tribal research permit application is the question, as in the case of the Nez Perce Tribe’s application question number “14. How will this project benefit the Tribe?” or by an elder speaking in one’s class, as when Cliff SiJohn has spoken – “as a student in this class . . . *what will you do* with the knowledge gained? . . . how will it be used . . . to *help others?*” One of the foundational teachings shared throughout Indian country is encapsulated in the Nimípuu term, *té·k’e* – “to give and share [food with others]” or Apsáalooke term *ammaakée* – “give away.” As expressed among the Sch̓itsu’umsh an “ethic of sharing” with those in need, without expectation of reciprocity, is the dynamic that binds all the members of the extended family together (Frey and the Sch̓itsu’umsh 2001:10). As our host has so generously shared with us, ask ourselves how we will “give back” to help others, though our research, publication and teaching? In our efforts at collaborative-based research, publication and teaching, ask how we will support our host as an equal sovereign partner? What is termed “pure research” has its vital role in the academy and for the public good. But

when research involves a reliance on the knowledge from an Indigenous community, it must be done in consort with that community, bowing to the wishes of our host regarding the manner in which that research is to be used and applied.

While I was being guided by my Indian collaborators to do research that would benefit their Tribes, to help others in need, I was also being encouraged to do so by my dissertation chair at the University of Colorado, Deward Walker. Deward's passion to help others introduced me to a professional life as an "applied anthropologist." For examples of my applied, collaborative research I would mention the following three projects.

Having just completed my MA in anthropology at Colorado State University in 1974, my first ethnographic field work was at the invitation of the Crow Tribe, under the coordination of Jack Schultz, a CSU anthropology faculty and former student of Deward Walker's. There was a general lack of good communication between the Indian Health Service physicians and their Apsáalooke patients. I researched and put together a paper on traditional Apsáalooke understandings of health care and illness, and the larger cultural context within which these understandings were expressed. The paper was used by the physicians to "help educate them" to better understand and communicate with, and provide health care for their patients. This research provided the impetus for my Ph.D. dissertation (University of Colorado, 1979), which, in turn, led to the publication of *The World of the Crow* (1987).

In 1992 I served on the Coeur d'Alene school district's Language Arts Committee, where we were in the process of selecting new textbooks. I soon discovered that the students of this non-Indian community had very little curriculum exposure to the people to whom their city and school district were named. Working in collaboration with the elders of the Schjitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene), we developed curriculum materials, a teacher's guide, video tapes of storytellings by elders and held teacher workshops. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade Schjitsu'umsh language arts curriculum was adopted for use in the 22 elementary schools of the district. This project and specifically, its teacher's guide, led to the publication of *Stories That Make the World* (1995).

In 1994 I was approached by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and asked to assist them in a Natural Resources Damage Assessment. With over a hundred years of mining in the Coeur d'Alene River watershed, the entire river-lake ecosystem adjacent to and on the reservation

had been subjected to high levels of pollutants. An ethnographic baseline study was needed to show how the Schjitsu'umsh had defined and interacted with their landscape of water, plants and animals prior to the arrival of Euro-Americans and how that relationship has continued or changed into the present. This project led to the publication of *Landscape Traveled by Coyote and Crane* (2001).

**“Go inside . . . listen”** As we travel the territory of the Tin Shed, should we not attempt to position ourselves as a “child” as if “swaddled in the blanket” of our hosts? Should we not attempt to grow under their tutelage and guidance? For Alan and Cliff, their “textbooks” are etched in the rock and soil of a particular landscape, and informed by the narrative oral traditions of that landscape. In turn, this place-bound knowledge is gained through participatory, experiential learning, within a broad family context. Guided by our host, should not our own learning thus also entail a participatory engagement with a particular landscape and all its peoples, actively listening and interacting directly with them? Alan and Cliff recognized that if we were to learn about their worlds we would need to do so using a distinctly different style of learning and in a distinctly different type of classroom.

To help us begin to appreciate this approach, let's consider more fully an example of a participatory, experiential Indigenous learning style anchored in a particular landscape. For the Apsáalooke aboriginally and much into the contemporary, a child's learning occurred entirely within the purview of the watchful eyes and guided hands of an extensive network of matrilineally-related family members (Frey 1987:40-57). Among the members were: *masaka* – mothers, inclusive of all older women of one's mother's clan, *biilápxe* – fathers and “clan uncles,” inclusive of all men of one's father's mother's clan, *bakupe* – sisters, inclusive of all women of one's own generation within one's clan, *biiké* – elder brothers, inclusive of all older men of one's clan. Learning transpired not in isolation, as an individual learner, but through the dynamic of kinship-based interconnections, each member with his or her own responsibilities to the child, and the child to them.

The *biilápxe*, for example, provided prayer and perhaps an Indian Name, offering protection and guidance. And when a deed of note occurred, the *biilápxe* would sing his praise songs for the one being honored. In this network of interrelationships the child learned

early the pivotal role of reciprocity and of sharing. When an accomplishment occurred in one's life, it was as much the culmination of his or her efforts, as of the contributions made by the various members of the family. Accordingly, when that deed was publicly announced by a *biilápxe* and a praise song sung at a community gathering or ceremony, it would be accompanied by an *ammaakée*, "give away," in which gifts were given to all those who had helped make this achievement possible, acknowledging their contributions. And by extension, the child learned of the quintessential value placed in reciprocity between one's kinsmen and of the pervasive practice of sharing with all the peoples, especially those in need.

From the age of being tightly swaddled in the blanket of a beautifully-beaded cradleboard through early adulthood, the youth were present at and engaged in all the activities as that of the adults – root digging with *masaka*, ritual sweating with *biiké* or *bakupe*, traveling to a council meeting with *biilápxe*. These were place-bound activities, specific to a particular landscape along the Bighorn and Yellowstone rivers, specific with the adventures and misadventures of the First Peoples, also referred to as the Animal Peoples, who brought forth this landscape and endowed it with story. It was Coyote's story that was along that bend in the river, atop that particular hill, in this grove of trees, with each story offering its own critical teaching. As the child engaged the landscape with family members he or she also engaged Coyote and his lessons.<sup>4</sup>

It is within this setting that experiential, engaged learning thus occurred – the young closely (and sometimes not so closely) watching and listening, of being "attentive," and attempting to at first mimic and then emulate what their parents and grandparents did. A village of elders guided with gentle encouragement and deliberate example, doing so embedded in and informed by a rich covering of oral traditions – spoken, worn and danced, sung and re-told – all of which were anchored in their particular landscape of rock formations, hills and peaks, and riverbeds, etched with the deeds of Coyote and the other First Peoples.

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4 In addition to the Apsáalooke, this notion that Indigenous knowledge is place-bound knowledge is certainly well documented, as in Keith Basso's insightful and exemplary work with the Western Apache (1996), and as I have witnessed with the Nimíipuu (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995; Frey and the Nez Perce 2001), Schitsu'umsh (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995; Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001 and 2002), and Warm Springs and Wasco (Frey and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs 2003).

Of particular importance to this learning style, the young would be guided to what the Sch̓itsu'umsh call the *mi'yep*, “teachings from all things” – ranging from overarching “perennial archetypes” and moral and ethical codes, to practical utilitarian skills relating to hunting and gathering, to kinship roles and responsibilities (Frey and Schitsu'umsh 2002). The Nimíipuu *té-k'e*, “to give and share [food with others],” is one such teaching. Through the *mi'yep* one would discover what it means to be Sch̓itsu'umsh or Apsáalooke, as well as gain the necessary skills to successfully engage life and all its Peoples – Animal and Plant, Human and Spirit.

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**He had sung his hunting songs, a prayer to a brother he now sought. The terrain is tough going at times, steep and rocky, and thick with foliage and downed trees. But he has to be on his toes, quiet, for he is being tested. His brother will only come out of the thicket if he is up to the task, showed his skills as well as respect in song and in his heart. And there, just beyond that row of trees, in an open flat, the Deer stands. The rifle is aimed and a shot fired. As he cuts into the flesh of his brother, the songs continue. A brother has allowed his flesh, his “meat” to be taken that day, but only by his consent, so that others would be fed and nourished. No other deer would be hunted this day, as that is all the meat the family needed (Frey and the Sch̓itsu'umsh 2001:164-72).**

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Many of these teachings would be revealed as the narrative oral traditions were engaged, heard and experienced. Richly layered with essential *mi'yep* teachings, such oral traditions included the stories of Coyote and Salmon, of Animal and Human Peoples. The Sch̓itsu'umsh classified their narrative oral traditions into the First People stories, such as those of Coyote and Salmon, called *meymiym q'esp schint*, “he/she/they are telling stories and learning about the time before the human beings,” and the stories involving the Human Peoples, such as those of Four Smokes and Burnt Face, referred to as *meymiym tu'schint*, “he/she/they are telling stories and learning about the human beings” (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:12-13; Frey and the Sch̓itsu'umsh 2001:183). It became the elder's responsibility, with his or her particular set of storytelling skills and techniques, to bring the stories alive and make them accessible. And it became the listener's responsibility to actively

engage the stories, discovering for him or herself its *mi'yep* teachings (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:174-75). Specific Aesop-like moral commentaries were seldom attached to the stories. As the listener grew in experiences from year-to-year, upon hearing the same stories re-told, new *mi'yep* would await discovery. The many-layered *mi'yep* engrained within a Coyote story could elicit a laugh from and a lesson for old and young alike. The *meymiym q'esp schint* provided an affective tone to life, as well as a didactic form for life, framed within self-paced instruction linked to a listener's particular experiences (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:171-77).

In addition to the narratives, learning and engaging in the other oral traditions were just as essential. Primary among these was the language itself, with all its particular semantic and syntactic significances. Other vital oral traditions included the donning of the richly designed beaded dance regalia and then of dancing to the "heart beat" of the drum, and learning and singing the songs of those dances. And there were the songs of prayer for the hunt and gathering, for a morning and evening time of the day, for welcoming and honoring, and for healing and for a wake at a funeral, and so many more ceremonies and occasions, all providing opportunities to "discover" the *mi'yep* embedded within. There were no institutional schools in which formal, standardized, competitively-based instruction within age-based grade levels segregated children from the rhythms of family and camp life, from their particular home-land.

With this Indigenous learning style in mind, ethnographic research methods would benefit by using such experiential, qualitative techniques as participant observation, with an emphasis on the act of participation, and semi-structured interviewing, with open-ended and follow-up questions (Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001:272-79). Let the interview become a dialogue, directed by the interviewee and not preconceived questions, of active listening. Let the participation become an active engagement in the host's life, not as an observer. To help select our research collaborates and interviewees, we would use various sampling techniques, including intensity and snowball. Successful participant engagement and interviewing are predicated on developing a mutually trusting relationship between ourselves and our hosts and interviewees. Quantitative-based surveys that seek nomothetic conclusions have their role, just not in the Tin Shed. These research methods will be discussed more fully in the "Getting off the wooden bench: Linking the *How* and the *What*" section of this essay. The techniques

considered here and my approaches to research in general certainly also have kinship with the tradition of doing Boasian ethnography.<sup>5</sup>

To better engage and understand our Indigenous collaborators and garner their trust, to be as a “child” “swaddled in the blanket” of our host, it is critical that we learn the language of our host. Deward Walker, my dissertation chair at the University of Colorado, insisted that if I were to work with the Apsáalooke I needed to learn their language. In 1979 I was perhaps the first to use a Native language to satisfy the University of Colorado’s language requirement. During the 1970s and 80s, the population was fully bilingual, with an estimated 80 percent fluent Apsáalooke speakers. It was the primary language heard at all public events and in most daily conversations, and certainly used by all the elders. While I was never fluent, my minimal competency in the language opened doors and revealed insights. I was able to grasp many topics of discussion and certainly knew when I was the brunt of a joke! By offering a simple greeting in Apsáalooke demonstrated to potential collaborators that I was dedicated enough to go the extra steps to enter the Tin Shed on their terms. The lack of the use of personal pronouns – he, she or it – led to the realization of how meaning was contextualized. One was cognizant of the gender of the subject in a conversation or during a storytelling

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5 “Boasian” ethnography is in reference to the Franz Boas (1858-1942). German-born and educated in physics, his doctorate was on the color of ocean water in the arctic, which brought Boas to the Central Eskimo and later the tribes of the Northwest Coast. Boas’ scientific training would help focus his research on the empirical details of a society. Boas reacted against the “grandiose armchair theories and theorist” of his day, many of whom were overtly racist in nature. He challenged the notions of “psychic unity,” the possibility of “nomothetic universal laws,” “environmental, geographic or economic determinism” and “prime movers,” as well as the use of the “comparative method.” Boas stressed the need for intensive and long-term field work, grounding research in a particular history and its description, and in the language of the people, and doing so collaboratively, as he did so successfully with George Hunt (1854-1933), a Tlingit. Considered the “Father of American Anthropology,” Boas’ legacy can be seen in the works of his many students, among them Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Leslie Sapir, Alexander Goldenweiser, Melville Herskovits, Edward Spier, Clark Wissler, Paul Radin, Ruth Bunzel, Ruth Benedict, E. Adamson Hoebel, and Elsie Claws Parson. Boas trained the first American Indian anthropologist, William Jones (Fox). As with any ancestor, there remains plenty of “sins” that bring angst to a decedent, and must be recognized and addressed. Human skulls were sold and souls vanquished from subjects, as the American Indian was objectified in the name of science. Nevertheless, I acknowledged myself of mixed parenting, in part a progeny, albeit a distant cousin, of this Boasian extended family. And it is from this Boasian lineage that I was led to Clifford Geertz and his use of “thick description” and “religious symbols” (1973), which is certainly embedded in my research and writing styles.



knowing the circumstances in which that subject was referred. There was a revealing use of the quotative suffix, *tsə ruk*, meaning “it is said” or “he/she said” in oral narratives, which identified and followed specific morpheme clusters. These clusters marked “verse and scene” patterns in a narrative and gave a distinctive oral-nuanced cadence to the storytelling (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:151-52, 217-18). With a “future and non-future verb tense” structure, I was introduced to a non-linear, cyclical understanding of time itself.

And through my understanding of the Apsáalooke language a most remarkable insight was offered (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:xviii, 154-58; Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:197-99; Frey 2004:163-64). I had noticed that upon departing from a visit with someone, a “good bye” was never spoken, but instead, *diiawákaawik*, “I’ll see you later.” “Good bye” was considered “too final,” possibly leading to not seeing that person again. People were reluctant in talking about an illness for concern in bringing it about. Bestowed by one’s *biilápxe* during a Bundle ceremony, an “Indian Name” was not only descriptive of a quality sought for someone, but helped bring that quality about in that person’s life. And there was Alan Old Horn’s Medicine Bundle helping protect his use of words when spoken aloud for another. Then I was introduced to the phrase *dashússua*, “breaking with the mouth” (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995: 155). That which comes through the mouth has the transformative power to bring about that which was spoken. With this understanding I began to realize that indeed “stories make the world.” When “the fibers of the words are woven into the exquisite tapestry of a story, the words bring forth the deeds portrayed . . . The world is made and rendered meaningful in the act of revealing Coyote’s story of it” (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:156, 214).

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**Last winter, with its leaves off, the towering cottonwood’s two great branches was revealed, its fork clearly visible. Two days before this July Sundance, after offering a prayer, it was cut from its roots, trimmed of most of its limbs and leaves, except the foliage on the tips of its two huge forks, and transported the many miles to this plateau site. After a prayer song, including the song of the Tree, it was then raised from the ground with rope and poles and effort, and placed in its four-foot hole, the earth firmly packed around it. It now**

serves as the Center Pole for this Apsáalooke Sundance Lodge, this Big Lodge, the *Ashkíshe*, with its twelve over-head poles and thick wall enclosure of cottonwood brush. On the tree are the mounted Eagle and Buffalo head, as the hundred or so men and women dancers can now be heard blowing their Eagle-bone whistles and seen charging the Center Pole and dancing back, and charging again and dancing back, to the beat of the drum and voices of the singers at the Lodge's entrance. It is a particularly hot day. And while the dancers entered the Lodge vowing to give of themselves for a beloved one in need, to go without food and water for the three days of the Dance, all expecting to suffer, there is one among the dancers suffering "too much." "Old Man John," with his Eagle-feather fan in hand, makes his way out to the Center Pole and begins to pray to his spirit Medicine Fathers and to the Creator, focusing his attentions and his Feathers on one of the Tree's knots. Moments later and from that knot a few drops emerge and then a small stream of water flows. A cup is filled and a little of the Tree's Water is given to the one in need, as well as to many others that July day (Frey 1987:138).

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With an Indigenous learning style in mind, the pedagogical methods used in a classroom would benefit with the adoption of a variety of experiential, heuristic activities.<sup>6</sup> Underpinning the ultimate intent of these methods, it would be the teacher's responsibility to anchor the course content to the bones and *mi'yep* of the Indigenous experience, and then with his or her particular set of storytelling skills and techniques, to bring the course content, its stories alive and rendered accessible; while it becomes the student's responsibility to actively engage that course content, those stories, discovering for him or herself its *mi'yep* teachings – learning through discovery. For both the "teacher" and the "student" who may now be reading this essay, may the following pedagogical activities to be outlined better equip each of you to access and engage in an Indigenous learning style, as a facilitator and as a learner.

While participating in class sessions and especially during the various learning activities of the course, have the students learn and play the parts of the kinship roles and relations

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6 For an example of one of my courses that attempts to incorporate many of these Indigenous-based pedagogies, see "Plateau Indians," at <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~rfrey/422.htm>.

typical of a people under consideration in the class, as for example, a Schitsu'umsh bilateral or Apsáalooke matrilineal, kinship-based, extended family. The students would seek to emphasize the various reciprocal relations of proper etiquette and social duty each member has to the others based upon gender and generation, all in support of a "healthy and vibrant family." The graduate students and/or seniors could take on the roles of the "headmen and headwomen" of the family, of "elders," assuming coordination responsibilities, building consensus among the members and leading by example. All members are to look after the well-being of all other members, placing the success of the family before that of individual success, as defined by the roles of a typical family.

In lieu of an ancestral name for each family, I assign a place-name, such as for the Schitsu'umsh, *q'emjln* – the Post Falls area, or *chatq'ele'* – the Chatcolet Lake area. Each term would encapsulate an essential part of a family member's identity, as much of the meaning of the family's ecological, social and spiritual life are derived from it. I ask the students to learn its correct pronunciation, as well as discover its literal meaning. In addition, students are asked to learn the oral traditions, ecological significance and historical events associated with their place-name. For example, *q'emjln* means "throat" and is in reference to the story of a boy whose canoe capsized on a nearby lake and who then traveled for three days through an underground passageway opening near these falls along the Spokane River, hence "throat." The falls themselves were created by a mischievous Coyote, preventing the salmon from entering Lake Coeur d'Alene. Post Falls is the Euro-American imposed name, "celebrating the settling" of the area in 1871 by Frederick Post. In using place-names in this manner, the students gain another opportunity to appreciate the critical link Indigenous peoples have with the landscape.

The family (or subgroups within it) would then play an organizing role in the varied learning activities of the course, such as "in the round recitations," class discussion, the storytelling sessions, the participatory projects, providing a context for study and research groups, as well as performance roles. Such activities and projects can help emphasize the importance that Indigenous learning transpires in the context of interconnections, with each individual having a responsibility to the others in creating a body of understanding from which

all can gain. Helping cultivate collaborative skills will of course always assist students in whatever professional endeavors they may be pursuing.

Move from a written exam format to an oral learning activity format, what I've come to call "in the round recitations." To prepare students, post a series of study guide questions that cover the designated content, to which the students would be held accountable. Encourage each family to meet prior to the recitation to study the questions thoroughly. Then schedule a time mutually acceptable for each family to meet individually with the instructor. With the students sitting in a circle, ask individual students segments of your mid-term or final questions. With the students articulating their responses in their own words, the subject materials of the course can be re-visited in new ways, the process becoming a learning experience for all, with each member better able to retain the information.

Move from assigning letter grades for individual learning activities and projects to a less competitive pass-fail grading of group projects, assessing the efforts of "families" in meeting established course learning outcomes. Take the individual competitiveness of earning a good grade off the table and place any competitiveness with the "family," with its individual members each supportive of others, for the benefit of the whole. You can still provide a bit of a competitive spirit in the classroom by assessing each family relative to other families, as they seek to meet course learning objectives. In not providing individual-based grades, it is also essential for the instructor to make an extra effort to provide in-depth and timely evaluative feedback to the students, both for their group and individual efforts within the "family."

When possible, have a variety of tribal elders and experts come to class and present on a range of pertinent topics. Most rewarding is having elders share in their favorite narratives, demonstrating the power of storytelling. Don't forget to gift those who have shared.

Have the students themselves "re-member" and re-tell "authentic" stories, though only those narratives that can be appropriately and publicly shared, and when they are to be told (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:232-40).<sup>7</sup> In some traditions, for example, Coyote stories are only re-told during the winter, after the first frost and ceasing at the first thunder in spring.

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7 For additional consideration of storytelling techniques, see pp. 76-82 of this essay.

After researching its appropriateness, I have students access narratives that have been recorded in their native language, with an English interlinear transcription, along with a free translation. For the Apsáalooke, for instance, consider Robert Lowie (1960), and for the Nimíipuu such texts can be found in Haruo Aoki (1979), Hauro Aoki and Deward Walker (1989), and Archie Phinney (1934). In so doing, elements of the storytelling nuance, such as deictics, phrase reputations, quotative suffixes, verb tense forms and personal pronoun usage, so often removed or rendered into standardized English upon editing a story for publication for a wider audience, can be identified and reintegrated into the re-telling. With these texts, students can also more readily access what are called the “bones” of the story. A story is understood by the elders as a “living being,” a “person,” with the bones as the essential storyline and, most critically, the *mi’yep* “teachings” embedded within (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001: 191). Consult the Glossary for further discussion of the key terms, such as “bone,” used in this essay. These are bones and *mi’yep* that remain remarkably consistent from telling-to-telling, storyteller-to-storyteller, year-after-after, present-to-since time immemorial, bones established by the First Peoples, such as Coyote and Salmon. But in seeking out a narrative for re-telling, I also have students select a story that somehow “speaks” to them, for which they have found some sort of affinity and attraction, be it a lesson or character engrained in the narrative. It then becomes the responsibility of the storyteller, using his or her particular repertoire of storytelling techniques and energy, to reanimate the bones with “flesh,” to bring it “alive” for the audience now transformed into participants within the unfolding story. The same story might be animated by one student raconteur with extensive use of dynamic intonation and differing voice inflection for each character, while another storyteller might apply visual body language and hand gesturing to help bring the narrative alive. In each case, experiencing the stories from the inside looking out can bring a whole new awareness of their meanings. Following the re-telling, I have students reflect on any “discovered” meanings, submitting a short “reflective write.” While the experience can be met with anxiety by some students in having to publicly re-tell a story, the resulting benefits are always appreciated by the students and instructor. It has been rewarding to have my students, after first fully engaging the stories and bringing them to life as part of the course assignment, then re-tell them, fully

animated, with all the bones, before a group of local elementary or high school students. What a wonderful way to extend the life of these stories and render them accessible to others.

My students have discovered that the act of re-telling the stories and that of making twine from dogbane are incredibly similar and have remarkable parallels. One semester a student in my Plateau Indians course, Frank Finley, well versed in own family's Salish basket-making traditions, offered to put on a presentation on making cedar baskets, and what are called by Plateau peoples, "cornhusk and sally bags," for my students. As part of his presentation, Frank demonstrated how to fashion twine from sticks of dogbane, and, in turn, he had the students attempt to do the same for themselves. During the twining demonstration, each student was given a three-foot long dogbane branch, something that had once been alive, flexible and growing. Now held in hand, the dried dogbane branch was stiff, inflexible, and seemingly "dead," without life. But with care, each student was first instructed to use his or her feet to step on and then fingers to break-up the rigidity of the branch. Then with his or her hands, with effort and some skill, and a little water, the students were taught how to roll and twist the freed fibers into twine. Each student transformed what had been rigid and dead into something flexible, exceedingly strong and useful, into twine, something now "alive," many of them fashioning a wrist bracelet. To do such, each student had to first access the essence of the dogbane, by removing its hard woody material and revealing its strong, fibrous threads. With continued effort and skills, the twine could then be transformed into a "living" bag or basket, a demonstration yet to come.

As part of a class assignment, the stories the students were then engaging and remembering to be re-told were not unlike the rigid sticks of dried dogbane, stories fixed on the pages of a book, without "life." But with their own efforts and skills in listening, they would first attempt to get down to the story's very fibers, strong and flexible, discover the "bones" in the story. Then with continued effort, applying storytelling skills and their energy to the story, each student would attempt to breathe life back into those bones, those fibers, rendering his or her story "alive," flexible enough to invite an audience into the story, indeed, transforming them into participants of the unfolding narrative. The student storytelling and twining experiences were also great illustrators of the power of Indigenous participatory learning.

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**The off-reservation bar is never been a good place to settle a dispute. The disagreement soon breaks out into a fight, a gun is pulled and he lays there bleeding with two bullets close to his heart. He is rushed to the Indian Health Service Hospital at Crow Agency, but the doctors there want to bring in a specialist from Billings before doing the surgery. The parents are told their son, so close to death, has to wait. While the nurses are away from his bedside, “Old Man John,” called in by the parents, goes in and prays to his Medicine Fathers for help. Just before departing and with care, the powder of a particular medicine root is placed in the open wounds. The nurses soon return to change the blood-soaked bandages, and when they pull the sheets back, lying there are the two bullets, right beside the young man, “they came out the same way they had gone in.” X-rays are taken and there were no bullets, and as soon as he regained his strength, the young man was discharged (Frey 1987:127).**

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I first glimpsed the excitement and approval of elders in having non-Indian students re-tell their most cherished traditions when Chris Bain, a fourth-grade teacher in the Coeur d’Alene School District, had his students publicly “perform” Schitsu’umsh narrative oral traditions. Using stories recently approved by the Schitsu’umsh and developed for use in the 1992 language arts curriculum previously mentioned, and with their youthful energy the students brought the stories alive. With both Lawrence Aripa and Cliff SiJohn in attendance, they had nothing but delight on their faces and positive comments to say about the performances and use of their stories in this fashion.

In addition to elders coming to my classroom to share their stories, I have myself attempted to demonstrate and model for my students the power of storytelling. Certainly my own style of telling has been most influenced by Tom Yellowtail, an Apsáalooke elder, and Lawrence Aripa, a Schitsu’umsh elder. I also credit my passion in telling the narrative oral traditions to David Carrasco, a professor of Religious Studies at the University of Colorado, who served on my dissertation committee and to whom I was a graduate teaching assistant in 1978. David’s wonderfully charismatic enthusiasm brought his classes alive, as his students entered

into the ancient Aztec story of Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent, and the other Tin Sheds David constructed for them. It was David who I thank for introducing me to Mircea Eliade and the “hierophany” that can shine through “the center, *axis mundi*” and “mythic time, *in illo tempore*” (1954; 1958; 1959). David is now a professor at the Harvard Divinity School.



Gathering the *Sqigwts* “Water Potatoes” 1998 – 2011. On the shores of Chatcolet Lake.

As Indigenous knowledge is place-bound knowledge, consider expanding the walls of your campus classroom with the addition of field trips to the “classrooms of the elders.” Such trips could involve visits and guided tours to a tribal fish hatchery, a museum, a health care facility, tribal council chambers, and a tribal school. As I have done for the last many years, I have my students participate in the gathering of a traditional root food the Schitsu’umsh gather each fall, the *sqigwts*, “water potatoes.” Side-by-side with the students from the tribal elementary school and under the guidance of elders, my



Photos: Frey 2005, 2011

college students spend some considerable time and effort in the gathering of the root, and then learn the important lesson of sharing with those in need. On several occasions, after cleaning up the roots and bagging them, my students would then have the opportunity to give these “hard-earned gifts” to a group of elders assembled at the local community center. The delight on the faces of the “grandmothers,” in seeing one of their traditional foods shared with them in the fashion, is worth it all and well remembered by the students.

And finally consider having students engage in a semester-long, “participatory project.” Using the family groupings, have students thoroughly research, for example, a day-in-the-life of an Indian family or community activity or event, be it from the past or in the contemporary. I do offer family members the choice to conduct a single project involving all members of the family, or as a project made up of a subgroup of the some of the family members, or even of going solo, as an individual project, separate from the project done by other family members.



An individual project could focus on a young boy's experiences with his first successful deer or elk hunt, or the experiences of a young girl when she gathers her first traditional root food, and importantly, chronicling the events that would follow. It could be a day-in-the-life of a boarding school experience, or in the aftermath of the allotment of reservation lands. A family project could focus on a community's gathering of the first roots or fishing the first salmon of the year, and then of the feast and celebration that would follow. Each family member would relate and view the same events but doing so from their particular and differing role perspectives, as a grandmother, as a grandfather, as the son, a sister, as a mother, as a young grandson, etc. The researched project could chronicle a particular season, such as the winter, recounting events on particular days and then, in detail, integrating into the narrative the various family and kinship roles, the manner of teaching children, the material culture used such as tools, clothing worn, baskets made and used, nature of shelters and materials used in making them, the nature of subsistence activities, intertribal trading and relations and the related spiritual activities, such as prayer and sweating. I discourage topics that are very broad in scope, such as chronicling a yearly, full-cycle seasonal round, but instead focusing in-depth on a single season. In all these projects it is important to emphasize to students that they must research the depth and detail of the appropriate ecological, social and spiritual relations, as well as the material culture of the event in question. Students attempt to identify and appreciate the essential *mi'yep* teachings embedded within and conveyed through these relationships, to "get down" to the perennial "bones" of the Indigenous experience.

The researched event would then be developed into a sort of "creative nonfiction" narrative text, with an invented yet entirely probable storyline detailing the authentic interactions of fictional characters, with students imagining themselves in the story as those characters. The goal is to "see it from the *inside* looking out," always the greatest of challenges. The text could be inlaid with original drawings or photos to better express what words cannot. The resulting narrative can convey some of the tone and atmosphere, the emotive of an event, so elusive in a formal analytical account, and it will be well re-membered.

I tend to discourage participatory projects which seek to explore topics directly and solely focusing on "culturally-sensitive" subjects, such as a vision quest or Sundance ceremony.

I am concerned that students may not be able to grasp all the subtle nuances and meanings associated with such an esoteric ritual expression within the confines of an academic course, given the nature of the available library resources and a limited timeframe to complete such an endeavor. More importantly, I like to use this constraint to reiterate the point that engagement in such “culturally-sensitive” activities, be it through the imagination of an instructional exercise or, by extension, in actual living practice, should only be pursued with the permission of an Indigenous host, and under the guidance of that host. The elders should be the ones that point the way. Knowing the boundaries of appropriate, ethical participation is a critical lesson worth highlighting at often as possible. Nevertheless, as most so called “traditional” events, be they a root gathering, a deer hunting, a family giveaway, for example, would have some level of reference and linkage to spiritual underpinnings and activities, I do expect to see appropriate, discreet and well-integrated expressions of the spiritual developed and conveyed in the projects’ narrative text.

As a sort of epilogue to the participatory projects I have students provide a more formal cultural and historical background on the particular segment researched and a reflection on its meaning. To reflect is to seriously contemplate on significances of a particular topic and their implications in relation to the student’s own experiences. I also ask students to identify how he or she contributed to the overall “family project,” and what sections each researched and wrote. I expect each student to make an appropriate, fair and equitable contribution to the well-being of the whole family, as collaborative skills can always be improved upon.

Even before experiencing the power of storytelling from various Indian elders, I experienced it as a nervous graduate teaching assistant at Colorado State University in 1973. I was to give my very first lecture to some 200 freshmen on any topic of interest to me. At the time I had a fascination with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century European peasant society. But how would I attempt to lecture these students on a topic so esoteric and removed from their lives, potentially so “deadly” a topic for these freshmen? So I told a story. I had researched a day-in-the-life of the “Sibiriaks,” the European emigrants to Siberia during the days of Tsarist Russia. With these ethnographic details I created an account, a storyline of what one might experience upon walking into a Sibiriak village – the smells of the dung heap just outside the

village, the sights of two-storied houses lining the main road, with livestock pens on their first floors, the sights and sounds of a wedding, even the images of what people were wearing and how they were interacting with one another. While I am not so sure what the students might have learned and remembered, I did seem to hold their attention, they engaged in the story. And while I know I cannot remember much about my own studies on 19<sup>th</sup> century European peasantry, I can still vividly remember the details of that story and the feeling I got in telling it.

Soon after the Sibriak story I was introduced to and impressed by a very innovative but little known work edited by Elsie Clews Parsons entitled, *American Indian Life* (1967). Originally published in 1922, Parsons had gathered the prominent ethnographers of the American Indian of her day, such as Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Edward Sapir, Paul Radin and Clark Wissler, and had each write fictional stories with plots and characters, always adhering “strictly to the social facts,” that could depict the “thoughts and feelings of the Indian . . . impossible in a formal, scientific report” (1967:13). Hence what I am calling in my courses “creative nonfiction ethnography,” has a storyline and protagonists as creations of my students’ imaginations, the storyline and characters hopefully inspired by the larger narrative structures of a social event or environment under consideration. Nevertheless, the descriptions of material culture and social interactions, as well as the epistemological underpinnings are all derived from and well anchored in actual ethnographic research, from non-fiction.

By attempting through creative-nonfictional means to engage in the life of someone so removed from our own, we can experience, at least a little, of what Alan had pointed to – “go *inside*,” “*feel* it,” “see it from the *inside* looking out.” In a 1973 classroom and in a 1974 field experience, the seeds were sown for a pedagogy I would later develop as a professor.<sup>8</sup>

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**During this Jump Dance, “heart talk” and *súumesh* songs are being shared by the many gathered this evening at the Longhouse. As the songs are sung, others join in and “jump,”**

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<sup>8</sup> Kirin Narayan (2007) offers a thorough introduction on the placement of creative non-fiction within the discipline of anthropology, advocating the importance of doing so, along with practical tips on how to use of creative non-fiction in the writing of ethnography.

dancing to its beat, offering in consort their own prayers in so doing. It is during the early morning hours when it happens, those two men had been dancing hard and then they “went out,” they “Blue Jayed.” They flew to the top rafters of the building and then out into the night, into the mountains like an Animal, no longer human beings. A little later, during the early morning hours the medicine leaders, who know how to take care of them, sing their *súumesh* songs. Those who had Blue Jayed come back in, and they go around the room and doctor the sick and bless the food that will soon be consumed, though never touching any that are gathered around. The Blue Jays are eventually “brought back,” made human again (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:232-36).

\* \* \*

Publication on the other hand can be even more problematic. How does the text of a publication acknowledge and be informed by an Indigenous learning style? How does the text acknowledge and be informed by an Indigenous perspective. How is an oral-based learning and knowledge system to be effectively conveyed through a literacy-based format? For many elders the very act of writing down oral traditions or even the words of an interview can only drain the stories and the words of their life. For others in the Native communities, however, the value of preserving for future generations the knowledge and oral traditions of their elders in a written format outweighs any possible harm putting those words in print might bring.

In an attempt to convey elements of the oral nuance, one consideration would entail presenting oral-based texts in a poetic style, noting intonation, pauses, cadence and even the hand gesturing and facial expressions of the elder as recorded during an interview or storytelling session (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:20-24; Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:126-27, 188-204, 279-82; Frey 2004:161-62). The resulting “script” can better express the rhythm, pacing and context of an interview or storytelling which are so critical to the oral-nuanced meaning.<sup>9</sup> In turn, I have those who engage these written texts do so not as a reader, but asking them to have another read the stories aloud to them, experiencing

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9 For further discussion on the implications of the oral-nuanced storytelling, and specifically of orality on how we can format written texts, see pages 76-86 of this essay.

something a little closer to the original oral-nuanced storytelling (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:20-24). I owe much to the pioneering work of Dell Hymes (1981) and Dennis Tedlock (1972) for first introducing me to the “poetic” in the oral tradition.<sup>10</sup> In attempting this sort of poetic-style formatting in some of my publications it’s been gratifying to hear from family members of both Lawrence Aripa (Sch̓itsu’umsh) and Tom Yellowtail (Apsáalooke) that upon reading their respective transcribed stories they “could hear the voice of grandpa.”

The following text is an example of an oral-nuanced transcription of a segment from Tom Yellowtail’s re-telling of “The Little People” we tape-recorded in the summer of 1993 (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:122-25). Notice Tom’s use of repetition and pacing, with frequent pauses, as indicated by commas and a series of dot ellipses, depending on length of the pauses, and stressed words, indicated in italic type. A few of his hand and face gesturings are noted in parenthesis. Also notice the importance Tom places on the location of the story.

We talk about the Little People...,  
     that are among the mountains.,  
         in fact...my own medicine..come from the..Little People that I call on....  
*And..this one time.,*  
     not too long ago.,  
         possibly I would say..about fifteen years ago when this happened.,  
     on our present day..buffalo pasture  
         on..the south of the Big Horn Canyon.,  
             what they call the Yellowtail Dam..., (Tom points)  
     branches of canyons that run into the..main Big Horn Canyon are the Black Canyon.,  
         the Bull Elk Canyon., (continues to point)  
     and so worth that lead into it.  
*And in that area is.,*  
     where our buffalo pasture is..*now..*,  
         comprising a big area.,  
             of some near thirty thousand acres.,  
     there where our tribal buffalo herds..are being kept.  
 They have natural..canyons that comprise *high walls*, (Tom motions with hands to sky)  
     that *not..not very much* fencing has been done to close up this..wide space

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10 For examples of the poetic style of formatting and how I have attempted to address the challenge of presenting oral texts in a literacy-based media see, Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail (1995) and Frey and the Sch̓itsu’umsh (2001).

comprising around twenty-five to thirty thousand acres.,  
 where our tribal herd of buffalo are being kept *today*...  
 And..some fifteen years ago..the buffalo warden.,  
 a man...,  
 a clan brother of mine.,  
 who comes to visit me.,  
 josh with me.,  
 because that's our..general..custom,  
 according to our Indian ways,  
 that we josh each other.,  
 whenever we meet.,  
 not meaning anything *real*  
 but we josh.,  
 make jokes.,  
 and so forth.  
 And...this..buffalo warden at that time who is Frank..He Does It.,  
 who *lives*..in the Big Horn valley,  
 his home is on the Big Horn valley,  
 close to..the present day..Fort Smith....  
 And..he had this job of being the buffalo warden,  
 so he *stays up there*..  
 There is a cabin up there  
 which we call "hunter's cabin"..  
 And it's a place provided by the..tribe.,  
 for the buffalo warden to live in.,  
 its a..log cabin,  
 a barn,  
 corrals,  
 a good spring close by..  
 And..the areas..for camping is very..nice  
 around near that..cabin  
 where the buffalo warden stays..  
 And he stays up there,  
 has his saddle horses to ride around with.,  
  
 looking over the buffalo herds.,  
 check the..fence lines,  
 and so forth..  
 And he lives and stays there.,  
*all alone*...  
 And..*this..one night*,  
 when he rode during the day  
 and come back and put his horse away.,

in the barn.,  
                   corral.,  
                                   for the night.,  
 he retired.,  
                   nightfall had come..  
 He come into his cabin,  
                   and prepared himself a little..supper..  
                                   And..after he ate.,  
                                   had his supper,  
 he laid down on his bed,  
                   had his lights..his lights on,  
                                   and..reading magazines.,  
   old newspapers,  
   and so forth.  
 He was laying on his bed.,  
                   *all alone...*,  
                                   he's baching it up there (a bachelor)  
                   *he's all alone...*,  
                                   *nobody near...*  
 And while he's..laying there.,  
                   silent,  
                                   reading..by his..lights..  
 And..all at once he heard a *little noise?*, (Tom has a questioning on his face and looking off to  
 his porch)  
                   out on his porch,  
                                   porch like this that's out here.. (Tom points to his own porch to his left)  
 He heard a *little noise*..out there.,  
                   thinking  
                                   "*Somebody's coming?*" (Tom whispers)  
 He's listen! (whispering)  
 Pretty soon...there is a *knock* on his door., (Tom patting his hands together)  
                   a *knock*...on his door..  
 And he says,  
                   "*Hay, hay, come on in,* (in a loud, welcoming voice)  
                                   *come in!*" (Tom motions with hand to come in)  
 The door opened.,  
                   and in walked *four little men...*, (Tom holds out four fingers)  
                                   standing about three and a half..four feet...*high*,  
   that's..the height of the Little People.,  
   a grown man.,  
                   he maybe a hundred year old man.,  
                                   only..standing about three and a half feet high  
   or so.,

*Little People* just like a little.. a little..tiny child..,  
     is what they are.,  
         that's the size of them.  
*Yet..they are powerful...,*  
     *the strength of a giant..,* (in a strong voice)  
         is what those Little People.,  
             *as little as they are....*  
 They have the *medicine..,*  
     they have the *strength..,*  
         so they take care of things..  
 But...they come to the buffalo warden to do them a favor...

As an alternative to the written word and as a means to convey orality-based knowledge, it is worth considering the digital world of Internet and DVD dissemination. Streaming oral traditions and interviews as told by elders over the Internet or on a DVD can render the voices of the elders more immediate, vibrant, and authentic. While certainly not a substitute for a “living encounter,” their voices are not mediated through a literacy-based media that can inadvertently distort, or through a writer that can unintentionally misrepresent. In addition, the interface of a web-page module or DVD can offer the “user” a non-linear, non-progressive experience. Instead of beginning at an introduction and step-by-step culminating in a book’s conclusion, subject to an author’s intended agenda, the user can experience a “Web,” navigating about to various topics and presentations, exploring that which is relevant and meaningful to him or her, a sort of “self-paced, individualized instruction,” so typical of an Indigenous learning style. The learner takes on some of the instructional responsibility for the learning.

In 2001 I was presenting the completed module of the extensive Nimíipuu Life-Long Learning Online Internet-based project to the Nez Perce “Circle of Elders” for their review. I can remember my own anxiety as I was beginning to present the project to these elders, the Tribe’s Cultural Committee, but soon into my formal talk, my apprehension was replaced by an excitement in the air and approval on the faces of these “grandmothers.” Upon seeing and hearing their own voices and the voices of other relatives presented so clearly and untrammelled through this media they quickly became intrigued and a bit enamored with the



experience. I overheard several comment to each other that they wanted to have their granddaughters show them how to access the new world of the “Web”!

The immediacy of the spoken voice and the active role of the learner were elements both brought to bear in one of my graduate student’s thesis project. In “Voices that Soar with the Eagles,” Jennifer Gatzke elected to present her research on a contemporary, all-women’s drum group among the Schitsu’umsh not through an established written thesis, but through the agency of a DVD (2008). Her interviewees had their voices fully presented, unedited by an editor or shortened given length, nor mediated through a written script. Most critically, the particular sounds of the drum beat and voices of this all women’s drum, so unusual in Powwow country but supported by Tribal elders, could also be better described and appreciated. Users of the DVD could then move about the rich and diverse content and topics with the easy of a computer mouse and guided by his or her own intentions to explore. The Coeur d’Alene Tribe fully endorsed and approved the project, while the University of Idaho’s Graduate School and Library were less enthusiastic, a reluctance stemming from the issue of the “permanency” of this emerging digital format compared with the written page. The university finally accepted Jennifer’s DVD thesis, though only after it was also accompanied by a shorten written-version of the thesis. The power of the written word! It is ironic that such a technological-based media can hold promise for the delivery of a very organically-based knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

I’ve attempted in several of my published works (be it print or electronic/Internet) to format the texts in a manner that encourages the reader to explore and discover for himself or herself the embedded meanings within (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:173-75; Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:279-82). As with my classroom students, readers are asked take on an active, heuristic role as they engage the texts – a learning resulting from discoveries made by the reader/student. The elders have insisted that the “discovery process” is essential to the storytelling experience (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:282). Traditional storytellers typically do not add a specific, Aesop-like, moral commentary to the beginning or end of their stories, inviting each listener to “discover” the lessons and *mi’yep* teachings in the story that are

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11 See the Frey and the Nez Perce (2001), Frey and the Schitsu’umsh (2002), and Frey and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (2003) for an example of my Internet-formatted publications.

uniquely meaningful to him or her (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:174-75). As the stories are so richly layered with multiple meanings, to offer but a single lesson would only serve to close off other possible lessons that might be of value to the range of diverse listeners. Other than identifying some broad literary motifs (e.g., Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995) or underlying “teachings” (e.g., Frey and the Schjitsu’umsh 2001), to help contextualize and anchor the texts for readers (what I will come to call “signposts”), I’ve sought to minimize any analysis of the stories, or, for that matter, I’ve tried to refrain from overt interpreting any of the knowledge and experience emanating out of the Tin Shed. In this regard, I’ve sought to present ethnography in the Boasian tradition, free from theory-laden, nomothetic assertions.

I’ve also incorporated the use of short “vignettes” that would be placed within the appropriate chapters and sections of a book’s text, similar to those used in this essay. The vignettes are comprised of narrative oral traditions, first-person participant observations of social scenes, or particularly poignant segments from transcribed interviews, all without commentary or overt interpretation (though it is acknowledged, that in the acts of identifying and isolating such vignettes, and of placing them in a particular location within the manuscript, an implicit, albeit partial interpretations are made). In peppering the manuscript with such vignettes, the many “voices” of my hosts can be presented less filtered, and the reader asked to do the work of making the connections and “discoveries” within and between the many meanings embedded within the narrative vignettes. This can be constructed text not always acknowledged as viable in the academic community. I clearly remember my first attempt at publishing, a short article on the Apsáalooke Sundance, with an extensive use of isolated and seemingly randomly-placed vignettes augmented with more formal interpretive analytical text. The journal’s reviewers dismissed not only the submitted article as incoherent, but one reviewer characterized the writings of its author as that of a “schizophrenic!” I have nevertheless persevered, and have found publication platforms on which I can juggle multiple voices and challenge the readers to engage the text and make discoveries.

\* \* \*

**It’s evening. Over there, they’re running through camp, chasing each other, and a boy falls, his face landing in the hot coals of the fire. Some time passes. He comes out of**

his tipi, and they gather around, they see a scar and someone calls out, “hey, Burnt Face!” In the months that follow he feels ashamed. At ten years of age, Burnt Face now keeps to himself, traveling alone and setting up his camp separate from his family and village. Then he makes the decision to go to the mountains, to fast, seeking help. He travels alone to those high mountains of the Big Horns, wearing out each four sets of moccasins his mother had made. There, high on the mountain, the Sunrise and Sunset clearly seen, he goes without food and water, offers daily prayer with tobacco and Pipe his father gave him. Under the watch of the Sun, he moves huge rocks, there, that one, and there, to form a great Wheel offering, twenty-eight spokes with a rock hub, like the Sundance Lodge. It takes him awhile. It’s an offering, showing his sincerity; a gift to whoever might come, perhaps to the *Awakkulé*, the Little People, who inhabit this area. And they do come, the Little People; they’d been watching him. They take him in, adopting him; he calls them “Medicine Fathers,” and his scar is removed. It’s like a new born child’s face. He returns to his people to become a great healer amongst them, all the while keeping his name, to always remember (Frey 1987:90-92; Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:108-22; Frey, Yellowtail and SiJohn *in* Crawford O’Brien 2008:185-205).



Rocks of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel, Wyoming.  
Photo: Frey 1993

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And finally, in publishing the cherished stories of my hosts, I have sought, in most of my publications, to acknowledge co-authorship of the texts. In collaboration we are the co-genitors of the text, the re-tellers of the stories, stories anchored in the experiential heritage of our hosts. While this admission may seem an obvious conclusion given the cultural property rights of Indigenous communities, this is not always the case in the academy and with its publishers. In one submitted, co-authored text for a proposed book chapter, the first response from the publisher was to question its co-authorship, as these individuals must surely to be understood as the “subjects” of the article and of my research. The publisher even

requested from me the signed informed consent forms, if they were to be included in the legal documentation of the text. The book's editor, Susan Crawford, came to my rescue, insisting on a shared authorship role for Cliff SiJohn, Tom Yellowtail and myself in the piece entitled, "If All These Great Stories Were Told, Great Stories Will Come" (Frey, Yellowtail and SiJohn *in* Crawford O'Brien 2008:185-205).

**"See it from the *inside* looking out"** Alan and Cliff were certainly aware of so many others who had imposed their own perspectives on their Indian ways of life, misrepresenting and distorting them. If I was to venture into the Tin Shed, Alan and Cliff wanted to be certain I attempted to do so seeing from "*inside* looking out," attempting to gain an Apsáalooke or Schjitsu'umsh perspective. Alan and Cliff were seeking to re-orient the premise and assumptions upon which many of my initial questions were being posed, allowing me to better see their world as they did.

In attempting to see from the perspective of our host do we not need to first acknowledge our own perspectives? As Alan had redirected the questioning back to me while seated on the wooden bench, should we not ask ourselves what we bring into the Tin Shed? Just whose "culture" are we attempting to research, and then disseminate in our writings and in our classrooms – that of another's or to some extent a colonized extension of our own? Once we are cognizant of our own biases and preconceptions, we are better able not to let those perspectives blind us from or wash out the views of those we seek to understand.

As we travel the Tin Shed, attempt to position ourselves as a "child" to be "swaddled in the blanket" of our host. Grow under the tutelage of our host. While this goal may ultimately be an elusive goal – when can we ever really see through the eyes of someone else – what is the alternative? I would offer that it is the only viable goal possible.

In an attempt to "see from the *inside* looking out," we need to conceptually frame and organize the research questions, the resulting ethnographic text and the classroom content using Indigenous categories and terminology. So often we present the story of American Indian society configured within a Euro-American praxis, materialist orientation. From this perspective, the prime mover in a society is understood as its ecological relationship with the environment, which drives the economic system, which in turn spawns the social order, with

the religious institutions functioning to maintain the entire system. From a Sch̓itsu'umsh perspective, for example, this orientation when applied to them must be turned on its head. As the world was created by the *Amqtqn* ("one who sits at the head peak," considered the "father" to all his children) and the First Peoples, such as Coyote and Chief Child of the Yellow Root, it is from the spiritual as expressed and perpetuated in the rich assemblage of oral traditions that the material world is brought forth. Book chapter headings such as "economy," "social order," "religion" and "mythology" are replaced with "Preparing the World," "Receiving the Gifts," and "Sharing the Gifts" (Frey and the Sch̓itsu'umsh 2001:271). Instead of a world ripe with "natural resources," denoting commodities of monetary and utilitarian value, it is a world embedded with "gifts" from the First Peoples – the camas, deer and water, as well as *mi'yep*, moral and practical "teachings," and *summ̓esh*, spiritual power – all of which are to be shared freely with those in need (Frey and the Sch̓itsu'umsh 2001:269-72). Along with "natural resources," such often used analytical constructs as "beliefs," "culture," "history" and "worldview," which have their origins outside the Tin Shed, should be qualified if incorporated into the theoretical framing of the text (Frey and the Sch̓itsu'umsh 2001:269-72, 297-98). Many of these terms could even be replaced, as in the Sch̓itsu'umsh example, "culture" with their term for "our ways of life in the world" – *Hnkhwelkhwl̓net* – suggesting a much more experiential-defined as opposed to ideological-based construct. All the content that would have been included in a traditional ethnographic manuscript or college course, such as technology, material culture, family and kinship, religion, mythology, etc. could be retained, but just added to, renamed and critically reconfigured from a Tin Shed perspective.

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**Everyone is having a tough time of it, the Rock Monster is rolling around everywhere and the camps are not safe. The First People go to Coyote asking his help. "What's in it for me?" he asks. Agreeing to terms, Coyote seeks out the Monster. With taunts and challenges, Coyote gets the Rock Monster to chase him, away from the camps of the people. They go this way and that, in so doing creating the flat of Rathdrum Prairie, the hill that is Plummer Butte, much of the landscape we see today. But as Coyote tires, he gets an idea.**

**And through the bushes toward the cliff and a ledge overlooking the lake he runs. Right behind him the Rock Monster rolls, rolling through those huckleberry bushes. Coyote jumps onto the ledge, while the fast rolling Rock, covered in huckleberry juice, falls into the lake, drowning and giving Lake Coeur d'Alene its blue color. Soon the Human People will be here, to a landscape embedded throughout with the stories. And with each re-telling of this story, the Coyote comes alive, swirls around you and talks to you, and the blue in the lake is perpetuated (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:71-75; Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001:127-31).**

\* \* \*

Similar to the confluence of two powerful rivers, the contemporary experience of the American Indian reflects the waters of continued Indigenous and sovereign ways intermingling with the waters disruptive to those ways brought on by Euro-American contact. To effectively allow readers and students an opportunity to better “see from the *inside*,” the content of ethnographic texts and the classroom should consider including both the waters rich with language and oral traditions, of family and kinship, of human-animal-plant-landscape interactions and of an inherent sovereignty, as well as the waters involving encounters with horses, smallpox, fur traders, missionaries, military generals and treaty commissioners, as well as the federal acts of allotment, re-organization, termination and self-determination, that have all too often sought to either deny tribal sovereignty or reinterpret it relative to federal plenary authority (Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001; Frey and McCarl in press). The Nimípuu cannot be fully understood without appreciating the influences of the Nez Perce War of 1877 juxtaposed alongside Coyote's story etched along the hills of the Clearwater River all the way up to Kamiah where he slew the Swallowing Monster and created the human Peoples. The Schitsu'umsh cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of the affects of the Soldiers of the Sacred Heart and the Jesuit Mission alongside the unique story of Chief Child of the Yellow Root's overcoming of the “man-eaters” along the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene, giving them their “names” and new roles, “preparing the world for the coming of human Peoples.” The waters of one without the other render only a shallow and muddied river. And in the intermingling of the particular aboriginal and Euro-American waters, the river of any given

American Indian community will exhibit certain unique rapids and calm sections distinct from the rapids and calm of the rivers of other communities.

**“Feel it . . . feel the damp”** And what was it that I needed to “feel,” and feel distinct from what I was experiencing while seated on the wooden bench? As articulated by Alan and Cliff, they recognized differing ways of knowing, of experiencing the world, often referred to as “Heart Knowledge” in contrast with “Head Knowledge.” I needed to “feel” something from the “heart.” I needed to acknowledge an Indigenous epistemology distinct from that which I had been raised. Over the years working with Cliff and Tom Yellowtail, along with other elders, and given my own involvement in the Apsáalooke Sundance way, and of my particular research and teaching endeavors, I had come to learn a certain meaning to Head and Heart knowledge ways. And Alan and Cliff ask us, can we begin to move off that well-worn bench of familiarity into the unknown of the Tin Shed? Can we begin to see, to hear, to feel, to experience that which is within? Can we begin to move from Head ways of knowing to Heart ways of experiencing the world? What huckleberries would be needed to be picked here? As we seek to enter and then travel within the Tin Shed, this certainly can be the greatest challenge of all.



I first sought to put words to what elders refer to as Head and Heart Knowledge in a little book entitled, *Eye Juggling* (Frey 1994). In it I attempted to identify many of the key premises of what I called “Glass Pane” and “Looking Glass” worldviews, that is, Head and Heart ways by another set of terms. Both were presented as “story texts,” mega-narratives that are infused throughout and define much of the experiential life of their participants (Frey 1994:33). As a graduate student, experiencing the power of story among the Apsáalooke, of doing a little storytelling myself in the classroom, and then being introduced such theorists as Alfred Kroeber and Thomas Kuhn, I was becoming mindful of “narrative,” “story” part of my frame of mind. The histories of “Greek civilization” and “science” began to be appreciated as forms of mega-stories, albeit pervasive and powerful “superorganic style pattern” or “paradigm” narratives (Kroeber 1944 and 1963, and Kuhn 1962). Expressions of Greek architecture, military prowess, philosophy, science, sculpture, all grew with incremental steps, aligned with the dominate style pattern, with the storyline, if you will, until that style pattern, that story,

was fully realized, at a height of development, in a “culture climax,” the Greek “Classical Period,” between 450 – 300 BCE. In the instance of science, specific research methods and theories were understood as developing and becoming expressed based upon their fit within the prevailing paradigm, a storyline, all of which are subject to massive redefinition and even obsolescence given a “paradigm shift,” replaced by a new mega-story, as exemplified when the cosmos of Ptolemy was replaced by Copernicus and Newton, it supplanted by that of Einstein.

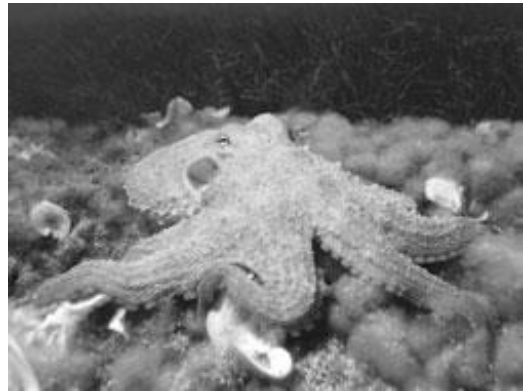
As in *Eye Juggling*, our discussion here is not attempting to provide specific definitions of Head and Heart Knowledge, nor attempting to reify a binary (Frey 1994). In part, this dichotomy is a function of contact-history, of the collision of two worlds and the elders’ desire to contrast much of their way distinct from that of the Euro-American. I would also have us consider that this dichotomy is not suggesting that Head Knowledge is exclusively the domain of European-based epistemology and Heart Knowledge is synonymous only with American Indian ways of knowing. Albeit typically vested only in the human “soul,” certainly the spiritual is expressed in forms of European-based thought and experience, along with other expressions of Heart Knowledge. And the American Indian has always been an astute empirical observer of the physical landscape, rendering precise calculations of the workings of the seasons in interaction with animal and plant life. A very efficient, pragmatic-based technology was successfully applied to the pre-contact lives of Indigenous people. Proposed here are only broad parameters and ontological foundations upon which a myriad of expressed definitions have emerged. In the instance of Heart Knowledge, elders would argue that it is inappropriate to attempt to offer an analytical, Head Knowledge definition to something that can only be felt and experienced through the Heart, something which often defies words.

While much more nuanced than suggested here, “Head Knowledge,” something most of us are familiar with, is ultimately premised on such ontological principles as Aristotelian materialism and Cartesian dualism, and perhaps best expressed in the scientific method. This is the story of great men, of the “Godfathers of Science,” identifiably starting with the Greeks, and such thinkers as Pythagoras (580-497 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC).

To illustrate the influence of but two, albeit two pivotal contributors of the many instrumental to the development of Head Knowledge, let’s first start with a glimpse into the



story of Aristotle. From his detailed observations made off the island of Lesbos and other areas in the Aegean Sea, Aristotle recorded some of the most accurate and early descriptions of aquatic life, including the catfish, angler-fish, paper nautilus and octopus. He was among the first to classify fish distinct from the mammal species. While



discredited until its rediscovery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, his account of the hectocotryl arm of the octopus was two thousand years ahead of its time. While searching for “universal forms” like his teacher, Aristotle diverged from Plato (427-347 BC) in locating the universal in the particular concrete entities existing in the observable natural world. Plato had argued that universals existed as Forms or “ideas,” distinct from particular material things, as models or archetypes of those objects. As illustrated in Plato’s allegory of the cave, our protagonist, while chained within the cave, understands that which is directly observable and reflected on its walls to be what is real. But upon being freed from the chains and encountering the bright sun outside the cave, what had been thought to be reality is now revealed to be a mere reflection, an illusion, derived of the sun’s light and the Forms casting shadows on the walls. The great truth of the Forms is realized. On the other hand, Aristotle insisted that universal Forms were encapsulated intrinsically within the tangible. If a universal could not be predicated in an object, argued Aristotle, as for example observed in an octopus, surely it could not exist. Forms remain the unconditional basis for all overt phenomena, accessible through the observable, in essence, what are to be found on the walls of the cave.

Aristotle’s approach to universals and the particulars, his methodology, implies an ascent from particular phenomena to the knowledge of their ultimate attributes and Forms, an inductive approach. Plato stressed the opposite approach to methodology, a descent from *a priori* knowledge of universal Forms to a contemplation of particular imitations of these, in essence a deductive approach. While Aristotle’s “natural philosophy” certainly included rigorous philosophical-based inquire as well as politics and poetry and other fine arts, it also was the critical first step toward becoming what we would refer to as material reductionism

and John Locke's (1632-1704) inductive empiricism and, in this sense, anticipating the scientific method of today. Among his many works that have had such an impact on Western Civilization, his *Nicomachean Ethics* is widely considered one of the most important historical philosophical works, influencing a range of subsequent thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and the development of Christianity, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) and the foundations of modern political science, and Francis Bacon (1561- 1626) and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and the beginnings of modernity itself.

René Descartes (1597-1659) adds another plot or two to our story, approaching what is knowable from quite a different stance than that of Aristotle and Locke. Yet these are contributions to our story that are not only complimentary, but essential to the overall story of Head Knowledge, as we have come to know it today. For this French philosopher he starts with the assertion that we as humans have ultimate knowledge of our own existence because we are thinking beings – *cogito ergo sum* – "I think, therefore I am." The foundation of knowledge consists of a set of first, "self-evident" principles, *a priori principles*. The mind is not an empty cabinet, a "blank slate," but filled with universal, though not readily knowable, principles. For Descartes, access to these first principles is not based on "the fluctuating testimony of the senses," on empiricism, nor is it contingent on the "blundering constructions of imagination," on aesthetic or spiritual awareness. He distrusted sensory evidence as much as he avoided any undisciplined flirtations of thought. The first principles are those anchored on "conception which an unclouded and attentive mind gives," on conception "wholly freed from doubt," principles derived from clear and logical thought. One can even begin with a set of assumptions that are only hypothetically true, all of which need not be verified by observation, need not exist in fact. They need only be hypothetically correct. Keeping to our oceanic examples, one can hypothesize that a shark is a fish structured for rapid, agile swimming. This assertion need not be proved empirically.

From these first principles, other truths can be deduced by a meticulous application of logical rules and axioms. Mathematically-rigorous formulas can be applied in order to arrive at conclusions. If one designs a human submergible as a "shark," it logically follows that the submarine would likewise be rapid and agile. Knowledge is not so much what corresponds to

experience, as it is a coherency within and among their principles and deduced statements. And so the deductive and rational methods are born, their strength and legitimacy residing in their ability to objectively think about the natural world and deduce statements of truth about that world. Descartes published his approach to knowledge in 1637, in *Discourse on Method*.

René Descartes made another important contribution to the unfolding story of science. Descartes reasoned that if the mind is capable of clear, objective thinking, then it cannot ultimately be reducible to the influences of the material world. “Mind” and “matter” are the basic constituents of the universe. The defining characteristic of “matter” is extension and movement, i.e., the possession of dimension such as time or space. The defining characteristic of “mind” is thought, i.e., the activity of thinking. Regardless of the way “matter” is extended, e.g., straight or curved, it must be extended. Regardless of the way “mind” thinks, e.g., abstracting or imagining, it must think. Each is absolutely different from the other, requiring nothing but itself to exist. Neither has the properties of the other, nor is causal of the other, and neither is reducible to the other, yet all in the universe is reducible to one or the other, to either “mind” or “matter.” Cartesian Dualism thus adheres to the understanding that the natural world of “matter” is independent of the “mind,” and, conversely, that the “mind” is independent of the “natural world.” Objectivity is possible. The world of the “other” and of “man” himself has become “objects,” for study, in which independent ideas and symbolic representations of them are possible – scientific hypothesis and theory. The “science of man” was ushered forth.



Portrait of Descartes  
by Frans Hals, 1648

The evolving story of Head Knowledge continues with other great men and their contributions, such as that of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). Following the lead of Pythagoras and looking into the heavens, Galileo placed an emphasis on observable, quantifiable variables and their relationships, a reality of discrete numerically-based chunks, i.e., statistics – “the language of nature is numbers.” Continuing the story of rigorous observations, Isaac Newton

(1642-1727) sought to establish universal generalizations – “laws” to describe, explain, predict and ultimately control the natural world – the “laws of motion.” As the unfolding narrative sought to bring maximum benefit to human welfare, Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and his utilitarianism, articulated a science that ultimately holds the keys to unlocking the power of nature over nature. Collectively all these stories bring forth the scientific method, of a dualism that separates us from nature so that we can understand it, predict it, and ultimately control nature. Of “pure” and “applied” sciences, seeking to improve our comprehension of the subatomic and astronomic, and advance the condition of human health and wellbeing. And of the objective researcher, one who is in a non-reflexive relationship with the objects of their studies. Head knowledge is thus most often associated with rational-deductive and empirical-inductive modes of thought, all premised on certain ontological principles, such as the mind/body dualism and objectification, material reductionism, quantification, gradation and secularization (Frey 1994: 95-104, 123-26, 162-68). Head Knowledge can be equated with scientific endeavors operating within a broad sweep of the positivist paradigm.

When asked “what is real and knowable through the Head” Alan and Cliff would declare that it’s to be discovered outside Tin Shed, viewed from the wooden bench. Reality is ultimately “understood” as separate and apart from the viewer, as if viewed from behind a great “glass pane.” It is a tangible world made up of discrete, quantifiable material “objects” interacting together with a great regularity and order through lineal time, devoid of any spiritual animation or significance. It is a world made knowable and verifiable through deductive and inductive tests of logic and empirical observation, and of experimentation, all of which can be measured in terms of reliability and validity (Frey 1994:95-104). While traveling outside the Tin Shed, systematic analysis of dependent and independent variables, anticipatory predictions of cause and effect, and manipulations of the physical world can all be attempted and made. This is knowledge of explanation, axioms and theory of things and their forces.

Co-evolving outside the Tin Shed is another essential narrative, the social and cultural construct of the “autonomous individual.” It becomes the foundation for the articulation of political rights and freedoms, of economic consumption and production, of the diagnosis and treatment of illness, of educational assessment, of athletic achievement, of the pivotal

component even within the family, of the stimulus for and attribution of technological and scientific discovery and innovation, as well as of spiritual salvation, of the Euro-American ideal of “rugged individualism.” And between these individuals there prevails a relationship of maximizing one’s gains and minimizing one’s losses, in Euro-American history expressed as the economic system of “capitalism.” It is a world differentiated not only by binary oppositions, but also hierarchies. The human species is understood as sitting in a very privileged position, unique with its intelligence and volition, above all other species, as the “caretaker” of its garden, “whose purpose is to benefit the caretaker” (Frey 1994:164).

“Heart Knowledge” is often associated with participatory modes of action, all premised on very different ontological principles from those of Head Knowledge. Key among those principles are the unity of interrelational existence, of holism and monism, as expressed in the Apsáalooke concept *ashammaléaxia* (“as driftwood lodges”) (Frey 1987:40, 154-176) or Sch̓itsu’umsh concept the *chnis-teem-ilqwes* (“I am part of all”) (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:40-41; Frey and the Sch̓itsu’umsh 2001:10, 183); the equality among all entities, as expressed in the Sch̓itsu’umsh term *unshat-qn* (“eye-to-eye”), seeing all beings as equals, be they human, animal, plant, rock or spirit (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:41-42); and the transcendent and animating spiritual nature of reality, as expressed in the Apsáalooke term *baaxpée*, the Nimípuu *wéyekin*, or the Sch̓itsu’umsh *summēsh*, all three referring to “spiritual force” and “Indian medicine” (Frey 1987:59-63; Frey and the Sch̓itsu’umsh 2001:9, 176-80), as well as expressed in the Sch̓itsu’umsh phrase *snq-hepi-wes* “where the spirit lives, from horizon to horizon” (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:42-43).

This is the story of an omnipresent Creator – *Akbaatatdía*, “the maker of all things first,” the *Amotqn*, “one who sits on the mountain,” and of a multitude of “Peoples,” kinsmen – human, animal, plant, rock and spirit, both of the present and the past – the “ancestors” and the “First Peoples” of the creation time. This is the story of Coyote and Salmon, Rabbit and Jack Rabbit, Chief Child of the Yellow Root and Burnt Face, not as the “Godfathers” but the “Guardians of the Oral Traditions.” It is they who prepare the world for the coming of the human peoples, overcoming “man-eaters” and other monsters, and inundating the landscape with “gifts” – the foods and *mi’yep* teachings, what human peoples will need. This is the story

of deer, camas and salmon who are “brothers” to the hunter, root digger or fisherman, offering themselves up voluntarily when given “gifts” of respect and song, and then of only offering their flesh when it is shared with those in need. These are “brothers” never to be taken by asserting one’s self over them, never to be taken for one’s sole use and appetite, never to be taken without the consent of the kinsmen (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:204-11).

When asked “what is real and knowable through the Heart” Alan and Cliff would insist that it’s revealed while traveling within the Tin Shed. Reality is ultimately “experienced” as the transitory intersection of all those participating, an event of converging relations, always in the making (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:262, 286). The “vital act” is the “act of participation.” “Those participating” are thus inclusive of human, animal, plant, rock and spiritual “Peoples,” both of the present and the past – the “ancestors” and the “First Peoples” – all in temporal and spatial kinship with one another; no glass pane separations here. It’s a world unified through kinship, imbued with spirit. It’s a world precipitated and animated by the spiritual, with its animation and volition shared equally within all Peoples (Frey 1994:169-76; Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:10). While traveling within the Tin Shed, perennial meanings are revealed and spiritual animation channeled, permeating and renewing all the relations and lives of the world. This is knowledge of relationships and their meanings.

Given the spiritual animation of and kinship-based unity within this expanded world of the many Peoples, in the human acts of re-telling, re-singing, re-dancing the perennial stories of the creation time and place, stories embedded with all their essential “bones,” the world presently engaged is re-created and perpetuated. The world is renewed, as the temporal present is rendered one with the First Peoples of creation time and place (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:171-73, 176; Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:197-204, 234, 260-68; Frey 2004:166). As Cliff SiJohn has said, in telling the stories of the First Peoples, “they come *alive* . . . they *swirl around* you as the Turtle is saying his thing or as the Chipmunk is saying something . . . they *swirl around* you and you see the *Indian medicine* . . . this is Chipmunk talking to you . . . this is Coyote talking to you . . . all these things *suddenly come alive* . . . they are just as alive as they were a thousand years ago” (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:197). In the acts of telling, singing and dancing, the Human Peoples thus have a co-creative role and responsibility.

Hence the Apsáalooke expression, *dasshússua* (“breaking with the mouth”) and the phrase, “stories make the world.” That which comes through the mouth, be it spoken or sung, be it an Indian name or a creation story, has the efficacy to bring forth the world.

In re-telling Coyote’s story of the Rock Monster, the blue in Lake Coeur d’Alene is perpetuated. In re-telling Burnt Face’s story, a scar is removed and a face made new, as a “child’s,” . . . and a cancer abated. In giving voice through a prayer or a song, or through the movement of body and feathers in a dance, a Deer or Camas would offer themselves up to kinsmen in need, a name would protect, water could usher forth from a Tree, bullets removed from a young man’s body, and humans transformed into Blue Jays. In giving voice through words, songs and dance it’s never a matter of “suspending disbelief,” but invariably of intensifying what is most real and true. “The world is made and rendered meaningful in the act of revealing Coyote’s story of it” (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:214).

Any pretense of a “glass pane” separating you as independent from all the other Peoples is shattered (Frey 1994:126-41). Any pretense that the words of a story can simply describe a world out there is vanquished. Any pretense that you can have an “understanding” of, “explanation” for, or a “belief” about a world separate and autonomous from that world is dissolved. The constructs such as “beliefs” and “values,” and even our academically cherished concepts of “culture” and “history,” all entail psychological and philosophical states in which an individual holds a cluster of propositional or declarative ideas/thoughts about the truth, nature or existence of something else, be it material objects, or other ideas/thoughts. In this state, the “cluster” and the “something else” are each understood as having distinctive albeit exclusive constituents. Such psychological and philosophical states necessarily presuppose Cartesian dualism.

Within the Tin Shed you don’t have beliefs about the First Peoples, as direct experiences with them. “Belief” and “history” do not mediate nor veil your engagement with the world. As a graduate student at the University of Colorado in 1979 I had the opportunity of listening to Vine Deloria Jr. as he was being interviewed for a faculty position, which he was offered and he subsequently accepted. During the interview David Carrasco asked Deloria something to the effect, “what are some of the key religious beliefs of the American Indian?” Deloria

wonderfully articulated a response, including the statement I still clearly remember, “We don’t have beliefs about our religion, we experience it.”

And as a graduate student, a certain other adage, this one relating to “history,” has also continued resonate with me. Shared during one of the many lectures I attended, the phrase was insightful in the construction of the concept of “history,” as well as implications of this construct. Whether correctly attributed to the Lakota leader Sitting Bull or not, he is purported to have said, “History means disrespect for the ancestors.” He had certainly witnessed a horrendous disrespect, with the physical assault on his forefathers, at the hands of the United State military and its missionary allies. But even more perceptive, the saying suggests the very nature of lineal time, of a past rendered dead and buried, no longer accessible, is disrespectful itself, erecting a barrier to the once viable interactions with one’s animated ancestors.

This is not to suggest that there is not a great body of knowledge, of *mi’yep*, “teachings from all things,” brought to bear in each and every moment of interaction between Animal and Plant, Human and Spirit Peoples. The *mi’yep* inform the unit of references in each symbolic act of interaction with others. The *mi’yep* are embodied in the morphemes associated with each phoneme of meaningful sound, in each spoken word. The *mi’yep* are disseminated among the peoples through a particular learning style. And the *mi’yep* can be accessed and taught by elders and even by ethnographers, and can now be held in hand by you, the reader. The re-telling of the narrative oral traditions of Coyote and Salmon, of the *meymiym q’esp schint*, “he/she/they are telling stories and learning about the time before the human beings,” embedded with layers of *mi’yep*, render the world meaningful, and indeed, perpetuate it.

The shift is from viewing reality as composed of objects of some perceived permanency and an investment in autonomous “beliefs” about those objects, as mediated by the glass pane of dualism, to experiencing reality directly, as the transitory intersection of those participating. The shift is from viewing the Pythagorean Theorem as a precise mathematical extrapolation of a naturally occurring right angle to applying a symbolic formula,  $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$ , that brings such expressions into being, creating them in nature and in the Parthenon. The shift is from viewing Aristotelian forms as observable in material objects to experiencing ultimate reality as transcendent Platonic Forms or “ideas,” as the perennial “bones,” upon which all of nature is a



manifestation and reflection. The shift is from viewing the *meymiym q'esp schint* as explanations about the world, as attempts at “suspension of disbelief” about reality, to experiencing the *meymiym q'esp schint* as the world, as intensifying reality itself (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:175-77).

And critically, it is a shift from viewing reality devoid of spirit, to experiencing reality as infused with spiritual animation and vitality, with *snq-hepi-wes* “where the spirit lives, from horizon to horizon.” The words and songs are not only informed by the *mi'yep*, but can be inundated with spiritual power, with *súumesh* or *wéyekin*. Words that, when woven into the blanket of a story can *dasshússua* (“breaking with the mouth”), can “make the world.”

Head and Heart Knowledge are indeed contrasting ways of viewing and experiencing the world – very distinct epistemologies! On one hand it is a matter of viewing the world as made up of distinct objects, devoid of spirit, viewed from a position of hierarchy and dualism. On the other hand it is experiencing the world as transitory intersections of



Along the Clearwater. NEPE-HI-0959

interrelated participants, of equal kinsmen, imbued with spirit, an event in the making. You can glimpse these contrasting ways as you view or experience the particular rock formations along the slope of the Clearwater River, just as you enter the Nez Perce Reservation. They can be understood through a scientific understanding of geological processes occurring during a particular geochronological period in lineal time – a landscape full of “natural resources” to be acquired. And those same rock formations are experienced as created through the actions of the First Peoples, the Animal Peoples, such as Coyote and Snake, occurring in time immemorial, and perpetuated and renewed each time their stories are retold – a landscape endowed with “gifts to be shared,” having existence at the moment of engagement.

**The Rainbow.** To help my students get off the wooden bench and begin an appreciation of Heart Knowledge, of an existence not of discrete objects but of events of relationships, I have them think about an experience they all have had, think of a “rainbow” and then that of a

“tree.” I owe this teaching moment to a source far from the Tin Shed, to the British philosopher, Owen Barfield (1965:15), who first articulated for me another view of a “rainbow” and “tree.” While returning home to Colorado after completing an ethnographic project with the Apsáalooke during the late 1970s, I had the following experience that brought home what Barfield had asserted, rearticulated here.

I had just come out of the downpour as I sped south on the Interstate Highway. Except for the sun's radiance from the west, the sky remained dark blue. Then I saw it, bright and clear, not more than a quarter mile to the east. With all its vivid colors, the rainbow emerged from the ground, arced and re-entered. It was a perfect rainbow.

But the perfect rainbow had something special to offer that afternoon. As I continued south, the rainbow seemed to move with me. I passed a wooded area, then a deep coulee, now a ranch house; at each site the rainbow touched down and moved across. I slowed my car to sneak a picture with the camera; the arc of color slowed as well. I sped up; it sped up. A hill rose a few hundred feet from the car; the rainbow touched down so close that I could almost run my fingers through its vibrant colors. I soon realized that this was my own special rainbow. Did others see my rainbow traveling south with me, even as many other drivers traveled north? No one else would indeed see it as I saw it. Others who traveled that highway may also have seen a rainbow, even at the very same moment I saw mine, but their's were not mine. It was a gift to me alone. And I gave thanks.

So I asked myself, what makes up my “rainbow,” what are its constitute elements, its properties? Certainly the mist of the rain and the light of the sun are critical elements. But is not a certain interaction also necessary? The light must refract off the mist. And was there something else still needed? *I saw* that particular interaction of light and mist. Would a “rainbow” even exist without me physically perceiving it, without me seeing the light and mist in a particular relationship and angle with each other relative to myself? Would a “rainbow” even exist without me mentally conceiving of it, without a cognitive schema rendering it meaningful and significant, without *mi'yep*? And I asked myself, is not the experience of the “rainbow” more than these constitute properties, but fundamentally the interaction between them, coming into existence at the transitory intersection of all these component participants,

a dynamic event always in the making? My “rainbow” had existence not as an object in the sky but as a relationship of its many participants.

And as I drove on, a grove of trees made their appearance, with one tree in particular standing out on a knoll. And I asked myself, how fundamentally different is that transitory intersection I call “rainbow” from that which I call “tree”? Are not both the “raindrops” and “fibrous limbs and leaves of a tree” not made up of similar elemental, constitute properties, of what Barfield refers to as “particles,” just simply arranged differently, distinguished only in that one set of properties is on a much slower temporal scale – a slow growing tree? And I would ask my students, if a “rainbow” is the result on our interaction and particular relationship with raindrops and sunlight, would it not follow that a “tree” is also the result of our interaction and particular relationship with a hard, fibrous growth? And thus would not all of what you and I assume to be “reality” ultimately be composed of a myriad of participants in a complex web of transitory interactions with one another?

As a co-creator of the research we conduct, the essays we publish, the teaching we do, and learning we attempt, we must acknowledge our own role in what we help bring forth. As an engaged, participant learner, seeking an inside perspective, the researcher, teacher or student must acknowledge the importance of his or her own reflexivity. We are no longer separated by a “glass pane”; we have an impact on each moment of interaction, with each of the other participants. Indian etiquette dictates that upon meeting someone new, first a handshake than a pronouncement of one’s name and family lineage are exchanged between the once strangers. So too, as researchers, as writers, as teachers, as students we must clearly announce, through self-reflection in our writing and in our verbal dialogue, who we are in the presence of others, articulating what we bring to any interaction – our experiences, our backgrounds, our perspectives, our “names.” As we sat on the wooden bench and Alan redirected the questions back to me, if we are to research, publish, teach and learn about the lives of others we must begin closer at home, with ourselves. We must clearly announce our intentions. If we are to attempt to see from the perspective of our host, we must first be clear in our own preconceived notions and possible biases, we must take responsibility for our contributions to each unfolding intersection.

As a graduate student I remember being introduced to four “classic” ethnographies that illustrate precisely the importance of identifying one’s name in the text one researches and writes (Frey 1994:37-38). When life in the Mexican village of Tepoztlan was first described by the American ethnographer Robert Redfield (1930), it was a “folk life” characterized as cooperative and integrated, made up of content, well-adjusted people. When Oscar Lewis (1951) re-studied the same village a few years later, it was tension, schism, pervading fear, envy and distrust that characterized Tepoztlan. Had the some twenty years brought that much change? Or had Redfield and Lewis, however unwittingly, each brought something of their own respective cultural milieu into their studies? For Redfield, had it been the optimism of an age of prosperity in which “the War to end all wars” had just been fought and a League of Nations established? For Lewis, was it the tension and fear of an age of Cold War – the “Bomb” about to drop and global conflict to erupt at any moment?

In 1930, the British anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard initiated what would become the definitive study of the Nuer, an east African Nilotic people. The first in a series of works, *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people* (1940), quickly became a classic in the field. With the outbreak of World War II, Evans-Pritchard was forced to relinquish his research and return to England. While there, he became a Catholic. With the war concluded, Evans-Pritchard resumed his studies among the Nuer, and in 1956 published *Nuer Religion*. While describing the same people, albeit differing domains within the same culture, in comparing *The Nuer* with *Nuer Religion* it is as if two different writers were at work. In *The Nuer*, it was a humanity defined in terms of the material praxis and functional qualities of its social existence. While in *Nuer Religion*, it was the symbolic and ideational qualities that defined this humanity. Was it his own newly acquired religious sensitivities that allowed Evans-Pritchard to better appreciate Nuer spiritual sensibilities? And in the instances of Redfield and Lewis, could not the times from which each viewed the world have actually helped reveal differing aspects of the same village life in Tepoztlan? As an ethnographer, a writer, a teacher, a student, it is so critical we identify who we are, our family lineage, and greet others with our name – acknowledging what we contribute to the intersection of those participating. It’s an issue of reflexivity.

### Further Applications: Getting off the wooden bench

Perhaps it goes without saying, but there is an unequivocal relationship between the means to and the ends of something, between *how* we research and teach and *what* we research and teach. As previously implied throughout our discussion, if our goal is to access, understand and teach the American Indian experience and Heart Knowledge, would we not want to use Indian learning styles and Heart Knowledge ways of researching, learning, communicating and teaching it? The ethnographic methodologies used in the field, the format utilized in a publication, and the pedagogic techniques applied in the classroom, i.e., the *how*, should all correspond, to some degree, with the content we seek to understand, describe and disseminate, i.e., the *what*. For Alan and Cliff, to apply Head Knowledge “means” to Heart Knowledge “goals” would only result in misrepresentation and distortion. “You can sit back here and talk about it . . . but *not* really understand.” We must get off the well-worn wooden bench of Head Knowledge if we are to “see from the inside looking out” and “feel it,” and access Heart Knowledge. How does the adage go, “don’t try to force square pegs into round holes,” and if attempted, only distortion results.

With Heart Knowledge as our goal would we not want to apply ethnographic research methods that experientially engage the world of our host? As suggested previously we should consider techniques and approaches such as participant observation and interviewing, using intensity and snowball sampling techniques, seeking the perspective of the host, actively listening with our heart, acknowledging our contribution to the resulting participatory interactions and research, all done collaboratively. With all these techniques and considerations, developing a meaningful and trusting relationship with our host is essential. The research design would necessarily be qualitative in nature, seeking to authentically describe idiosyncratic aspects of our host’s Tin Shed. Those aspects could range from any number of topics focusing on narrative, aesthetic, religious, social, ecological, or political interactions (or other appropriate configuration of participants). The focus could be on a prominent individual, conveying important interactions with others throughout his or her life. The criteria for assessing such research would be based upon standards of authenticity, trustworthiness and appropriateness. Recognizing the unique make-up of the Tin Sheds of

differing hosts, of differing tribal communities, and given our own personal involvement in the research design and execution, comparative studies that seek nomothetic and generalizable analysis and conclusions would be difficult if not improper to conduct. And recognizing Heart Knowledge as our goal, while scientifically-oriented, quantitative research designs and methods with their measures of validity and reliability would be appropriately applied outside the Tin Shed, they would indeed only result in misrepresentation and distortion when applied within.

It's intriguing to extend these implications back through time, for the archaeologist. If the contemporary experience of the American Indian is generated by and the culmination of Heart ways of knowing, along with Euro-American historic contact influences, why would not the ancestors of Alan Old Horn and Cliff SiJohn of 500 years ago have not experienced a world totally predicated on Heart Knowledge? Would not the student of Alan's and Cliff's ancestors, my archaeological cousin, be informed with the understanding that it was Coyote who etched those rock formations along that bend in the river, as much as it was geological forces at work? And in what other archaeological subjects and endeavors might a Tin Shed appreciation have application? Might not the methodological tool kit of the archaeologist be greatly benefitted by the addition of the lessons of Heart Knowledge, applied as "ethnographic analogy," to the world of Alan's and Cliff's ancestors? Alan and Cliff would remind all of us not to remain seated on the wooden bench.

**Sampling.** Let me offer a further word on ethnographic sampling in this transitory world of convergent participant interactions. Whether our ultimate research objective is to create an internal report for a tribe's use or an academically-refereed publication for public dissemination, we would seek to re-create an intersection of the key participant "voices" that our collaborators consider most typical and appropriate of the interactive configuration in question, be it in any number of narrative, aesthetic, social, ecological, or political convergences. This re-creation is, of course, in the form of a written text, inclusive of the participant "voices" in question. We'll further consider the nature of this composed literary text and its implications momentarily. But for now we'll ask ourselves:

Who should be sampled? *Intensity sampling* seeks to select participants who are experiential experts and authorities on particular topics. These are individuals that have great

knowledge on the subject, are able to articulate that knowledge to you, and who have the time and willingness to participate in the collaboration. For example, to learn about the giveaways, I interviewed Alan Old Horn. These participants are identified through participant observations and inquiring from our primary host collaborators.

How do we get an insider's perspective? Who are the individuals that the community members themselves identify as the authorities? *Snowball sampling* is a form of intensity sampling which asks interviewees or participants who they think are the most informed and knowledgeable on a given subject. A great question to ask a collaborator upon completion of an interview on a particular topic is "who would you go to obtain further information or help on this or that topic"? Asking Alan about Apsáalooke "doctoring" led me to Tom Yellowtail.

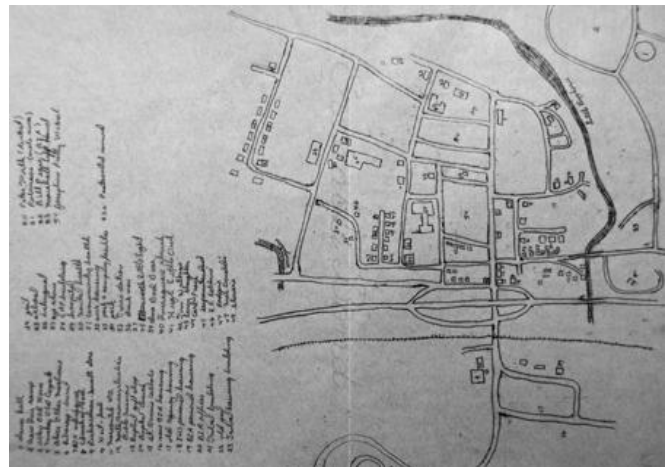
How do we identify the parameters and depth of a given convergence? Who typically participates in particular events or experiences, and who do not? Continue to sample a range of interviewees as long as new insights are obtained and until we reach a cohesive and consensus saturation of the event or experience in question. As sampling is done relative to constructing a text re-creating the event convergence in question, *saturation sampling* refers to the point at which any subsequent interviews do not reveal additional insights into or deviancies from the text, or are outside the event or experience domain in question. We have reached a point when the breadth, range and variation have been explored, as well as the depth and meaningful significance of the singular text is obtained. And as the construction of this text is a collaborative endeavor, the saturation point is certainly marked when a general consensus on these two previous questions are reached by all key participant hosts involved in the research project.

**Interviewing and Participant Engagement.** Given the parameters of who we should consult relative to the experiential domain of the topic at hand, our methodological focus would then be on accessing the ongoing intersections of the key participant "voices" of those experiences. My intent here is not to offer an in-depth exposé on research methods, but to fine-tune established ethnographic practices with a few remarks given an Indigenous sensibility.

We would rely upon listening techniques such as semi-structured interviewing, with plenty of open-ended and follow-up questions (Frey and the Schjitsu'umsh 2001:272-79). Enter

the interview in all humility and respect, as if a child swaddled in your host's blanket. Prime the start of an interview with a key word or imagery from the experience in question, asking for help in understanding it, and then let your interviewee guide the subsequent conversation and exchange. Keep listening intently, with a degree of eye contact; acknowledge with a nod of your head when you understand. If a response is not clear, ask follow-up questions that are indeed contingent on what the interviewee last said. Keep continuity in the flow of the dialogue. There is nothing more disconcerting and disrespectful than right on the heels of an elder's comment to interject with a new, disjointed question. Keep the conversation on-going, with follow-up interviews. Continuing the conversation and showing that you care about your interviewee's story can help build trust in your relationship with him or her, and typically results in opening up the quality and depth of subsequent shared knowledge.

Building that trust from the very being of the interview process is so essential. As mentioned previously, "complete sincerity and honesty, no hidden agendas" must mark your relations with your hosts and interviewees, as they "know what's in the heart." It was this sort of open honesty, imbued with a certain level of youthful naivety, which characterized my first series of interviews with the Apsáalooke that summer of 1974. I had decided to jump into my project by first going to the older neighborhoods of Crow Agency, walking the streets, going house to house, meeting folks indiscriminately, and seeing what interviews might result, a completely *random sample*.



What better way, I thought, for people to become more comfortable with seeing this stranger running about their community, and for me, so poor at remembering names, to begin recognizing and greeting others. To further help make the unfamiliar more familiar, I sketched out a map of these residences, along with other important locations and landmarks.

My "street walking" resulted in visiting over a dozen households, at various times of the day. I introduced myself, my project and its intended outcome, which being a project that



sought to educate the white Indian Health Service doctors, was always a hit, though talking about illness was not. In each and every instance I was welcomed into the home, and, in fact, expected to join in whatever the family members might be engaged in at the time. While a perfect stranger in so many ways, this twenty-four-year-old white boy was invited, indeed, expected to sit with the family and partake of their afternoon meal; a healthy enough city boy, I was expected to join the other men out back and help stack bales of hay; a stranger who indeed wanted to listen, I was allowed to see a Native American Church leader's most cherished sacred objects, including the contents of a small brass pill box, his "Chief Peyote Button," though not for consumption, I was asked to pull it out and there on the underside was pasted a small picture of Jesus; and a red-blooded enough young fellow, I was expected to join in with a host as he shared remembrances of the "good old days at college," along with what was left in his bottle of whisky. My street walking technique opened a diverse set Apsáalooke doors.

It has been this honesty, in consort with collaboration and application, which has dominated the tone of all my subsequent interviewing, be it with projects with the Apsáalooke, Bitterroot Salish, Kalispel, Kootenai, Nimíipuu, Schitsu'umsh, Warm Spring or Wasco. In all the years of conducting ethnographic interviewing, this stranger to so many communities has always found doors opening, warm greetings waiting, and wonderful conversations resulting. But in all cases I needed to be up front with my intentions, as people know what's in your heart.

As virtually all my collaborative projects have been defined as and focused on rather broad ethnographies, inclusive of varied relationships and transitory confluences, involving young and old, male and female participants, it's been particularly important for me to seek out representation of the women's voice, as well as the voice of the youth (as illustrated for example in Frey 1987; Frey, Apria and Yellowtail 1995; and Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001). As a Euro-American white male I have had to deliberately get out of my comfort zone, as well as the normative confines of male role expectations and boundaries as defined by the local community. My sampling techniques certainly helped lead the way to some wonderful interviews with treasured elders such as Susie Yellowtail (Apsáalooke), Agnes Vanderburg (Bitterroot Salish), Mari Watters and Mylie Lawyer (Nimíipuu), Lucy Finley and Mariane Hurley Nomee (Schitsu'umsh), and Rose Spino Moran (Warm Springs). But I have also been receptive

to participant engagements with these women in their daily lives, when appropriate and invited. With Mariane and her sisters, we spent a day together with our *pitses*, searching for and digging camas; we spent another afternoon together in a “quilting bee,” with some wonderfully insightful discussion on the landscape of the women’s world; I’ve brought fresh pies (from Safeway) for the morning meal, then prayed with Mariane throughout the night at the Jump Dance. By engaging Mariane’s world more comprehensively, each event in relation to others, the varied intersections are rendered a little more meaningful (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001). I could not have completed these ethnographies without these women’s guided assistance. While helping clean up the kitchen and doing some dishes with the “designated cooks” can put you in the brunt of a joke, “he does women’s work,” it can also be useful as an “ice breaker” as you introduce yourself prior to an interview, and certainly appropriate for the ambiguously defined “ethnographer.”

It’s also been important to engage participants much younger than me, done through interviews and in participant observations. I had the most incredible series of engagements with the ten-year-old Theron “Mish” Spino (Warm Spring), along with his father and grandparents, exploring his world of hunting and fishing, of the excitement of his first deer kill and first salmon catch and the subsequent giveaways, of his school and baseball adventures, of the thrill of his first home run, and of his powwow days and Sweat Lodge experiences (Frey and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs 2003). Then a few years later I was with Mish when we experienced the sudden, unexpected death and then outpouring of sorrow during the ensuing wake and burial of his beloved Grandpa, Rob Moran.

When invited by your host, participate in the experiential world you seek to understand. Place the emphasis of the “participant-observations” on the participation. Don’t remain on the wooden bench, viewing from afar. But also be prepared and willing to jump in. I remember being invited, as an ethnographer, to attend an Apsáalooke Tobacco Society Adoption, an infrequent event and one typically not publicized and open to the public. New members were to be inducted into this society, members responsible for the care of this sacred plant that affects the health and wellbeing of the entire Tribe. But as cameras and tape recorders were not allowed in the lengthy and intricate ceremony, my skills in re-member were certainly put to

the test. While my level of participation was that of an observer, my eyes and ears took in as much as possible, my thoughts kept quick pace with the sequence of unanticipated events rolling past me. I had not even remembered reading my Robert Lowie account of this traditional ceremony to provide a guide for what I might expect that afternoon (Lowie 1935). As the ceremony continued, with tipis erected in a certain pattern, regalia worn by some, giveaways held, certain people the recipients of the blankets, and numerous talks given, all in Apsáalooke, I formed mental categories of behaviors and interactions, building lists in my mind of what fell under each heading, with new headings popping up and others being merged – a mental, albeit very unfamiliar, puzzle. But upon returning to my apartment that evening and opening the blank pages of my notebook, I surprised myself. The detail and sequencing of the events of that afternoon seemed to spew forth faster than I could write them down. Being attentive, to the minuscule as well as the big picture, is a critical ethnographic skill. Of course, these sorts of recollections of extraordinary events, as insightful as they are, should always be cross-referenced with interviews with actual participants, the resulting ethnographic understandings tremendously enhanced and modified as a result.

Typically each winter my graduate students and I have been invited to share in Cliff SiJohn's family Jump Dance. He wants to offer my students the opportunity to learn firsthand of the "Indian ways, and hear true heart talk," and, if comfortable, they too can join in the prayers. There are a few years Cliff prefers to "close the dance" to the students, allowing family members greater intimacy and focus in their particular prayers that year. When we arrive, Cliff greets us into the Longhouse with a warm handshake, a look in the eye and the words, "welcome home." The students can remain seated throughout the evening and morning hours, viewing the prayers and songs shared by others, from the comfort of their chairs. But they are also welcomed off their chairs and onto the "floor," as "true heart talk" is shared and *súmmesh* songs sing, welcomed to dance counter-clockwise in prayer with other family members. There is a fundamentally different "feeling" and appreciation you get when your entire being is a little more in rhythm with that song and dance, in consort with your host. You travel a little farther inside the Tin Shed.

But it is also critical to know the line of appropriate participation, a line established by your host, and your own reflexive conscience and professional standards. We should be mindful when applying our research methods, cognizant of the tremendous ethical responsibility we shoulder, balanced by our desire to enter the Tin Shed and fully engage in its transitory intersections, its web of converging relations. The web can be alluring. Continual dialogue with your most trusted teachers, perhaps members of our host community's "cultural committee," on these shifting and often blurred lines of proper ethnographic participation can provide guidance and assurance as we travel within the Tin Shed.

While continual guidance from a culture committee and critically your hosts can help steer your way through the unfamiliar, there will always be the unexpected challenge, the risk that an ethnographer must face, as best one can. In the turbulence other doors within the Tin Shed are revealed and opened, new understandings made known. Such can be the case when you begin developing close and endearing relationships with particular families, and you then find yourself in the middle of an intra or inter-family rivalry. Consider the following three situations, and something else each shares in common as well. As we engage our field work there will always be unanticipated events that necessitate a quick yet poised response.

One year while residing with Tom and Susie Yellowtail, they took off for a planned trip to Wisconsin and asked if I'd take charge of the household in their absence. "Look after the place while we're gone; stay in our bedroom." I was still relatively new to the family, and a few of the grandkids were far less accepting. One night, well after midnight, I got a call, a "collect-call," asking if I'd accept charges. Half a sleep, I automatically replied, "no," and hung up. Sometime later I heard the breaks of a car screech and car doors bang shut, with many steps marching to the front door. Before I know it, some of the boys, with knives in hand, were ready to "do business." They were angry in so many ways with me. I am sure having had too much to drink brought out the worst in them. From our little homestead, near Wyola, yet that night far out into the countryside, I never before spoke with such calm and reassurance, addressing their frustrations head on, and, in the process, eventually disarming their intentions.

I had just finished with a wonderful interview in Pryor, a rather isolated community on the west side of the Crow Reservation, and was on the long drive back home to Wyola, a drive

on a highway few traveled. Some miles into the drive I saw a little distance ahead of me a pickup truck parked along the shoulder of the road, with several folks standing about beside it. As I approached I could see they had a flat tire and seemed to be having trouble changing it. Being the Good Samaritan, I of course stopped and offered to help. These were several Northern Cheyenne, and I soon realized, all inebriated. Some were less concerned about the flat tire as they were with their rather poor shooting at some illusive target out in the field with their rifle. And they all were boasting of soon “getting some Crow!” Not a good idea to have stopped. I had never ever changed a tire as quickly as I did that moment and was soon on my way, never identifying my destination or involvement with the Apsáalooke.

During Crow Fair one year, I was invited into the tipi camp of someone I knew, but not well, a prominent man in the community. I soon realized he’d been drinking and was pretty intoxicated, but only after he had invited me into his tipi for a “talk.” His talk soon turned belligerent, as he wanted to “beat the crap out of me.” It was only when his sons come to my rescue and escorted me from his camp that I left without a blow struck. His intensive rivalry with the Yellowtail family meant I too was a target of his enmity.

Rivalries and risks can take on many levels, and come in many forms, with alcohol and addiction far too often exacerbating a bad situation. The unanticipated encounters we face in the field must, most assuredly, be responded to with some degree of finesse and quick action that limits harm to members of our host’s community (it doesn’t hurt to have some mechanical prowess as well). As a consequence we should also be receptive to possible insights that await.

I have always found it very informative to spend the necessary time transcribing my own field notes, my interviews with elders and my participations in community events, and certainly, the unplanned ones as well. Time consuming and to be done as soon after the experience as possible, as remembrances can slip away, the act of deliberately reiterating the words of an elder onto paper, of capturing an intonation and purposeful pause, and the act of attempting to catch the details, subtle gestures, as well as grand gestalts of social interactions of the many participants, can allow further insights into their meanings and implications. By re-engaging in the experience of an interview or participation, albeit through your imagination, new voices might be heard, new nuances of a word understood, connections with other associated

intersections made. And you now have a tool prepared for the ethnographic coding process you will soon commence. But as we will soon consider in a discussion of literacy in contrast with orality, be cognizant that you are mediating the Tin Shed experiential world through a medium that has the potential to distort and misrepresent. We must be precautionary so as not to unbridle the power of literacy as we engage Heart Knowledge.

**Symbols and Spiritual Efficacy.** So we continue our journey into the Tin Shed, having conducted some insightful interviews and participated in some intriguing events, all in consort with our hosts. We now hold vivid the remembrances of those encounters, as well as their transcribed texts on the hard drive of our computers and perhaps printed on the pages of our notebooks. But yet these remembrances and texts are likely so seemingly random and chaotic, disjointed all, without reference points, without meaning. Consider the nine vignettes peppered throughout the first half of this essay, texts from interviews, oral traditions and participant engagements. As I've asked myself at this re-occurring juncture in my own research, how do I begin to make sense of these rich and varied experiences? How do we begin to interpret these texts? And I ask the question: where should I start? Of course the interviewing and participations are likely to continue, as the question just posed is often asked just as one first steps into the Tin Shed. Making sense of it all is not a neat sequential, step-by-step methodical process; there is no designated starting point per se.

As we engage and seek to understand the various transitory intersections of those participating, let's consider the nature of the critical and elemental unit which encapsulates and conveys the voices of those participating. These are the essential units that are embedded in and make up the transcripts resulting from our interviews and participant engagements. And if we've observed, listened and engaged with any degree of competence, these are the essential units that should access and make known the bones of the stories and the *mi'yep* of the Animal Peoples and of the elders. These are the critical units facilitating the various communications and transformations reflected in each of the nine vignettes. Strung together with others, these are the units with which we will seek to weave into a fine garment and construct a "special kind of text." It is this special kind of text that will be eventually scrutinized and evaluated by our elder hosts before we dare disseminate our research to the public. The fundamental unit I am

speaking of is the “symbol.” Let me propose a way of making sense of the “seemingly random and chaotic,” a “starting point” (albeit an ever shifting point), revolving around a focus on symbols. It is a method of ethnographic coding of the assembled and varied interviews, participations, oral traditions, and even archival materials, which begins the interpretation.

While much more nuanced than suggested here, a rather generic definition of “symbol” will be offered (Frey 1994:14-18). A symbol can be defined as a specific *unit of reference* that refers to a particular *referent*. The unit of reference can be an object, a behavior or a sign. The referent can consist of a concept, process, behavior or certainly an object itself. At its basic level, a symbol is simply something that stands for something else. In our story of the Rainbow, the unit of reference is the printed word on a page, “rainbow,” while the referent is that arc of vibrant color, a phenomenon, suspended in the not so distant sky. Five critical elements of a symbol are identified and briefly elaborated here.

Symbols presuppose *displacement*. The unit of reference refers to something that is beyond and not confined to the temporal and spatial immediacy of the person who is symbolizing. The word “rainbow” can refer to something separate from the direct experience of seeing a rainbow. While you may have an image of that something in your mind, that image is not dependent on you directly experiencing it in the phenomenal world as you refer to it. The implications are far reaching. As a consequence of displacement, the human is forever free from the constraints of what is experienced and defined in the immediate and can contemplate distant places and times to create an endless inventory of images, meanings and participations.

Symbols entail *meaning*. Anchored to any symbol is significance. The meaning associated with “rainbow” might be the anticipation of good fortune or the possibility of finding “a pot of gold” or simply the understanding of the colors of the spectrum formed by the refraction of the sun's rays on raindrops. While displacement allows the human to expand beyond the immediate, the meaning attached to symbols gives significance to that expanded world. Theoretically, you may never have personally experienced a rainbow for yourself, but you may have an understanding of its meaning as the result of the meaning embedded in a story's symbols of it. The meaningful world is thus limited only by what the human can imagine. As ethnographers, it will be our challenge to discover the meaning embedded in the

various experiences and texts presented through our research. It is within these many symbols of our interviews and participatory engagements that the bones and the *mi'yep* we seek are to be discovered, in the perennial archetypes established by the First Peoples.

Symbols can be transmitted in time and through space, i.e., they can be *learned* and *shared*. You may never have experienced rainbow, but you can now learn something about it through the meaning-endowed symbols of a story. The rainbow may have occurred long ago, but you can know it in the present. The individual human is not limited to the sum total of his or her direct, personal and idiosyncratic experiences, but is potentially able to be inclusive of the collective experiences of an entire human society and its experiences. With great skills, we can gain access to much of the meaning of experiences quite distinct from our own, we can, in fact, know something of what's inside the Tin Shed; all because symbols can be shared and learned.

The meaning attached to the symbol is autonomous of and not bound by the actual unit of reference, i.e., any given symbol can refer to virtually anything. The meaning of a symbol is quite *arbitrary*. The phonetic spoken word "rainbow" can refer to the anticipation of good luck or it can refer to evil and the devil or, for some, the word may have absolutely no meaning at all. There is nothing innate within the unit of reference that would necessitate and bind the word "rainbow" to a certain meaning. It is this quality of arbitrariness that distinguishes a symbol from a sign. The meaning associated with a sign is tightly bound to its unit of reference. For instance, to cup one's hands and draw them to one's mouth is a unit of reference indicative of drinking or thirst. But, as a symbol, the word "cup" can refer to a container or possibly to the act of drinking or to a virtually endless assortment of meanings.

As a function of this arbitrariness, any given symbol can have an assortment of differing meanings and multiple significances, differing referents, and that assortment can occur simultaneously. Conversely, any given experiential referent can have multiple and differing units of reference, differing symbols for the same thing. And the processes of creativity and imagination are made possible. New, never before conceived of meanings can be brought forth. With the spontaneity of creativity and imagination, language is rendered "open-ended." But also because of this arbitrariness, the ethnographic coding of the symbols of a story text is made all that more difficult. The meanings of symbols, especially symbols originating out of the



experiences different from our own, are never overt or explicit, and are always susceptible to misinterpretation.

Symbols define the parameters of and assign the meaning to the phenomenal world of objects and of images, i.e., that which symbols refer to is *brought forth* and *created*. The meaning of an object or image does not rest in that object or image alone, but is the result of a complex interaction involving the object or image, human sensory perception, and human mental conception. Conceptualization, in turn, is influenced by the particular cultural and historical paradigms of the specific human who is conceptualizing. We are reminded of the question: what constitutes the phenomenon, “rainbow”? Certainly the mist of the rain and the light of the sun, physical particles, but also a human perceiving of that particular interaction of light and mist, a physical perception, and a human conceiving of that particular interaction, a cognitive category.

And as we engage the particular symbols emanating out of the Tin Shed, added to this complex interaction of referents, perceptions and conceptions are spiritual meaning and animation – are the *mi’yep* and *súumesh*. Tin Shed referents have the potential to be infused with and an extension of all that which is spiritually animated and significant, all that which is most real. In being linked to the *mi’yep* and *súumesh*, to what can be called “the sacred,” what is normally veiled and hidden, spiritual symbols have an ability to reveal what is most real and access what is most powerful. Hence in the Apsáalooke assemblage of verbal symbols, of *dashússua*, when a name is spoken, a vow stated, a story told, the world is brought forth and made. It is, of course, in this quality that Head and Heart symbols are fundamentally distinguished. As I suggested, the shift is from viewing the oral narratives, the *meymiym q’esp schint* as explanations about the world, to experiencing the *meymiym q’esp schint* as the world, continually unfolding as the words are spoken.

I am reminded of the vividly poignant story shared by N. Scott Momaday (1970). He relates how he was working on the closing passages in what would become his Pulitzer Prize winning *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969). Late one night, he was dwelling on an old Kiowa tale and on a time far removed from his own. It was 1833, under a night sky of meteor showers, and he imagined and wrote, so completely, about a “living memory” of an old woman,

Ko-sahn. Absorbed in the words, Momaday spoke her name aloud, and there, stepping right out of the language, standing right before him, was the “ancient one-eyed woman.” And they commenced in a most astonishing conversation!

By extension, the spoken *dasshússua* symbols of the Apsáalooke are not unlike those engraved in and form the character of a painted wooden mask, as donned by an Iroquois *Face* dancer or a Kwakiutl *Hamatsa* dancer. And while dancing the story of these Spirit People, the dancer is transformed into the Spirit People, the Schitsu’umsh Jump Dancer into a Blue Jay. The spoken *dasshússua* symbols are not unlike the distinct patterns of sand and color applied by a Diné (Navajo) healer as he lays out a “dry painting” in the floor of a ritual hogan, in it embodying the *Yei*, the Holy Ones of the Creation Time, imbued with *Hózhó*, “beauty and harmony.” In the ritual act of sitting upon the *Hózhó* symbols, on the dry painting, the *Yei* swirling about and a patient’s illness is purged, a healing order restored. The Apsáalooke Medicine Bundle and its sacred objects are laid out so precisely on the floor, channeling the *baaxpée* from the Creator and Medicine Fathers, through the Eagle-feather fan into the patient, pulling out the affliction, tossing it to the east with a flick of the feathers.

At this point of our inquiry, I would like to pause a moment and reflect on any insights that the nature of Tin Shed symbols might have on a better appreciation of their own meaning and efficacy. As you might continue to be asking, among other questions, “Really Frey, how is it that a special cluster of symbols – the words of prayer and the ritual movement of Eagle-feathers – can draw water from a Tree?” While having participated in the Tin Shed for almost four decades, having personally witnessed so many mysteries, so many remarkable transformations and healings, and having sat with so many great teachers, I claim no certainty, no firm understanding of the dynamics of this process. I have described for you some of the ontological foundations upon which this world is distinguished from others, and we will soon consider some of the defining qualities of orality, which will hopefully render the Tin Shed landscape a little more accessible. While I know it is true and I have experienced it as real, there remains an uncertainty regarding just how it all works. Perhaps the desire to resolve this ambiguity is a function of my Head Knowledge mind at work. Nevertheless and worth reflecting upon are the insights offered by Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). He was the renowned interpreter

of religious experiences, from the Indigenous Australian, to the Asian Hindu, from the Ancient Egyptian, to the Abrahamic Muslim. Perhaps he can guide us a little farther into the Tin Shed.

While a prolific writer and mentor to numerous scholars, let me offer but a glimpse of Eliade's eloquent enunciations. For Eliade, reality and the religious experience start with the sacred (1954; 1958; 1959). The sacred is understood as having *being*, has existence, as having *power*, the animating force to create the world, and as having *reality*, what is most meaningful, providing a "celestial archetype" emanating from "supraterrestrial planes." The sacred oscillates in, around and through two interrelated ubiquitous transcendent spheres of existence: the cosmic center, the *axis mundi*, and the primordial time of the Gods and Heroes, *in illo tempore, ab origine*. The "religious symbols" used in ceremonies and pilgrimages, in the oral narratives and songs, in the dances, regalia and masks, in the temples and atop mountains are the languages of the sacred, of the Gods and Spirits. These revered symbols are derived from the sacred, their source and inspiration, while also a revelation of it, revealing what is normally veiled and hidden in everyday existence. When humans participate in and use these religious symbols, in their rituals and storytellings, communication is re-established with the *axis mundis* and *in illo tempore*, and the sacred shines through, its meaning and power, its existence flows forth into the world, materialized, in what Eliade calls a "hierophany." Reality is manifested, derived from the transcendent, reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the cave.

But the use and application of the religious symbols must be deliberate; as Eliade insists, they must be aligned with and parallel to the sacred archetype. The rites of initiation, the world renewal ceremonies, the re-tellings of the creation accounts must repeat the perennial sacred if that sacred is to spew forth and into the lives of the participants. Are not the Sundance Lodge and the behavior of its dances, the *Ashkísshe*, in replication of the cosmic Center, as the water flows from the Tree? Are not all the bones of the primordial Creation included in the re-telling, as the First People swirl about and the blue in the lake perpetuated, as the world is renewed? At a Jump Dance aligned with the *axis mundis* and *in illo tempore*, is not Cliff's "welcome home" as much a pronouncement of family inclusion awaiting my graduate students, as anticipatory of a hierophany about to shine through? A hierophany shining

through when aligned with the bones? In response to our uncertainties, is not Eliade worth reflecting upon?

To conclude our cursory consideration of symbols, we would thus acknowledge that symbols ultimately liberate the human from any temporal and spatial constraints, and allow us to live in an expanded world fabricated by the participation of its many Peoples. From the minute and seemingly insignificant to the most grandiose and pervasive, all of human thought, activity, and expression are invariably symbolic. A glance of the eye or the spatial proximity with another person, the particular clothing worn, the numbers of a mathematician, the images of an artist, the design of a building, the spoken word, the written word, the oral narratives, the songs and feathers, the special kind of symbols found in the Tin Shed – all are clusterings of symbols woven into fine tapestries of lived experiences.

**Coding and Interpretation.** As we travel within the Tin Shed, ethnographic coding is understood the process of attempting to identify the characteristic and essential symbols of that landscape, inlaid with the perennial “bones” and *mi’yep*. These are the key symbols embedded within the vast assemblage of larger symbolic clusterings, derived from our interviews and participations, as well as previously printed texts, from the archival record (Frey 1994:33-42). Coding entails a process of triangulating amongst and between these varied assemblages and clusterings the quintessential and recurrent symbols, of a deep listening and being attentive, of rendering an interpretation.

As we do so we are reminded that our goal throughout remains to “see it from the *inside* looking out,” and avoid the indiscriminate and unwitting imposition of your own perspective into the mix, avoid being ethnocentric. As we’ve considered with the examples of Robert Redfield and Oscar Lewis in Tepoztlan and with Evans-Pritchard’s work with the Nuer, as you begin engaging in the experiences of others, we must know something of our own experiences. We must acknowledge our “name.” To properly interpret another's stories we need to be aware of our own; otherwise their stories simply become extensions of our own as we inadvertently cloud our descriptions with our own stories and perspectives. As we engage in someone else’s landscape, engage in our own, engage in reflexivity.

Borrowing from the folklorist Alan Dundes, he points the way that can assist in our coding of the symbols (Dundes 1966). Dundes distinguishes three key components in this process: the text, the context and the texture of a symbolic cluster. The *text* refers to the identification of the symbolic meanings engrained within a symbolic clustering, e.g., what is actually being said and referred to by the key symbols. The *context* refers to the when and where a text is being presented, e.g., in what social setting and for what purpose is a story told. The context requires an appreciation of the entire experiential configuration within which the story is set, through time and among spatial social relations. The *texture* refers to how the text is being presented, e.g., what is the style of the writing or the techniques of the telling, what are the interactions with the readers or the listeners, what are the linguistic components and structures. As we've suggested, *how* something is stated unequivocally affects *what* something means. The coding techniques which follow are predicated on the distinctions between the text, texture and context of a symbolic clustering.

*Text.* The texts of symbolic clusterings are as varied as there are points of intersection in the human experiential interrelational dynamic. They certainly include oral and written narratives, such as the stories re-told aloud or transcribed on the pages of a book by a Nimípuu elder. Clusterings include song traditions, as well as visual arts, clothing styles, and even architectural structures, such as a Schitsu'umsh tule-mat lodge, Apsáalooke tipi or Hopi ceremonial kiva. Behavioral and ceremonial expressions, from rites of passage and pilgrimages to the etiquette exhibited while eating a meal, are certainly symbolic expressions. Witness the rich meaning as exemplified in the actions of Apsáalooke Sundancers or pilgrims to a Medicine Wheel. Along with your own re-remembered experiences in the field, consult your written research notes, your verbatim transcriptions of interviews, and detailed descriptions of participant engagements; all are texts. Don't ignore past archival records, from personal letters and journals, to governmental and church records, to ethnographic monographs written by our Boasian grandparents. These are texts, albeit written accounts, of symbolic clusterings, embedded with meaning and significance, available to be "read" and coded as texts.

As you approach any given text, first engage it for "pleasure," from a non-analytical perspective. If a narrative text is being considered, attempt to imagine yourself within the

story, as one of the characters. Listen for the voice of the “storyteller” within the story. Familiarize yourself with the landscape of the story. Who are the central characters of the text? How would you characterize their actions? What is the storyline? Are there any overt or subtle lessons to be learned from their actions?

*Context.* Then re-engage the text, this time more thoroughly and carefully, paying attention to both the intricate details and specific references, as well as to the “big picture.” It's easier to identify the particular trees if you know which forest you're traveling. Attempt to see the gestalt of the text, not just the individual units of reference. What may be the larger implications of what is being referred to in the text? To successfully code a text, we must have an appreciation of its larger context. In considering the context of a given text pay attention to how that text is rooted within a larger aesthetic, economic, geographic, historical, religious, philosophical, political, psychological, and/or social association of influences and interconnections. Attempt to identify what type or types of contexts the text might be framed within. When and where is the text likely to be found?

*Texture.* Observe and view, and listen and hear the texture of a text. Engage not only *what* is being conveyed, but *how* it is conveyed. As you *read* a written text, *listen* to an oral narrative, or *view* an artistic image, each has its own set of expressive techniques and considerations. How does each form of expression affect the meaning of the text? Certainly *how* something is stated is inextricably related to *what* something means. For those texts which emanated out of an oral-based tradition, they should be accessed by first listening to them. Have another person read those particular sections aloud to you, paying attention to the pauses and word phrasing within those texts. An oral performance will help enunciate implicit meanings and significances not dedicated in a reading of the same text. In the next section we will consider more fully the nature and implications of orality and literacy in the symbolic clusterings in and outside the Tin Shed.

Throughout the entire coding process, apply our definition of “symbol.” Attempt to identify and isolate the key symbols. Ask yourself what meanings and images are being referred to in each individual phrase and passage. Ask yourself how the referent meaning of a specific passage relates to the other images and meanings throughout the entire text. Within

any given text, you may find a variety of seemingly disparate units of reference that, in fact, refer to a singular, affiliated meaning or image. Often a related image or symbol will be reiterated throughout a text but in a variety of ways in order to convey a specific common meaning. Look for the repetitions, in words and phrases that are repeated and reiterated; they can point to an underlying *mi'yep*. In addition, key units of reference are often presented as contrasting pairs or opposites. Symbolic meaning is frequently brought forth and conveyed as juxtaposed components of binaries. For example, the unit of reference, "left," is made meaningful by contrasting it with "right," or in the examples "female" with "male," and "evil" with "good," and so on. Look for these paired contrasts.

As you re-engage, comparing and triangulating multiple and differing texts – varied interviews, observations, participations, archival, etc. – you will begin to see re-occurring patterns of key symbols. They may begin to "jump out" of the texts. They will help point the way to the underlying bones and *mi'yep*. As you identify these key terms or symbols from initial story texts, begin to build a list of "code" words or labels that mark the varied ways any given symbol might be linked with and expressed in other groupings of symbols. Keep in mind that your initial coding labels are potentially temporary, subject to modification and change as you engage additional texts. Continue to apply your coding system to additional texts associated with the domain of research you are investigating. Are the coding labels applicable and assist you in revealing the patterns of underlying bones? Do some of your coding labels need to be modified, even discarded, and new ones brought forth? Re-access, re-apply.

Most important of all to the coding process is to re-engage the text a second and third time. Leave the text for another activity. Return to the text with fresh eyes. Try listening to a text as you read the printed text aloud. Dwell in the text. Gain some perspective. Coding is accomplished only after a great effort. And most telling, to code is to allow the words of the stories to be lifted from the pages of the text and for you to swirl and dance with them. Listen for the words of the storyteller within the story. Listen for Coyote's voice. "Take a walk in the hills, to the mountain, amongst the trees of the forest, and be attentive," as Cliff SiJohn so often has said to me, "listen to the wind rustling among the leaves." Coding necessitates an intimacy with the characters within the story text, traveling with them through their territory.

While working among the Nimípuu and Schitsu'umsh one of the key coded symbolic clusters, an interpreted *mi'yep*, was encapsulated in the Nimípuu term, *té-k'e*, "to give and share with others," and, while not identified in a specific Indigenous term, widely expressed in the Schitsu'umsh behavior, "an ethic of sharing." This shared symbolic cluster was consistently and pivotally engrained in the narrative oral traditions of both communities, exemplified wonderfully in the Schitsu'umsh stories of Crane, Rabbit and Jack Rabbit and, the tribal creation account of, Chief Child of the Yellow Root. It's the pattern that dominates how the Animal Peoples, such as the Deer and Salmon, interact with their human hunter and fisherman. In turn, this essential cluster is manifested throughout a myriad of interrelational behaviors, from the actions of root gatherers and deer hunters and how they distributed the camas or deer meat, to the policies of the Benewah Medical Center welcoming all in the community to their services, be they Indian or non-Indian, to how gaming profits are distributed, with large lump sums given to needy local schools, "without strings attached." And among the Apsáalooke, as we've witnessed, such revealing and pervasively engrained symbolic clusters, among the key codes were *dasshússua* – "breaking with the mouth," *baaxpée* – spiritual power, *ashammaléaxia* – "as driftwood lodges." They have all jumped off the pages of my field notes and experiences, unlocking the varied doors within the Tin Shed.

**Orality and Text Construction.** It is indeed a special kind of text that is being constructed, this symbolic clustering, this transitory intersection of those participating. Tin Shed texts ultimately emanate out of and are conveyed through the *oral* tradition. So let us look more closely at the dynamics and implications of orality itself, of the "voices" of story, song and dance, of the special kind of symbols, as we attempt to access and disseminate Heart Knowledge (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:141-58; Frey 2004). And for our discussion here, we will use as a point of reference and illustration the dynamic entailed in the narrative oral traditions, within the context of the spoken native languages.

As we glimpsed while considering an Indigenous learning style, the elders certainly were skilled in incorporating various techniques of storytelling as part of their instructional pedagogy (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:147-54; Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001:188-204). These techniques included an array of skills and attributes, such as the inclusion of explicit references



to particular locations, to rivers and mountains, to a rock outcropping, and the use of deictics in the narrative texts, phrases like, “here” and “there,” of anchoring the unfolding story lessons to a specific place and landscape. Raconteurs were skilled in using deliberate pauses and voice intonation, and in complementing their auditory communications with body language and hand gesturing. Lawrence Aripa, the well-respected Schitsu’umsh storyteller, would love to project differing voices for each of the characters of his stories, and especially delighted in the deep burly voice of the Creator chastising Coyote for some misdeed. I remember listening to Tom Yellowtail share his favorite stories, as he would synchronize the telling with use of traditional Indian sign language. The story would be heard through voice and vividly seen expressed in hand movements. There would be moments when Tom ceased voicing a segment of the story, though continuing, and I wouldn’t miss a beat, staying engaged through his precise use of this visually graphic language. This multi-dimensional storytelling session was thus a little more akin to a theatrical performance, a play acted out by a raconteur, to Shakespeare enacted, than its script simply though eloquently recited.

The stories were also typically inlaid with patterned phrase and scene repetitions, helping build tension within the storyline, emphasizing key points, and assisting in the remembering of the varied and lengthy narratives, a mnemonic devise to keep the “bones” together (an element not lost in the construction of this essay). It would take Coyote five successive attempts at tricking the Swallow sisters before breaking the damn at Celilo Falls, with each attempt fully described, until succeeding in releasing the Salmon upriver – three and five being the typical pattern for such scene repetitions in Plateau stories. For the Pend d’Oreille of Montana, the extensive use of repetition would contribute to the full cycle of Coyote narratives, with all his adventures and misadventures in going upriver, starting at Celilo Falls on the Columbia, taking three full winter nights to complete the re-telling (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:150). Indeed, the stories were re-membered, never memorized, word-for-word, as that was too “rigid and dead,” too much like a cut branch of dogbane. The appreciation of the re-telling as “re-membered” is so appropriate. There is a re-uniting, a renewed membership, a re-kindling of the kinship with all those within the unfolding story, alive with Coyote and Burnt Face, and with fellow listeners.

Along with other techniques, each elder might prefer and rely on a certain set of these skills, differing one storyteller's style from that of the next. While varied in technique and style, the intent of each storyteller was always the same – to draw the listener into the story as a participant. As a re-membered story, the raconteur could freely adjust a pause here, adding a repetition there, and giving an inflection to that phrase, even adding a phrase or two of local color and relevance, to better engage the listeners. As the elders have said, the story is a “living being,” a “person,” and with each re-telling, the story is brought to life (Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001:191). It was each raconteur's responsibility to animate the “bones” with “muscle and flesh,” with texture that is felt, applying his or her own particular style and set of techniques of telling, as varied as they were, in order to breathe life back into the story, in order that the story is engaged by listeners. The storyteller's duty is to transform that stiff branch of dead dogbane into a flexible wrist bracelet that can be as easily worn by a petite young female student as by an overweight aging male instructor. Nevertheless, despite this overt variability, all the elders shared in their re-tellings the desire to keep the underlying “bones” intact, “you can't add new ones or take away some. They all have to be there.”

In the summer of 1991, during a teacher's in-service retreat, at a camp resort along the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene, I witnessed a most remarkable re-telling. Some thirty public school teachers from around the state were attending the multi-day workshop to learn how to more effectively and appropriately infuse narrative oral traditions into their language arts and social studies curriculums. A few of us were sitting around the evening's camp fire, when one of the teachers shared a “Lakota” story, animated and detailed with a complex storyline, lasting some twenty minutes. None of us had ever heard it before. Immediately following the re-telling, Mari Watters, a Nimíipuu elder and accomplished storyteller, and one of the workshop instructors, said, “Let's see if I got it.” She re-membered the narrative, complete with identical storyline and characters, with all the bones, but doing so her way, using her particular storytelling techniques to re-animate the story (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:152-53). We all traveled within that Lakota story, that evening along the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene, twice.

During the spring of that same year I witnessed another remarkable re-membering. Basil White, a Kootenai elder, was sharing the rather lengthy narrative, “The Animals and Sea

Monster,” to a largely non-Indian audience. As he spoke, I recall his words as deliberate and precise, using all the techniques of an accomplished raconteur to bring the story alive. The unfolding storyline wove this way and that, with the multitude of Beings appearing at very juncture, of Muskrat and Frog, of Magpie and Woodpecker, and of the Sea Monster and Coyote. I felt the uneasiness of many in the audience, with a plot development and characters that did not fit their Euro-American notions. But if you listened, Basil provided a rare and authentic opportunity. And he provided a wonderful example of a re-membered story. A few days later I consulted a not readily accessible publication of Kootenai narratives, recorded sometime around the turn of the last century (Boas and Chamberlain 1918). In that collection was the story Basil had retold. As I scanned the pages, I could hear Basil’s words. Remarkably, Basil and his family had kept the story of the Animals and the Sea Monster fundamentally intact, kept all the bones and *mi’yep* together, from generation to generation, for some 90 years, without deleting some of the bones, without adding others, all within the oral tradition of re-membering. He and his family did so without reliance on the written word. As it happened, that evening’s performance was audio recorded, transcribed, and with Basil’s assistance and approval, included in *Stories That Make the World* (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:196-213). Basil and Mari nicely illustrate the responsibility of the storyteller in keeping the bones together, and in the long-term and immediate dynamics of “re-membering.”

The varied storytellers, indeed the very words they spoke, shared other qualities in common as well (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:141-47; Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:188-204). Consider the physiological nature of this auditory experience, of this clustering of phonemes, of distinguishing sounds within the act of storytelling. As a heard experience, orality is a transitory, effervescent incident, here one moment and gone the next, a continual stream. No permanence, no objects. And further, the sound emitted envelops and surrounds the listener, involuntary unifying him or her in that momentary event. Once spoken, the word is heard, is registered and envelops a recipient, ears unlike eyes not as easily closed to the influx of a physical stimulation, be it auditory or visual. At this physiological level, “Orality is thus a transitory *event* that *unifies* the listener *involuntarily* with the sound and its sources” (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:143).

Consider the syntactic and semantic nature of the story experience, of this clustering of morphemes, of meaningful units of sound within the story text. Indigenous texts are often characterized by their general lack of function words, words that provide relationship and connect thoughts, such as prepositions, e.g., “about,” “for,” “of,” “with,” and conjunctions, e.g., “and,” “but,” “or.” As is the case with the Apsáalooke, there are also no “he,” “she,” “it” differentiated personal pronouns in the language. In fact, Indigenous texts are generally noted for their rather terse, stark use of words and of descriptive phrases altogether. As pointed out by the Nimíipuu scholar Archie Phinney, it is intriguing to realize that in the combined Indigenous oral literature of Coyote, “No clear image is offered or needed” of this trickster (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:149). This was indeed the case for all the First Peoples, lacking not only imagery but detailed descriptions of their actions, their motivations, and of the landscape on which their exploits unfolded. Hence to complete the thoughts between words and phrases, to know the gender of a character, to complete the image of Coyote, or of a landscape, each listener is called upon to engage the story text and add the connections, to make the links, to complete the picture. A story is only whole when its participants are an integral part of it, integrated within a larger context of interpersonal relations and a particular landscape. No passive listening allowed, no viewing from a far. But everyone can also connect the dots a little differently, discovering this meaning or that meaning, embedded within the richly layered story, relative to his or her own experiences and maturation level, lessons specific and relevant to him or her alone. Meaning is contextualized.

Finally, consider the Indigenous spoken word itself, this special kind of symbols (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:154-58; Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:197-99). Upon departing from a great evening’s visit, one never says “goodbye,” but instead, *diiawákaawik*, “see you later;” “goodbye” is too final, rendering it possible. Ceremonially bestowing an Indian Name can bring about in that child, in that adult, that which is described in the Name. Spoken words infused with sacred symbols, have the power to bring forth what they describe, *dashússua*, “breaking with the mouth,” a hierophany shining through. When woven into the fine tapestry of a story retold in the native language, “The world is made and rendered meaningful in the act

of revealing Coyote's story of it." The blue in Lake Coeur d'Alene is perpetuated, a scar is removed from a burnt face, a face made new, as a "child's," . . . and a cancer is abated.

When all these orality elements and dynamics – the storytelling techniques, the physiological experience, the syntactical qualities, and the power of the spoken word – come together and coalesce, they can transform a passive audience into participant travelers within an unfolding landscape. Coyote swirls around you and talks to you. As the elders have said, a story is only brought to life when all those in the "canoe" of the storytelling session – the storyteller and participating audience – equally help with the "paddling" up the "river," exploring the territory together, with the raconteur guiding the way (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:172). It is indicative to note that traditionally, when participants began waning, disengaging from a storytelling session, they would cease to verbally or visually provide cues acknowledging continued engagement, for example, ceasing to periodically voice, *ée*, "yes." Upon such feedback, the raconteur would stop the re-telling, immediately, regardless of the story's completion or not (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:148). The paddling has ceased. As an interaction between storyteller and listeners, the raconteur monitors participation, fluctuating an emphasis here, employing a technique there, guiding participants within and through a territory. The storyteller's responsibility is to encourage the listeners to remain paddlers, engaging them as participants, while "keeping the canoe on course," navigating each bend and fork in the river of the story's landscape, the story's bones. In turn, the listener-participants' responsibilities are to fully engage the story, keeping the canoe moving, and to listen deeply, discovering what might await within, "a gift" unique for each participant, unique each time the story is engaged. The elements and dynamics of orality bring about the transitory intersection of those participating, an event always in the making, allowing you and the Coyote to swirl and talk with each other. This multi-dimensional expression, when conducted in the native language, is understood as "ceremony," as the ritual act of participating in the renewal of the world, in a shining through of a hierophany. In re-telling of Coyote, stories of transformation, during the dormant winter the flowering of the spring is brought forth. Orality is participatory.

I recall with clarity my first, albeit brief, encounter with "swirling." I was a graduate student at the University of Colorado, teaching a course to some seventy undergraduates. On

this particular day I planned to share the Diné (Navajo) creation account, setting aside the entire class session to do so. For some time prior I had been going over the storyline, the characters, the varied worlds from which the *Yei*, the “Holy Ones,” had emerged into this the Fifth World. This was the story of Changing Woman, and her hero twins, Monster Slayer and Child of the Water, who traveled the land, overcoming most of its “monsters,” preparing the world for the coming of Human Peoples. With my students attentive, I started in. Using my own words and style of telling, I seemed to give life to the story, certainly engaging the students. I saw it in their eyes; I felt it with their presence. And then it happened, some twenty minutes into the re-telling. So distinct, so vivid, I was no longer telling a story, but was within it. I was traveling with the *Yei*, witnessing new, fresh events unfold right before my very eyes. While preparing for this story I couldn’t recall having ever read these events. I seemed to be in a place and time transcendent of the mechanics of voicing words, in a place and time made of words. Frankly, it was unnerving and I stopped short my re-telling. I apologized to the students and dismissed class early, my heart still rapidly palpitating. When I got back to my office, and re-read my notes, the “fresh events” I experienced as “new” were indeed in the text all along. I don’t honestly know what my students experienced that day, but I surely swirled, if only momentarily.

The contrasts between orality and literacy, the written word, another sort of symbolic clusterings, could not be more stark and revealing, with critical implications. As we know, writing is itself a technological invention, involving some sort of physical medium or surface (e.g., wood, clay, or stone surface, hide, parchment, paper, computer screen) and some sort of marking device (e.g., etching or imprinting device, ink and pen, press, electronic keyboard), to record and share a standardized symbolic code (e.g., an alphabet with consonants and vowels). An early example is represented in Sumerian cuneiform of some 3,500 BCE. Fundamentally a series of pictographs stamped on clay tokens, cuneiform was used for recording ideas and numbers associated with economic transactions. With the Semitic languages, such as Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew and Phoenician, a consonant system was developed as early as 1,050 BCE, and with the Greeks vowels were added as early as 400 BCE. Among the Olmec and Maya of Mesoamerica, we have forms of writing dating back at least to 900 BCE. This is the technology

that has moved the once oral traditions of Gilgamesh and Homer to what we now can hold in hand. The organic nature of orality is anything but technologically based.

The dynamics of literacy are further revealing (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:141-47). Consider the physiological nature of the literacy experience. Literacy is composed of visual images and symbols, of written words fixed to the pages of a book, to a material object, an object with some degree of permanence, having a quality of “thingness.” A story is accessed and conveyed through the physicality of visually seen and tactilely touched “pages.” In addition, the eye of the reader can scan the lines of the pages at his or her own pace, voluntarily, stopping here to reflect on this word, on that idea, moving on, speed reading through this section, skipping that altogether, and putting the whole thing aside, at his or her pleasure. It is not an involuntary engagement asked of you. To the extent that the medium mediates and influences what is viewed, the world envisioned tends to be understood as made up of objects, a world objectified, with you as a detached, independent viewer.

And consider the syntactic and semantic nature of literacy. Anchored from a much more formalized and standardized set of grammatical rules, literacy seeks to render meaning independent and autonomous of an interpersonal context. A sentence, a story itself, has completeness onto itself, with minimal need of an infusion of links and connections made by a reader. The author endeavors to convey a constant and indelible denotation, remarkably detached from an immediacy with any particular audience. A preposition added here, a conjunction there, personal pronouns throughout. Coyote is richly adorned with imagery and motivation, a landscape endowed with color and texture beyond imagination. Both author and reader would subscribe to a stylized grammatical convention, formalized, for example, in the APA Style for the social and behavioral sciences, the MLA Format for the humanities, or the Chicago Manual of Style for anthropologists, to inform, structure and encase the dissemination and the accessing of meaning. Meaning is decontextualized.

Taken together, the qualities and attributes of literacy contribute to an understanding of reality as made up of discrete objects, with some degree of concreteness and permanency, to be observed from afar, as if behind the neutrality of a thick glass pane. Born out of this dualism is an impetus to invest in story separate from and descriptive of experience, in “belief” about

reality, in “propositions and equations” predictive of “sense datum” results, in analytical stories. It certainly can be argued that the dynamics and nature of literacy not only supports, but is a precursor and if not a precondition for the observations of Aristotle’s octopus and of the scientific method of Descartes and Bacon. Born out of this dualism is invest in story separate from and descriptive of experience, in sonnets and poems and prose, in essays, short stories and novels, in the great tradition of Shakespeare and Dickens, in literary stories. Literacy is object-ifying and dichotomizing.

The contrast between orality and literacy could thus not be more revealing. The shift is from viewing stories as explanations about and descriptions of the world, as predictors of reality or suspenders of disbelief about reality, to experiencing the stories as the world, as intensifiers of what is most real. The shift is from understanding an author of a novel or a scientist of a hypothesis as its originator and you the observer of what is being observed, to experiencing the unfolding of a story with its raconteur in consort with you and the other engaged listener-participants as co-facilitators, as co-creators of that transitory intersection. The shift is from compartmentalized cubicles to dynamic amalgamation. To slightly rephrase what Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), the influential Christian mystic-theologian, and Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), the eminent scholar of Buddhist and Hindu philosophy, both asserted while contrasting European and Asian aesthetic traditions, the shift is from viewing every artist (and by extension, every author and scientist) as a special kind of person, to experiencing every person, each of us, as a special kind of artist (Coomaraswamy 1934:64).

It is indeed a special kind of text we are constructing; an intersection of participant orality-based “voices” each contributing to the co-creation of a series of transitory effervescent events. Accordingly, with Heart Knowledge as our goal we would seek to construct written texts, these symbolic clusterings, which experientially engage our readers, our audiences, our students. We would seek to convey the orality dynamic in our publications, incorporating a “poetic” nuanced format and inviting the reader to participate in the “discovery” of the *mi’yep* embedded within the pages of the text.<sup>11</sup> With Heart Knowledge as our goal we would seek to

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11 Ruth Behar (2007) offers a very persuasive position regarding ethnographic writing that goes beyond conventional formal writing, of “burring the genres,” to bring “art” to ethnography.



employ a pedagogical delivery of these written texts that transform the formal classroom of the academy into the classroom of the elders, filled with the experiences of relationships involving stories, landscapes and hosts, embedded with the *mi'yep* and bones of the First Peoples. We seek in our classrooms, transformed with an Indigenous learning style, to disseminate the oral tradition through experiential activities, through storytelling itself and “in the round recitations,” by engaging the elders in “their classrooms,” through field trips – events of converging voices. In essence, we seek to “re-tell” the Indigenous oral traditions, be they on any number of topics and expressed in any number of narrative, aesthetic, social, ecological, or political “story text” forms. As in any Indigenous storytelling experience, the resulting special kind of text, be it as a publication or in a classroom presentation, is the experiential transitory confluence of the voices of our hosts, as well as of the ethnographer/teacher, and of the audience of readers and students, with our hosts certainly the predominating voices, infused with the bones of their stories, (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:285-86). A story, after all, is only brought to life when all are in the “canoe” of the storytelling session – the raconteur and participating listeners – each equally helping “paddle” up the “river,” with the storyteller guiding paddlers, while keeping the canoe on course.

It’s a special kind of text we are constructing that, up front, needs to acknowledge the challenge, do I dare say distortion, which an unbridled reliance on literacy can bring to the dissemination of Heart Knowledge, through our publications and in our classrooms. With Heart Knowledge as our goal, disseminating knowledge framed within a formalistic, hypothesis-driven analysis of quantitatively-derived variables would be appropriate when applied outside the Tin Shed, but only misrepresent and distort when applied within the Shed.

So what is it that you now hold in your hands, this re-created intersection of those participating, this re-told story text, this symbolic clustering, this special kind of text? This essay is certainly not what *I had experienced* with Alan beside the Tin Shed, or what *I had experienced* while driving south with my Rainbow. It is not a representation of something existing on the other side of a glass pane, not a depiction seeking to replicate a phenomenal world. It is not what I had experienced, for in the act of engaging with what is held in hand *you are now also a participant* of that Tin Shed and of that Rainbow. And with your participation you bring your

own experiences, perspectives and “names” to this point of interaction, and new “discoveries” are to be made. Like the re-telling of the same Coyote story each year, while the voice of Coyote and his “bones” remain remarkably consistent with every telling, each storyteller of that story and each audience of listeners bring new and varied experiences and “names” to the retellings. And while Coyote comes alive, his voice can be heard a little differently during each telling, by each participant. Something new is to be “discovered.” But also, something else could possibly be “misinterpreted.” Held in hand is at best a “*translated map of a landscape*,” certainly not the landscape itself, nor even a map in replication of a landscape (Frey and the Sch̓itsu’umsh 2001:285). This new transitory convergence of those participating, this event in the making, is also marked with “signposts” to help guide *strangers* now invited to travel the territory of the Tin Shed or a Rainbow. As a translation it seeks to provide ample background and context, to provide an oral-nuanced cadence to minimize misinterpretation, a translation designed to accommodate the “many and diverse travelers,” a translation to accommodate you (Frey and the Sch̓itsu’umsh 2001:283-86). These “signposts” are not unlike the particular techniques used by a raconteur, added here and there, to better engage and guide readers through a river’s landscape, while keeping the canoe on course, all of which are clothed in the raconteur’s particular style of telling, with his or her “name” clearly enunciated. And I ask, would not these assertions concerning this now held-in-hand essay not also apply to any Heart Knowledge-based ethnographic text held in hand?

Coming full circle, we reiterate the importance of, “*you see that tin shed?*” Like a storyteller’s narrative, this re-telling of a story, this translated map is as a “bridge,” to be firmly anchored in Heart Knowledge, and certainly not in a raconteur’s, nor a researcher’s or writer’s imagination (Frey and the Sch̓itsu’umsh 2001:285-88). One end of this bridge is anchored in the Coyote’s landscape, with the perennial bones and *mi’yep* of the stories. While at the other end of the bridge “signposts” line the way, of the welcoming and guiding the varied strangers, as well as returnees, as they travel over and discover what may await them. In consideration of our ethnographic research techniques just mentioned, this is a bridge with at one end is a foundation of bones resulting from our coding methods, triangulating essential *mi’yep* out of the interviews we’ve conducted and the participant engagements we’ve made. At the other

end of the bridge is a foundation made up of our ethnographic interpretations, acknowledging our particular name and applying our particular storytelling techniques, of erecting signposts to welcome strangers and clothe the bones with a flesh to bring them alive. It seems fitting to call this process “interpretative,” as an ethnographer’s “interpretation,” the act of rendering something meaningful, is so closely aligned with the storyteller’s act of animating the bones with flesh, of rendering something accessible. In contrast, to provide an ethnographic “explanation” is to render something scientifically “known,” devoid of bones, names, signposts.

But to help assure that this bridge we’re constructing has a solid foundation, a thorough inspection and approval of it by our host community is essential. To help assure our “translated map” is authentic and appropriate it needs certification. We seek to avoid any possible misinterpretation, in getting the canoe off course, in missing some of its bones or of adding some that don’t belong.

**Evaluation.** Let’s also look more closely at the criteria designed to review and assess, to evaluate our special kind of text. Such a review, of course, is a prerogative sovereign Tribes have when their cultural knowledge is sought for accessing and dissemination. As previously mentioned, Head Knowledge assessment criteria seeks to evaluate the ability of a study to replicate and measure the objectified world of the subjects of that study. Among these criteria is internal validity, which seeks to measure the degree to which the findings of the study correctly map and correspond to the phenomena in question. Another is external validity, which seeks to measure the degree to which the findings can be generalized to other settings similar to the one in which the study occurred. And a third is reliability, which seeks to measure the degree to which the findings can be replicated or reproduced by another researcher. All these criteria are premised on measuring an autonomous world that can, in fact, be measured, a world regulated by certain ontological principles. It is a world of subject-object dualism, reducible to discrete quantifiable material forms interacting together, governed by certain laws of cause-effect regularity, devoid of spirit.

As we’ve identified, the world of the Tin Shed has a very different set of foundational principles at work. The focus of any sort of Heart Knowledge review process shifts from measuring the correspondence of the research findings with an autonomous phenomenal

world of physical objects, to assessing the value of the transitory points of participant interactions, the effervescent events of convergent relationships. These are convergences always in the making, dynamic and shifting, as participant members come and go with each new unfolding configuration. Each of these points of juncture entails multiple members, multiple “voices,” including hosts, a researcher or teacher, and the potential of various audiences of readers or students. These points of interaction range from an ethnographer standing before the Tribal Council petitioning to be allowed to conduct research, to an ethnographer’s participant observations with an elder, to an ethnographer’s interview with that elder, to the note taking of the observation and transcription of the interview, to the results of the study with the elder under review by the Culture Committee, to the written report or publication inclusive of that elder’s voice in the hands of a reader, to the lecture presenting the voice of the elder to the students in a college course. For the Culture Committee then it’s not just the “product” of the research that is under review, be it a written report or proposed publication, not just *what* is said, as critical as that is. But under review is also *who* is included in the study, assessing the many “voices” and their particular relationships with each other at the various junctures of interaction; under review is also the on-going “process.”

Not unlike the significance and meaning of “Coyote’s voice” in a narrative oral tradition (Frey and the Schjitsu’umsh 2001:202-04), I am using “voice” to refer to a participant, “in the flesh” or as mediated and conveyed through the spoken or written word, at a transitory convergence of all those participating. “Voice” can be that conveyed during an interview between an ethnographer and elder, it can be that conveyed spoken by storyteller and heard by an audience, it can be that conveyed written on the pages of a manuscript and read by a student, and now by you, . . . or it can be that spoken by Coyote and you, each in dialogue with the other. It includes your voice as well.

In our “If All These Great Stories Were Told, Great Stories Will Come” (Frey, Yellowtail and SiJohn 2008), a narrative that chronicled a healing journey, we deliberately sought to identify and distinguish some of the many “voices” in this text, while also acknowledging the article’s collaborative, equitable co-authorship. The edited segments of Tom’s contributions were based upon a 1993 audio recorded transcription of an interview we had done and a

conversation that followed on the use of an oral-nuanced format. Cliff's words were from transcriptions from two segments of an interview we did together in 1997 and from a 2006 recorded conversation specifically intended for the article. To better give a sense of the dynamic rhythm in Tom and Cliff's words and thus convey their "voices," we italicized their voiced inflections and stresses, and added a series of dot ellipses to approximate pause durations, from brief (two dot) to longer (three dot and four dot) gaps in their speech. Both Tom and Cliff's texts were further differentiated from mine as they had indented margins and a smaller font size, yet distinguishable from each other by style, topics and embedded indentifies in the previous paragraphs. Each paragraph demarcation reflected a critical and coherent segment of content and message selected for the presentation, resulting in an article made up of a storyline of alternating sequential yet associated paragraph texts from each of the three authors. Within Tom's story there were thus conveyed his "voice" and the "voices" of Burnt Face and of the Little People, while within Cliff's narrative there were his "voice," along with those of Coyote, Eagle, Chipmunk, and Cedar, among other First Peoples-Animal Peoples. And along with my "voice" were those of my son and *Bishée*, Buffalo. We also asked the reader to contribute his or her own "voice." To appreciate a little more of the power of storytelling, we asked the reader to become a listener, having some else read the text aloud to him or her. As we suggested, "a great story is to be experienced as it is told," the listener transformed into a participant "voice" within the unfolding story. Each time the text is engaged, "If All These Great Stories Were Told, Great Stories Will Come" offers an entrance to quite an assemblage of potential "voices" at any one moment, interacting with one another, as an unfolding event.

Heart Knowledge assessment thus accordingly relies on very distinct and suitable criteria, such as authenticity, trustworthiness and appropriateness, all of which seek to evaluate and grant authority to the various transitory intersections of those participating. Of the research process and product based upon traveling within the Tin Shed, the Culture Committee might ask are the many "voices" that should be included, in fact, included – a question of authenticity. Such voices comprise inclusion of the appropriate elders, as well as linkages to the essential bones and *mi'yep* teachings of the oral traditions associated with an event intersection. Of those "voices" included, are they credible and dependable – a question of

trustworthiness. Are the participants, Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous, honest and trustworthy. Of those “voices” included, should they be publicly disseminated – a question of appropriateness. Some events of intersection, particularly associated with certain oral traditions, are domains of specific “families” and not meant to be shared outside those families with strangers. And of course asked by the Committee, has the “voice” of the ethnographer, the writer, the future teacher been granted permission to enter the Tin Shed in the first place and, if so, should his or her voice be included as part of the story. Has he or she properly greeted and identified him or herself to others, noting “family lineage,” pronouncing aloud his or her “name”? Can he or she be trusted to cherish the voices of the elders and of Coyote, and to share them appropriately? These forms of assessment and evaluation certainly differ from Head Knowledge empirical, non-reflexive means, such as reliability, and external and internal validity.

In 1977, after three years of research with the Apsáalooke, the resulting manuscript was being reviewed by my collaborators and interviewees. Some felt inclusion of ethnographic descriptions of the “bar scene and behaviors in response to alcoholism” would not be appropriate, as not enough context was provided to properly understand the topic. Such materials were excluded. After two years of intense research, the Natural Resources Damage Assessment project was being reviewed by the Culture Committee of the Coeur d’Alene Tribe in 1998. Some committee members objected to the project not because of what was being conveyed, but because of whose voices were not included. More interviewing was then conducted. As the Life-Long Learning Online (L3) project was being reviewed by the Culture Committee of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in 2003, members of that committee didn’t so much object to what one particular participant had to say, but objected to his inclusion altogether, insisting that his participation in and contributions to the project be excluded. They were. In all cases, the resulting texts were successfully disseminated, without compromising the Indigenous knowledge each sought to convey (Frey 1987; Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001; Frey and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring 2003).

While the review process can be time intensive, and for the ethnographer, a process racked by anxiety, it is essential in so many ways and for so many reasons. In the instance of

the Coeur d'Alene Natural Resources Damage Assessment, it took over six months of review before being concluded by each of the twenty-five collaborators in the project, by the elders who regularly attended the Senior Luncheons, by two Culture Committees (besides the Coeur d'Alene, the Spokane Tribe's, as they were "respected for their opinions" by the Schjitsu'umsh, which, of course, brought a heightened level of stress as I knew none of these committee members), and by the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council (Frey and the Schjitsu'umsh 2001:286-87).

Also considered as part of the assessment are the future "voices," the future participants of these junctures of interaction, of those who might read the final report or pick up the published ethnography, or even those who might listen to a classroom lecture. It includes voice of the reader of an essay, it includes you. Certainly the Culture Committee would be invested in helping preserve for the future generations the voices of their elders, and of the voices of Coyote and the other First Peoples. But there's a catch. As one Schjitsu'umsh elder stressed to me, once my stories are written down, "the words can be interpreted *any which way,*' losing their meaning, as she 'wouldn't be there to correct someone'" (Frey and the Schjitsu'umsh 2001:283). While a Culture Committee would not seek to assess and evaluate who in the future might read the ethnography or participate in the lecture, they can ask that the ethnographic report or classroom setting be designed to anticipate and effectively accommodate the participation of future others. These others would likely be "strangers" to the Tin Shed, and need the ethnographic text or classroom to be provided with ample background, context and formatting to help minimize any misinterpretation. These new travelers need signposts that are trustworthy and appropriate to help guide them as paddlers going up river, to keep their canoe on course; they need a translated map that is certified if they are to explore the story's landscape; they need a solid bridge thoroughly inspected if they are to cross over into the Tin Shed.

While a Culture Committee might apply Head Knowledge criteria and certainly many do add scientific empiricism in their assessment, the evaluation of an ethnographer's work typically shifts from a primary reliance on objective, objectified evidence to whether the experiential re-telling of an event (or events) is inclusive of its essential participants, along with their relationships and bones.

### **Confronting the “Mutually Exclusive”**

Now we stand back and ask ourselves, as I’ve done so many times, if we enter the Tin Shed do we have to give up our seat on the well-worn, wooden bench, never to return to it? Can we truly begin to comprehend and apply an Indigenous research and teaching paradigm without first giving up everything we’ve been taught and hold true about science? Yet if we remain thoroughly grounded in a scientific paradigm, how do we go about approaching Indigenous knowledge and experience without reducing it to mere fantasy and quaint beliefs and practices, to imaginary myths and superstitions, of relegating it to some sort of “pre-scientific stage”? How do we approach Heart Knowledge in a manner that is as viable and legitimate as science or any other way of knowing? But are not Heart Knowledge and its transitory world co-created by those participating, and Head Knowledge and its impermeable world of discrete “objects” ultimately mutually exclusive? How can the world be unified through kinship yet divided by dualism, be imbued with spirit yet devoid of it? How can the rock formations along that bend in the river be created by geological processes and yet by Coyote? How can these two irrevocably distinct clusterings of units of reference account for, indeed bring forth absolutely the same referent, the indistinguishably same thing? This just can’t be! How do we render these contradictions compatible with each other? How do we begin to address and reconcile the dilemma of the mutually exclusive in our professional endeavors as an ethnographer? In our personal lives as human beings?

So where do we look for guidance? What huckleberries would we need to yet gather or perhaps pull from our baskets, relied upon, if we’re to travel the mutually exclusive as ethnographers? As people? For me, it would be in how I addressed the mutually exclusive in a particularly dire segment of my own personal unfolding story, of applying a huckleberry or two gathered while traveling outside of my professional life, that I would begin to address this dilemma inside my professional life. Let me re-tell a little of this story.





### **A Father's Journey: Traveling from the Professional to the Personal.**

This little story begins with honesty. Honesty, that quintessential characteristic we seek in all our ethnographic relations with our Indigenous hosts, can also be a force that lays bare a core of our shared humanity, removing overt differences, revealing us as “grandkids and grandparents,” as “brothers and sisters.” Where once there were interviewees and collaborators and ethnographers, there now can be family members, relating to each other simply and sincerely as human beings. As we engage others through our intense and often long-term ethnographic research, engaging in what is most cherished and revered, we must be prepared to decide, upon coming to a fork in the path, if we're going to go beyond established professional boundaries, crossing over those “shifting and often blurred lines of proper ethnographic participation,” freely entering the allure of the web? This is a crossing over to be taken with great responsibility, with the deepest respect for one's teachers and introspection with one's self, with a clear understanding of your professional ethical standards, as well as of the professional consequences of those actions. This is a crossing that, as Ruth Behar (1996) movingly identifies, can leave you vulnerable. This is a crossing entered with great honesty.

Can you respond with clarity and assurance to such questions as, would your actions bring harm to others? Would the identities of these others remain confidential? Would the integrity of your applied research be in anyway compromised, and thus be of little benefit for those you wish to serve? With your new kinship there come extended family responsibilities. Would you continue to be there, as a sibling or grandchild, in support of the beloved members of your adopted family, next year, twenty years out, forever? Do you have permission to travel farther into the depth of the Tin Shed, an invitation from one who will guide you with wisdom, with *mi'yep*, a grandparent, an elder brother, an elder sister? And what are your intentions?

While these critical questions are only brought into sharper perspective with hindsight, not sure I could have articulated them in my twenties, I do believe that at my core it has always been honesty, along with “being attentive” and a willingness to take responsibility, which others have recognized and that has led them to welcoming me into their homes and lives.

My crossings over and back began early in my ethnographic journey. I had two extraordinary summers with the Apsáalooke in 1974 and 1975, delving into such diverse realms

as traditional healing and powwows, and gender roles and Sundances, and being introduced to some incredible teachers and hosts, including such warm welcomes from Tom and Susie Yellowtail. I was able to camp at both Sundances those summers, in fact, assisting in the construction of the 1975 Lodge. Tom was the Sundance Chief, in charge of running them. At the 1975 Sundance my wife and six-month-old son Matt were able to join me. I remember the “grandmothers” so intrigued with this white baby that they asked if they could borrow him for the afternoon! Agreeing, Matt was tightly wrapped in a wonderfully beaded cradleboard and rocked on the laps of virtually every grandmother in the twenty or so camps of the Sundance encampment that day. By this second summer I had begun learning something of the stories behind a few of the dancers. While standing at the Lodge’s door, I felt a little of the tremendous sacrifice they sought to give for loved ones, these three days of going without food and water, under the hot July Sun. At the door, tears filled my eyes as my knees buckled.

While back in Colorado during the winter of 1976, pursuing my graduate studies, my wife and I, along with Matt, were returning from a short road trip, when Matt suddenly went limp on us, unconscious. We rushed him to the nearest hospital, where all sorts of tests were run. During those desperate moments, lasting an eternity, this twenty-five-year-old father reached out in any way I felt I could be heard, prayed with all my heart that my son would recover and be safe. And at that spontaneous moment, what came into my heart, were the stirrings emanating out of Sundance prayers, led by Tom Yellowtail. And I vowed to fast from food and water, alone on a hill, for three days for my son’s recovery. Matt recovered, and that summer of 1976 I asked Tom if he would help me fulfill a promise to “fast,” so I could honor my son. Generously, Tom agreed and prepared me, with a cleansing Sweat, in the use of the Pipe and tobacco, with a fan of Eagle-feathers, what to do for my morning and evening prayers, with hot coals and cedar, and selecting a location up in the hills, far from the curiosity of others.

This urban-raised, white middle-class young man had no idea what to anticipate, no background, though a sincere desire to offer himself, to suffer a little, for the joy of his son’s recovery. During the day, Tom had me walk up from my camp site to a higher butte to pray under a tree there. Each day as I walked to the hill, I passed close by a den of rattlesnakes. Tom had mentioned possible visitors and how to use the Feathers. Alone and so distant from

others, as I came up to the snakes each day, for some reason, I sat down right before them, with the Eagle-feather fan in front of me, and had this odd sort of “dialogue,” with those I would have normally jumped back from instantly under any other circumstances. But there was no fear, no apprehension, just this silent conversation, and then I’d get up and move to the hill top. Thinking back upon it now, I must have been crazy.

During this fast in the hills there was another visitor to my little camp. I had gone two full days and nights without food and water, under the Sun’s watch, offering my morning and evening prayers around a small fire, and I actually felt fine. I was going into the last evening, after the Sun had set, and thinking about coming down, back to the warmth of Tom’s home the next morning. “I had really accomplished it; I had really done it myself,” I thought. And then it hit, overwhelmed me, with anxiety and fear. My heart was racing, I wanted to run, but run where? I remembered what Tom had said about the power of tobacco and prayer. So I lit a cigarette, faced east, and began in, from all my heart. Holding the cigarette in front of me, a first, then second, and a third cigarette was lit from the previous, in a continuous long prayer. And then he appeared, clear and vivid, not more than twenty feet to the south of me, one of the *Awakkulé*, the Little People. He said nothing, just stood there, looked at me, and I knew. As fast as it had rushed over me, the fear and anxiety were gone, as was my visitor. I realized that I had not, in fact, accomplished anything on my own, with my efforts alone, but this fast was the culmination of the many prayers of others, of Tom, of a little person, of my family, of the efforts of many. I voiced my thanks and had a good night’s sleep, that last night on the hill.

The next day we took a Sweat together, and I re-told Tom of my visitors while on the hill. He then asked if I would care to join him in a few weeks to continue my prayers for my son in the Sundance Lodge. I did. As with the fast on the hill, I had not anticipated doing such even a short time before and certainly no awareness of what lay before me. But I did have a sincere desire to pray for my son’s health, to continue my pledge and give thanks. So began my crossings over. I continued Dancing, as to “blow the whistle” in the Big Lodge once entails doing so four times, and I completed two such cycles, my eighth Sundance, in 1996. During this time, Tom and Susie adopted me into their Yellowtail family, they becoming “Grandpa and Grandma,” and giving me the Indian Name, *Maakuuxshiichilish*, “Seeking to Help Others,”

bestowed during a Medicine Bundle ceremony in 1977. As Grandma said, I needed an Indian Name if I was to continue my dancing, if I was to continue my prayers.

During my fourth Dance, in 1978, completing my first cycle for Matt, I began the Dance dancing hard. I remember “feeling oh so comfortable, watched over,” and danced hard. I charged the Center Pole, brushing it occasionally with my Plumes, than danced back to my stall, charged again and danced back, and again, with the mounted Eagle, its wings spread, and Buffalo head hung from the Tree’s fork. Again and again, dancing to the song and beat of the drum, with Eagle-bone whistle in mouth and Eagle-plumes in hand. As I blew the Whistle I could see my life’s liquid spew out into the dry air, dripping from its tip, until there was none. From my angle within the Lodge, the Buffalo head looked down upon me. Continuing for some time, though losing all tack of time, I do recall glancing down upon the other dancers and the Lodge, and my body laying there on the dance floor, covered with cattails others had laid over it. And I traveled on. I first came to a deep and rocky canyon, as I was looking up into the sky; then to a dense pine forest, still searching above; then I came to a gentle cottonwood grove, seeing nothing; and finally I was in the sky amongst the clouds. All the while continuing to look for something, but seeing nothing before me. Then amongst those fluffy white clouds, as I looked out, there were horns coming out from beside my head, and I knew I was now looking out through the eyes of *Bishée*, the Buffalo. I would not find something out there, distinct from me, as we were indistinguishable, as one. Then I was back among the other dancers, in the Big



The Little Lodge  
Photo: Frey 1979

Lodge. Following the Dance, with Tom and “Old Man John” Trehero at my side, I re-told my story to those gathered and presented a Pipe, the bowl of which I had carved from black soapstone and the stem from chokecherry wood, to the sponsor of the Dance. And I was told never to eat the meat of the buffalo – *Bishée* was now my “Medicine Father.”

Under the watch of each full-Moon, with my wife Kris joining me, we continue to open my little Medicine Bundle, smudging its contents with sweetgrass, singing the song of the Tree, and offering prayer to *Bishée* and to the Creator for family and friends, for students and colleagues, for those challenged and struggling wherever they may be. I was given the right to pour water and conduct Sweat prayers in the “Little Lodge, the Younger Brother of the Big Lodge, the Elder Brother” and I continue to do so from my backyard. While no longer dancing in the Big Lodge, I continue to attend the Sundance each year, assisting from the outside those offering prayers on the inside. Returning to the Big Lodge in 2009, where he had first visited while tightly wrapped in the blanket of a cradleboard in 1975, my son Matt assisted in co-sponsoring the Sundance and, two years later, began his own Dancing with our Sundance family, giving voice in prayer to the Indian Name Grandpa had bestowed on him years ago, *Awakúikiiaateesh*, “Little Dwarf.”

I hope knowing a little more about my personal journey, of my entire “name,” both the ethnographic Frey and the *Maakuuxshiichíilish*, of entering the Tin Shed and the Big Lodge, allows the research I’ve conducted, the courses I teach, and the publications listed in this essay, all these transitory intersections of those participating, to be that much more accessible and, in turn, meaningful. Knowing a little more about my personal journey will make the story about to be re-told that much more accessible and meaningful for you, its potential huckleberries readied to be picked from their branches. With honesty we can explore our common humanity.



Flowering and washing of the Water Potato  
Photo: Frey 1997



### A Healing Journey: Setting the Stage<sup>12</sup>

You never know when you might stumble and fall; get knocked us off your path. You never know when you or someone close might face a seemingly insurmountable challenge – a dilemma relating to health, a relationship, a job, an overwhelmingly grave situation. Just how each of us responds is certainly varied, as diverse as there are spokes on a wheel. Each of us will certainly seek out that certain path that best navigates a dark territory. This happens to be my particular story.<sup>13</sup>

In December of 2005 I was diagnosed with third-stage Hodgkin’s lymphoma. I was a fit 55, or so I thought, happily married, with a loving family, professionally successful, and was about to begin a most unanticipated journey that threatened it all. I blamed no one. In fact, felt no anger. But the cancer could not be ignored.

Soon after being diagnosed I was having lunch with Cliff SiJohn, sharing the situation with him. His words helped initiate the critical path in my healing journey. Cliff emphasized the

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12 In 2011 I was honored by being named the University of Idaho’s College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences’ Distinguished Humanities Professor. As part of my responsibility I sponsored a year-long series of events, “Turning of the Wheel: a Humanities Exploration.” Significant segments of the remaining essay were written for a keynote address I gave as part of that series, and hence retain some of its oral presentation style.

13 In the past I have been reluctant to publically share my personal story, be it in the classroom or in print. When I’ve done so it has only been minimally, as I briefly told of my relationships with Lawrence Aripa and Tom Yellowtail (Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:7) and added a general reflexive statement in the last pages of an appendix on research methodology (Frey and the Schitsu’umsh 2001:288-292). The academy I had grown up within encouraged formality and the rigors of objective discourse. And frankly, by revealing something of my personal story as a “Whiteman Sundancing” could open room for misinterpretation of my intentions on campus, conjecturing up that I was somehow a “wannabe.”

But with my healing journeys, there came a new awareness and urgency. If, from a re-telling of my healing journeys, there were huckleberries to be picked by a broader audience, it behooved me to *baaéechichiwaau*. May others be gifted and helped. And as I continued with confidence to Indigenize my curriculum and publications, the importance of “full disclosure” and reflexivity, of acknowledging my “name” as a storyteller in the classroom and on page and my contributions to the convergence of those participating, became all the more essential. My entire “name” is now conveyed in the classroom and in print, beginning with an essay I co-wrote with Cliff SiJohn and Tom Yellowtail chronicling my first healing journey (Frey, Yellowtail and SiJohn 2008). To fully appreciate the particular journey about to be re-told here, my own personal journey in the Big Lodge leading up to it must thus be referenced and re-told, as I’ve done in the previous section. But even more importantly, in recounting the many paths of my own journey, I honor my elders and mentors by acknowledging their generous gifts of support in this interwoven professional/personal journey – a story only made possible in consort and by consent.

importance of appreciating the complimentary, though distinct processes of “external healing” and “inner healing.” He spoke of, “Putting your full trust in your doctors, in the external healing” and in what Cliff called, “Head Knowledge.” But he also stressed that I needed to pay attention to my “inner healing” and to what he referred to as “Heart Knowledge” – “to listen with your heart, be attentive.” “That’s your responsibility, not the doctors.” “Attend to both, equally” Cliff stressed.

But how would I attempt to go about traveling these contrasting paths, so seemingly mutual exclusive, simultaneously, side by side? After all, the world of Head Knowledge is the world of Western biomedicine, of the physical action and reaction of scalpels, chemo drugs, and stem cell transplants, anchored in the scientific method and objectivity. The world of Heart Knowledge is the world of American Indian spiritual healing, of the pulsating force coming through an Eagle-feather fan, emanating out of a transitory intersection of those participating.

Cliff said, “Attend to both, equally”? But when we’re confronted in our lives with such seemingly incompatible differences, when “difference” seems so irreconcilable, so mutually exclusive, how are we to go about negotiating our way? How are we to effectively communicate and, in some manner, go about engaging, no less collaborating, with the many strangers amongst us, with those of our vast humanity? If we’re to enter the Tin Shed of Heart Knowledge, would we have to give up our seat on the well-worn, wooden bench, would we have to give up Head Knowledge?



Cliff with Eagle-feather Staff.  
Photo: Frey 2002



Where do we look for guidance; where was I to look for guidance? What huckleberries would I need to pull from my basket, to rely upon if I was to travel the mutually exclusive?

### The Wagon Wheel: the Story

It was the summer of 1974 and I was conducting my first ethnographic field work. As mentioned earlier, I was a graduate student at the time, invited by the Apsáalooke to assist with helping “educate” the professional-trained but inexperienced non-Indian doctors who served in the Indian Health Service. The IHS physicians were having a difficult time communicating with their tribal patients, especially the elders and the more traditional members. Working with the elders, I helped put together an extended essay on how tribal members understood and approached illness and healing, all from their perspectives, an essay the doctors would use to better understand and hopefully communicate with their patients.

And in the course of this project I was introduced to one of the most amazing ways of looking at and experiencing the world, indeed creating the world. This world view, this behavior was repeatedly reflected in an uncanny ability of individuals to simultaneously travel distinct ways of life, as for example, of being a sincere Sundancer, devout Christian, a competent Indian Health Service nurse, and doing so with such ease.



Tom Yellowtail offering a Prayer  
at the Sundance, Pryor, 1974

This ambidextrous ability was wonderfully exemplified in the lives of Tom and Susie Yellowtail. Tom was an *akbaalía*, a traditional healer, and the Sundance Chief for his people; and he was a devout Baptist. Susie danced alongside her husband in the Big Lodge and practiced Western biomedicine, in fact, was the first American Indian registered nurse in this country. On various occasions Susie was

appointed to Presidential Councils, and traveled widely throughout the United States representing Indian peoples. While in the Sundance Lodge, Tom danced with the whistle and prayed to *Akbaatatdía*, “the Maker of All Things First”; while in the “Little Brown” Baptist Church he read from the Good Book and prayed to Jesus Christ. While in the Sundance Lodge, Susie applied Indian medicine; while in the Indian Health Service Hospital she prescribed Western biomedicine. But the Bible and the stethoscope were never brought into the Sundance, or the Eagle-bone whistle never into the Church. And while the Eagle feathers of an *akbaalía* (literally, “one who doctors”) might be fanned over a patient in the hospital, the



prayers and songs of the *akbaalíá* are offered only in the privacy of the patient's room, distinct from the care provided by the physician and nurse.

Each way of prayer and of healing, each way of behaving has its own path, distinct from the other, each with its own integrity. Yet all paths could be traveled, freely jumping between and on each of them, all leading to the same source. This powerful notion was appropriately symbolized when in October of 1993 in Chicago Tom, in Eagle-feather headdress and full regalia, shared the podium with some of the world's foremost religious leaders, including the Dalai Lama, and offered words of prayer at the 100th anniversary of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. Tom's Apsáalooke prayer for world peace was so easily heard, mingling and merging with the over 8,000 other spokespeople from the world's different religions – Christian, Muslim and Jew, Hindu, Buddhist and Taoist, and American Indian.

Tom Yellowtail, who became one of my most prominent and enduring teachers, offered the following understanding of how to travel distinct ways of life. Using imagery he felt I could relate to, he spoke of the world as a great "Wagon Wheel." Tom was intimately familiar with the Wheel, as reflected in the rock Medicine Wheel to the south of his Wyola home and as structured into the Sundance Lodge and the pattern of its dancers.

From its perch high atop the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming, the rocks of the Medicine Wheel have endured since time immemorial, the recipient of countless pilgrimages and prayers. Its 28 spokes of rock were linked by an outer rim of rocks some eighty feet in diameter and a central rock cairn of some two feet in height. As Tom has told in his favorite oral tradition, it was Burnt Face, a young boy, horribly disfigured, deeply scarred, who first traveled so long ago to these mountains to fast and offer prayer, and who assembled these rocks as a gift to the *Awakkulé*, "Little People" who inhabited the area, seeking their help. It's the image of the Wagon Wheel that was offered.

Imagine the Apsáalooke Sundance Lodge from the eye of a soaring Eagle. The Big Lodge is anchored by its cottonwood forked-tree, the Center Pole, from which twelve over-head poles radiate out to shorter posts to form the rim of the Lodge some seventy to eighty feet in diameter, all enclosed by cut trees and brush, its door open to the rising morning Sun. For three and sometimes four days, the over one hundred participants would fast from food and water, and offer prayer and dance for loved ones. To the beat of the drum and song, and with

Eagle-bone whistles in their mouths and Eagle-plumes in hand, men and women charge the Center Pole, with its Buffalo head and Eagle suspended from its fork, and then dance back to their stalls, and then charge again, and again. Each dancer has made his or her own individual vow to the Creator to give of him or herself for a loved one in need, each dancer distinct in intentions and expression from the others. Nevertheless, all the dancers are united as one as they blow their Eagle-bone whistles to the beat of the drum, and as they stand before the Center Pole and offer burnt tobacco in prayer, or as they might receive a blessing or healing, or even a visit from perhaps the Buffalo, or Eagle, and be given a special gift, a “Medicine.”

The Apsáalooke name their Sundance Lodge is *Ashkísshe* – “imitation lodge” – in replication of the world, a microcosm of the greater macrocosm, a reflection, a mirror.



Crow Sundance Lodge, Wolf Mountains.  
Photo: Frey 1993

Each of the unique spokes are dancing, among the many collective diverse spokes, all in unison, united by the ubiquitous spirit of whistle and drum, under the gaze of the Center Pole, of *Akbaatatdía*, the Creator, the *axis mundi*, anchoring and permeating the many spokes equally. The image of the Wagon Wheel is seen and danced and experienced, and brought forth.

And Tom went on to say, “The spokes of the wagon Wheel . . . are the *various paths* to the *hub* . . . the *different* religions . . . the different peoples of the world . . . each with their *own ways* . . . their own languages . . . their *own* traditions . . . . . but each spoke is *equally* important . . . that Wheel just *wouldn't turn* if some spokes were longer than others . . . if some were taken out all together . . . . *all* the spokes are needed if the Wheel is gonna to turn . . . . . but all the spokes are linked to the *same hub* . . . the same Creator . . . . each religion . . . each spoke might call the Creator by a different name . . . . but the prayers of all religions are heard by the Creator . . . . . if the Wheel is to turn.” Spokes unique, spokes collectively diverse; a hub and rim unifying, ubiquitous, universal.

For Tom and Susie, and so many others, there need not be investment solely in a single spoke, need not choose sides, but choice to travel the many spokes. For Tom and Susie Yellowtail they could effectively dance the varied paths, the many spokes, when acknowledging the indispensable and interdependent relationship of the many dances within the inexorable, greater whole, the anchoring hub and encompassing rim, while at the same time distinguishing



Tom and Susie Yellowtail at their home in Wyola.  
Photo: Frey 1976

the unique integrity and the separate significance of each of the many dances, discerning on which path it is appropriate to dance this or that dance, each way of knowing and experiencing the world, each spoke. They can effectively dance when acknowledging the anchoring hub and distinguishing the many spokes. Without such, there would be little turning of the Wheel.

The Apsáalooke term for a clan is appropriately, *ashammaléaxia*, “as driftwood lodges,” the social unit comprised of several matrilineally-related, extended families. It’s a term with broad application. Imagine looking out onto the Bighorn River. Individual pieces of driftwood don’t do well in the fast moving currents, bashed against a boulder there, submerged in an eddy here. But there along the river’s bank the driftwood is lodged into a large bundle, each of the many logs of driftwood in critical relationship with another, each supporting one another, the whole enduring well in that turbulent river of life. And what can bind the driftwood so tightly is a relationship expressed broadly by the Apsáalooke practice of *ammaakée*, “give away” – of giving to and sharing with others, with all those in need.

The Wheel-*ashammaléaxia* metaphor has facilitated the separate integrity of each of the many while embedding them within an interdependency of the greater whole. The Wheel-*ashammaléaxia* can thus provide a map for traveling the many paths without dilemma, without having to make an either-or choice. It’s a map that can chart a course, a map that can create a

path, when done with “competence.” It’s a map of the world, brought to life in deed and action, embedded by values of inclusion, of interconnection, of equality. Regardless of how seemingly irrevocably distinct from the other, the varied paths we encounter can be traveled without threat of their mutual exclusivity.

But it is a matter of knowing your map, of knowing its terrain. For Tom and Susie there was a critical competency in knowing which context and setting to be a devout Christian and a sincere Sundancer, a skilled nurse, and a spiritual healer. Knowing the map goes beyond just acknowledging or even just respecting the distinctions of the spokes; its hard work, it takes effort. Tom and Susie repeatedly demonstrated their capacities to effectively converse and communicate with Baptist parishioners, with Sundancer participants, and with Indian Health Service practitioners alike, of applying the subtle etiquette, nuances and languages of each. While such distinct communities, Tom and Susie worked with the members of each so easily, always in collaboration, helping sustain their respective “Little Brown Church,” Sundance Lodges, and IHC Hospital communities, without “mutual exclusivity.” It was little wonder that Tom, as Alan Old Horn, were at ease incorporating overtly Euro-American images to convey essential and nuanced Indigenous meanings, that of the “tin shed” and even a colonial-laden “wagon wheel.” It’s a competency in knowing that only when the individual logs of driftwood are kept distinct and strong in relation to the others does the lodged driftwood survive.

It’s not unlike a powwow dancer. While wearing his “traditional regalia,” the dancer moves with reserved dignity grounded with the earth. But while donning his “fancy dance regalia” that same dancer spins and leaps with vigor as if soaring above the earth. The dancer is free to dance either style, but in attempting to do so he must be keenly aware of the differing skills and moves needed for and etiquette associated with each dance style – keenly aware if the two Eagle-feather bustles of a fancy dancer are to be worn, or the one or none at all as with a traditional dancer. And then there is another regalia worn at his college graduation, indicative of yet another separate set of skills and moves the dancer has acquired. Each regalia is distinct from the others, each appropriate for a different path, but each can be donned by the same dancer, with the competency to know the difference. The dancer would never attempt to spin and leap while in his traditional regalia, though he might in his graduation gown! From the

many regalia a powwow is made whole and one, each of the many in its proper order and place following the Eagle-feather Staff of the Grand Entry.

For the powwow dancers, as with Tom and Susie Yellowtail, they can effectively don the many regalia and dance the varied paths, the many spokes, when acknowledging the indispensable and interdependent relationship of the many within the greater whole, while at the same time distinguishing the unique and separate significance of each of the many. Dancers discern on which path it is appropriate to don each regalia, each way of knowing and experiencing the world, when acknowledging the hub and distinguishing the spokes.

Wagon Wheels and rock Medicine Wheels? Sundancer Participants, Baptist Parishioners, Indian Health Service Practitioners? The interplay between the spokes and the hub? The interplay between the unique and the universal, between our collective diversity and what we share in common? Are there lessons to be learned? Huckleberries to be placed in our basket? And how would I best heed Cliff's advice, attending to both the internal and external healing, both the Heart and Head Knowledge ways?



In my own unfolding healing journey, the Wheel did indeed offer a map, a means to meet the challenges, to chart paths through a dark territory – huckleberries to guide and nourish. The Wheel allowed me to simultaneously travel what seemed “mutually exclusive.”<sup>14</sup> I could travel the spoke of Indian Names, Eagle-feathers, the Sundance way and Heart Knowledge, while at the same time travel the spoke of chemotherapy, radiation treatment, an autologous stem cell transplant and Head Knowledge – without discord, in balance, equally. I certainly brought to bear my own levels of competency in being able to dance the distinct and unique spokes of the Apsáalooke Sundance way and Western biomedical way, in my healing journey of 2006 and again following my relapse in 2009. I danced, or should I say, reclined under an IV connecting me to chemo drugs and then to a small pouch of my own stem cells, hopefully as easily as I did with the spirit of the Buffalo.

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14 Many of the “wagon wheel huckleberries” referred to here were gathered while on my personal life’s journey with my adopted families. While that is a journey parts of which are shared here, other segments of the journey are more fully re-told in the essay, “If All These Great Stories Were Told, Great Stories Will Come” (Frey, Yellowtail and SiJohn *in* Crawford O’Brien 2008:185-205).

As I sought to “pay particular attention to my inner healing,” it was Tom’s most cherished narrative, an oral tradition that further refined a path, helped navigate through a most perilous and unfamiliar territory – a young Native boy would help chart the course of action for an adult Anglo man (Frey, Yellowtail and SiJohn *in* Crawford O’Brien 2008:185-205).

Without warning, we could “stumble and fall,” a healthy state was taken away. **It’s evening. Over there, they’re running through camp, chasing each other, and a boy falls, his face landing in the hot coals of the fire.** For a young Apsáalooke boy a face is hideously scarred after falling into a fire pit. And for me, a body infested with malignant cells.

Confusion and solitude resulted. **He comes out of his tipi, and they gather around, they see the scar and someone calls out, “hey, Burnt Face!”** For a young boy it’s a life of ridicule and rejection, of living alone, as if without family, orphaned. For me it was the awkwardness of others not knowing just quite what to say, how to relate to someone with cancer, or perhaps it was going incognito, as my bushy eyebrows along with my dark though graying head of hair vanished, along with my identity. But for both of us, the isolation was soon replaced with the loving support of family and friends. Prayers given, preparations made.

For each there awaited a long journey of humility and perseverance, of sacrifice and offerings made. **He travels alone to those high mountains of the Big Horns, wearing out each four sets of moccasins his mother had made. There, high on the mountain, the Sunrise and Sunset clearly seen, he goes without food and water, offers daily prayer with tobacco and Pipe his father gave him. Under the watch of the Sun, he moves huge rocks, there, that one, and there, to form a great Wheel offering, twenty-eight spokes with a rock hub, like the Sundance Lodge. It takes him awhile. It’s an offering, showing his sincerity; a gift to whoever might come, perhaps to the *Awakkulé*, the Little People, who inhabit this area.**

My own journey involved travel to Lewiston in 2006, and then to Seattle and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Institute in 2009, of undergoing days, weeks and months of chemotherapy and irradiation, of their chaotic side-effects – fatigue, nausea, neuropathy – and of an invasive stem cell transplant, all augmented by my own “rock offerings.” Among the gifts I held tight to and laid out in daily prayer were my Indian Names – *Maakuuxshiichíilish*, “Seeking to Help Others,” the name Tom bestowed on me during a Medicine Bundle ceremony in 1977

when he brought me into his family, and *Kw'lk'il Sqqi*, "Little Red Hawk," the name Cliff bestowed on a brother during a Jump Dance in 2006, the name referring to the Red-tailed Hawk, who carefully watches and then swoops down to gather his catch, in so doing providing for others, others in need. I also held tight to my gift of Medicine – *Bishée*, received during my fourth Sundance in 1978. This was a journey that called on me "to be attentive" to what I most cherished, and, with renewed vigor, to what I must do with these special gifts, now and throughout my life's journey. This segment of the journey was one of sacrifice and perseverance, in the hope that a healing would come, always holding tight to the special gifts.

There are no guarantees. As Tom noted in his re-telling, Burnt Face could have perished high on that mountain. But the healing journey can also meet with success, with transformation. **And they do come, the Little People; they'd been watching him. They take him in, adopting him; he calls them "Medicine Fathers," and his scar is removed. It's like a new born child's face.** For me, I too was "reborn" as if "a child," the malignant cells destroyed. The power from the prayers and songs of family and through the feathers of the Eagle had entered my being and pulled from it that which can knock one off their path. And assuredly, the journey continues, thankful for each day, living each to its fullest.

Following the stem cell procedure I lost a lifetime of built up immunity, the chemo and radiation destroying the malignant cells, along with my



Receiving the Stem Cells and a "pat on the back."

Photo: Roby 24 July 2009

I had to re-take all my

childhood immunization shots, as if a 6 and 12, and 18 and 24-month old child, with my last series of shots, my mumps and measles vaccination. I was indeed "reborn as a child."

**A Language of the Hub.** And immediately following the stem cell transplant, something else was lost, and something else realized. As alluded to, as part of my 2009 autologous stem

cell transplant, I underwent two days of intensive chemotherapy and four days of Total Body Irradiation (TBI), in order to purge my body of cancer. Most intriguing, those four days of irradiation in Seattle were the same four of the Apsáalooke Sundance, held in Montana, that my son was helping sponsor. As I stood before and underwent a certain type of medically induced rays, so too did my family and friends dance and undergo the rays of the Sun. In a chamber of lead-lined walls, I too heard the songs and stories of the Sundance and Burnt Face, re-sung and re-told in Tom Yellowtail's voice, played on a CD player. For an eight day period, following the effects of this traumatic and radically chaotic rendering of my physical being from the TBI and chemo drugs, my bone marrow was totally compromised, shut down – I could no longer produce the life-giving fluids my body thirsted. I was no longer a viable living being, but dependent on transfusions of the red blood cells and platelets provided through the generosity of others. I was at the threshold none of us seek, but inevitably we must all cross over.

But out of this chaos emerged another sort of time and place. There emerged a liminality, a “betwixt and between,” what Arnold van Gennep (1960) and Victor Turner (1967 and 1969) have perceptively identified and articulated for us in the anthropological literature. It's a “timeless-spaceless” domain, betwixt and between the temporally and spatially-defined spokes. It's where-when you get one of those rare opportunities to truly and deeply listen, with few extraneous distractions, devoid of mundane sensibilities and concerns, as in the Big Lodge or atop a hill, or perhaps while on a healing journey. You get an opportunity to see what is right before you, but normally veiled by convention and establishment, to sort through to what is most vital and essential, a chance to take “being attentive” to an all together new level.

Out of the chaos, during this liminal period following my stem cell transplant, it was not fear or anxiety or even apprehension I felt. It was an overwhelming and crystalline sensation of what I can only identify as akin to “empathy and compassion.” As I continued to walk the halls of my hospital ward, with life-giving IV fluids attached and my Medicine Bundle close at hand, I felt my heart palpitating, literally reaching out to those around me – some patients on the road to health, others moving in another direction. I had never before experienced such an innate connectedness, such an outpouring of care for others – at a place transcending my physical viability, at a place eclipsing either Sundance or biomedical ways, yet inclusive of both.



While difficult to put into precise words, the very essence and meaning of empathy, inlaid with a generous dose of compassion, was unmistakably felt and expressed during my betwixt and between. “Empathy” had something to do with my capacity to place myself in someone else’s position, in the shoes of another, and of having an awareness, of being attentive to their particular situation and condition. And “compassion” was having the capacity to unselfishly give support to another, to help overcome that which troubles. With both empathy and compassion resulting, if not in the elimination, at least in the blurring of the categories of “self” and “other” altogether, each to some extent an extension of the other.



Throughout my healing journeys, I was able to transverse not only certain differentiated spokes, with a degree of competency, but there was also this hub and rim I transversed, that anchored and secured those head and heart-knowledge spokes, that emanated out of our “shared humanity.” While engaging with oncologists, surgeons and nurses, emanating out of head knowledge dualism, or while engaging with Sundance *akbaalía* and family members, emanating out of heart knowledge holism, distinct from one-another in so many remarkable ways, they all so clearly shared and extended to me a universal human face of empathy, care and compassion, transcending their fundamental differences. That “pat on the back” can penetrate oh so deeply, be it extended from the hand of a doctor in a white coat or from an *akbaalía*’s hand holding an Eagle-feather fan.



In reflection, it was a language I first experienced many years ago, with such sincere expression, in Tom Yellowtail’s face. I can still vividly remember, in so many instances, when a family member and often, a perfect stranger, perhaps a non-Indian, would be seated next to and conveyed to Tom his or her particular illness or distress, just prior to being “doctored” during a Medicine Bundle ceremony. You would see in Tom’s face, his eyes, indeed his entire being, a complete absorption, a degree of listening that it was as if Tom had himself entered into and was experiencing the pain and suffering of his patient. And then a few moments later, with the Medicine Bundle opened and facing East, the patient would be “doctored” by Tom.

The Eagle-feather fan pulsed over the body, here and there penetrating so deeply, and then pulled away, and with it the affliction, pointing the fan to the East, “letting it go with the westerly winds.” It’s little wonder that Tom could connect so easily with so many diverse people, as he stood at that Chicago podium in 1993. And, do not all the great spiritual traditions of the world, each diverse in varied ways, Hindu and Buddhist, Christian and Muslim, all affirm the face and hand of Divinity, of the Infinite, to be ultimately that of empathy and compassion? A “pat on the back” now has such renewed and invigorated meaning; empathy and compassion omnipresent languages unto themselves.

**Another Language of the Hub.** And in reflection there was yet another huckleberry offered that summer of 1974, a huckleberry that, like empathy, could provide a language that transcended the idiosyncratic spokes that can divide, that can bridge the seemingly “mutual exclusive” among us. Another huckleberry of the hub, of our shared humanity.

I can still see with such clarity that first meeting I had with Tom Yellowtail. I had phoned and asked if we could visit on a tribally-sponsored project I was involved with that summer of 1974. Upon arriving at his rural homestead I found Tom tending to his pigs, fixing the fence that ways seemed susceptible to their burrowing ways. There was a calm to his demeanor, as he gently spoke to these large beasts, in the tone I soon learned akin to that spoken to his own grandkids. And we struck up a conversation. I was always amazed at the almost immediate rapport we had with one another, “as if we had known each other for years.” Yet we came from such radically different backgrounds, seemingly little in common. I was the younger by forty-five years, very urban-oriented, from a middle-class family, shrouded in white male privilege, raised far from Tom’s way of life. Yet we could relate and converse with such ease. We soon shared a complete trust in and with one another that would only intensify over the next nineteen years. But in reflection, how was it that two people, so different from one another in so many ways, could come to share so much in common, so effortlessly, so readily?

For Tom and me, an additional “language” of our hub, as you might have already surmised, was the power of “story.” It was story conveyed in narrative, in song and dance, even in a pictorial representation on a beaded bag, a vest or a cradleboard. Through the sharing of the many oral traditions, and of our own life’s stories, through *baaéechichiwaau*, “re-

telling one's own" – of heroes and tricksters, of quests and transformations, of sorrows and joys and humor – we easily conversed and trusted, we easily transversed our differing spokes. Through our stories, Tom and I felt, we cried, we laughed, with remarkable affinity.

Successfully speaking the language of "story" has meant a competence revolving around deeply listening and engaging, with the heart, with honesty and humility, as Tom did often for perfect strangers, so akin to empathy itself. During the act of re-telling a narrative, done with all the skills and techniques of an elder raconteur, with all the power of the spoken word, the intention is to welcome the listeners and then transform them into participants, fully engaged within the unfolding story, traveling and speaking with Coyote. And on those special re-tellings, the First Peoples "come *alive* . . . they *swirl around* you as the Turtle is saying his thing or as the Chipmunk is saying something . . . they *swirl around* you . . . this is Chipmunk talking to you . . . this is Coyote talking to you . . . all these things *suddenly come alive*." It is of little wonder that the languages of story and of empathy are fundamentally complementary and interrelated modes and styles of sharing and feeling between and among people.

As I have identified, it was through narratives, that of Tom's Wheel and Burnt Face, that a path was charted through a dark territory and maps offered to transverse the "seemingly mutual exclusive" ways of the Sundance and biomedicine. And it is through narrative that the format and style, indeed the very content of this essay is defined, *baaéechichiwaau*. These are stories that have created my world and re-defined me in relation to my Indigenous hosts, my colleagues, my students and my family, now defining me in relation to you – they are "stories



that make the world." And in their re-telling, they are stories offered to you, for you the reader. Hopefully I've been able to re-tell these stories in a manner welcoming you within, as a traveler with me and my hosts, with Coyote and

Burnt Face, and the Little People. And if so, perhaps there's been a huckleberry or two that was added to your own basket? Tom would remind us, that whatever irretrievably divides our spokes is not so great that it cannot be bridged by some expression or capacity of our shared humanity, through some form of common language, some form of hub. And as one ultimate expression of our shared humanity, "are we not the stories we tell," imbuing and renewing at once, our origins, our destinies, our worlds, ourselves, for "in the stories we are" (Frey 1994:5).

**Further Applications: Traveling from the Personal to the Professional.**

While applicable in one person's healing journey, could these Wheel huckleberries nourish and guide in other situations, for me, as well as for others, for you? Could Tom's Wheel have implications for communicating and collaborating with perfect strangers? In promoting basic civility with those seemingly different from ourselves? In truly understanding the many strangers amongst us? And could the Wheel huckleberries offer insights into building community itself? As well as the creativity and discovery needed to sustain community? Could the Wheel address the varied dilemmas associated with the "mutually exclusive?" Could the lessons of Tom's Wheel, of the interplay between the unique and the universal, between the diverse and the shared in common, find application in other aspects of my unfolding story, in my professional life as a researcher, as a teacher, for my students? For you?

Certainly throughout all my teaching and research, understanding the interplay of the unique and universal, the collective diverse and shared in common, has invariably played itself out in a myriad of ways, expressed in a rich and vibrant tapestry – be it while glimpsing the narratives of the Indigenous Aranda of central Australia or Inuit of the central Arctic, the narrative of Christianity, Hinduism, or Taoism, the narrative of Science or Capitalism, the narrative of Abraham's Covenants with the Lord or Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address, the narrative of in a Pablo Picasso painting or a Sufi Nasrudin tale, or the narrative view from atop a tower at Jericho of 10,000 years ago, through Galileo's telescope, or from within Plato's Cave.

While teaching about world religions, for example, my students have found similarity between Tom Yellowtail's Wheel and the Hindu narrative. We learn from Hinduism, that while there are many different religious paths or *yogas* expressed in this religion, for example *Bhakti*, *Jnana*, *Karma* and *Raja Yogas*, and while there are literally millions of distinct manifest Gods and Goddesses within whom each individual can find affiliation, nevertheless, all the Gods and Goddesses are subsumed within the ultimate divinity of a singular omnipresent Brahman and all the *yogas* inevitably lead to the same Infinite bliss, *Moksha*. In Hinduism we find another expression of the interplay between the many diverse spokes and the ubiquitous hub/rim.

The Wheel has affinity with the Taoist narrative as well. Ultimately each narrative emanates out of a monism - for Taoism, the nameless Tao, and for the Apsáalooke, the varied-named Creator – *Akbaatatdía* – “the maker of all things first,” *Isáhka* – “old man, *lichíhkbaaleeish* – “the first doer.” Nevertheless, both manifest “the myriad” expressions of reality beginning with and continuing through a binary – for Taoism, with the Yin Yang, and for Tom Yellowtail, with the hub/rim and spokes, and then with the spokes. The binaries embedded within the Taoist and Apsáalooke narratives relate to each other as interdependent and balanced. Complementarity highlights the structures of these binaries.

Closer to home, for many of us, the interplay of the particular and ubiquitous, the diverse and universal, plays its self out in most revealing ways in the Christian and Scientific narratives. In contrast with the Apsáalooke, Hindu and Taoist narratives, it could be argued that both these stories revolve around a dualism that is fundamentally oppositional and hierarchical in character, rather than complementary and interdependent. This can be witnessed in the Christian vignettes of Genesis and the Fall, and in the Abraham’s covenants with the Lord – of the birth of knowledge of good and evil, of being vanquished from Eden and living in sin, yet the possibility of atonement and salvation in the Kingdom of God – of being fruitful and filling the earth, of subduing it and having dominion over every living thing that moves on the earth – of being a “chosen people,” of having your children blessed and your enemies cursed by the Lord. And as discussed previously with the Godfathers of Science, this oppositional and hierarchical dualism can also be observed in a series of Science vignettes forming the foundations of the scientific method. In embracing the scientific method and the premise that science holds the keys to unlocking the secrets of the natural world, we adhere to a dualism that separates us from nature so that ultimately we can have control over nature. Whatever the extent they are akin or distinct, the spokes of Christian and Scientific narratives are to be differentiated in fundamental ways from that of Heart Knowledge.

Closer yet to home, some of my students have noticed just the opposite, that the spokes of Heart Knowledge and aspects of the Western intellectual narratives have some affinity, are not so divergent. Reflect on the Rainbow and its transitory intersections of those participating, and how that case resembles the assertions of quantum physics, particularly its Copenhagen

interpretation and Heisenberg principle – the observer is incontrovertibly part of the observed. Did not the renowned physicist John Wheeler (1911-2008) not also say that the “vital act is the act of participation”? And consider the influential philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), who advocated what can be called a sort of spiritual monism. He challenged Descartes’ mind/body dualism, contending that all of Nature was inherently unified, its substance ultimately indivisible, and that Nature was derivative of a non-monotheistic “God,” much more similar to the Hindu Infinite and impersonal Brahman than the Christian anthropomorphic God.



Putting up the tipi.  
Students and author, 1999

And at home, it was a student and teacher who reminded me that the Wheel has remarkable parallels with the tipi. The connection was identified during a campus colloquium presentation by D’Lisa Pinkham, a Nimíipuu, who was working on her doctorate in education and is herself an experienced teacher in the Lapwai school district on the Nez Perce Reservation and developing an Indigenous pedagogy in her own classroom (2012). While using the tipi as a visual and conceptual design for a larger understanding and class presentation of a culturally-relevant curriculum in her own teaching, she pointed out the metaphoric relationship between the Wagon Wheel

and the tipi as understood by her family. Among the parallels she mentioned were the tipi poles as the spokes of the Wheel, representing the individual members of her graduate student class, as well as of her students in her own elementary school classes. Each distinct, each with his or her own unique stories, and yet together they come to make up a whole family, a home welcoming its diverse kinsmen. Critically, it was the place where the individual tipi poles came together and were tied to create the four-pole foundation for the other poles and the entire lodge, a place her people call *tiwa*. This place is the foundation, the center, the hub, where no one pole could stand alone without the support of these others. Once erected in their proper order, the poles were then wrapped with the tipi cover and firmly staked to the ground, and the lodge now able to withstand the “colonizing winds” that would seek to blow the Indigenous

lodge down. As D’Lisa said, “If my students have a strong, sturdy tipi, they sure can tell some good stories in there!” When viewed from within looking up or from the vantage point of an Eagle gazing down, it’s the unmistakable image of the hub and spokes of the Wheel.



Each fall, for the last fifteen years or so, as part of our university’s Columbus Day “Celebration” (though not actually a sanctioned event), it has been important to help remind students on campus that there continue to be rich, vibrant and sovereign Indigenous populations on this land. And that it was they who had already “discovered” what aliens would call, through the eyes and actions of a colonizer, “America.” I have my students, without much coaching from me, step-by-step, erect a twelve-foot, Crow lodge – right in the middle of the campus. Among the tasks is aligning the lodge with the East, offering those who would emerge each morning from its door an opportunity to give thanks to the Sun and orienting the smoke flaps so the smoke could easily ascend out of the lodge without the prevailing westerly winds intruding the smoke back within. In erecting this “four-pole lodge” there is also a judging of the placement of the two rear and two front foundational poles; the poles to the west slightly shorter, creating a steeper angle on the back side, the side facing the prevailing winds. Then there is the particular order of placing the poles onto the four-pole base. The placement can create a tight or loose fit, a distinct and differing configuration at this juncture of the poles. A next critical step is in deciding the spot on the “lift pole” where the canvas lodge cover will be secured, a point on the pole that approximates where the crotch is formed by the intersection of all the poles, a decision essential if there is to be an even, narrow spacing between the ground and the edge of the cover. With the cover tied to the lift pole and pole lifted from the



In the comfort of the lodge.  
Students with author, May 2005

rear of the lodge, the poles are wrapped by the lodge cover and with wooden pins, secured down the front of the lodge. The ends of the poles are adjusted outward, as wooden pegs are pounded into the ground, tightening the cover to the poles and to the ground, top to bottom no wrinkles, tight enough to create the “sound of a drum” when the lodge is hit, taut enough to grab hold the earth, all the more, when the strong winds blow. All in all, no small set of tasks. And “the grandmothers are watching!” The silhouette of this Crow lodge on the horizon, with its particular pole alignment and cut of the cover smoke flaps, help distinguish it from a three-pole Sioux lodge; not bad information to know depending on Tribal affiliation back in the 1840s while traveling buffalo county. Following a little prayer, the lodge is ready to welcome its family. Unwittingly, I’ve thus been having my students experience, while erecting the tipi, yet another expression of the Wheel.

**A Dynamic Wheel: Culture Change.** My students have come to also learn that Tom’s Wheel is not static and stationary, but always on the move; it’s a dynamic Wheel – a turning Wheel. Though certainly not an explanatory theory, the Wheel offers my students an approach to categorizing and differentiating the temporal dynamics and changes found within and between narratives. Witnessed are alterations in the character of spokes, as well as the geniuses of new spokes themselves and the eclipsing of others. As we have seen, Tom Yellowtail had effectively traveled a spoke his distant forefathers had not known, that of Christianity. The dynamics of the turning Wheel can entail processes such as “incorporation” and “syncretism.” The first involves the borrowing and inclusion of a trait from another spoke, and the second, the blending of characteristics from distinctly separate spokes to form a new integrated spoke. This latter process is wonderfully exemplified in our own University of Idaho’s Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, in American blues and jazz, the blending of elements from distinctly African and American musical traditions to form a new tradition.

These are processes contingent on some expression of “creativity.” Creativity entails the cognitive and affective capacities of freely envisioning, of going beyond and transcending the idiosyncrasies of one’s own spoke. Then of reconfiguring symbolic attributes (referents and units of referents) from distinctly separate spokes, of re-envisioning once disparate properties, in a novel way. This “envisioning” and “reconfiguring,” I would suggest is akin to the deeply



listening, the attentiveness found while in the liminal, the timeless and placeless “betwixt and between.” But if the act of creation is to ultimately take hold and flourish, it must also find some sort of “lodging,” some sort of integration within the pervading or perhaps newly re-arranged “driftwood.” It must be aligned within the larger configuration or paradigm, be it an artistic narrative, an economic, scientific, social, philosophic, political, religious, or some other mega-narrative. The “aligning” occurs in varied ways, some of which are not so cohesive and supportive – the Ford Edsel, others transformative and nurturing – Cooper’s cell phone.

With creativity comes the possibility of new spokes and the dissolution of "out-dated" others, as the scientific narrative of Ptolemy was replaced by that of Copernicus and Newton, and, in turn, replaced by that of quantum mechanics, chaos and string theory. With creativity comes the possibility of new spokes supplementing and building upon, though not necessarily replacing existing spokes, as the artistic narrative of 19th century Neo-Classicism was followed

by Realism, by the Romanticism as exemplified in Eugène Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) or with particular insight for the American Indian in John Gast’s *American Progress* (1872), by Impressionism, by the Cubism as reflected in Pablo Picasso’s *Le guitariste* (1910), by Surrealism, by Abstract Expressionism, by . . . . And



John Gast’s *American Progress*, 1872

when you take a closer look, each of these artistic styles are themselves expressive, in differing ways, of the interplay of the unique and ubiquitous, of the diverse and shared in common. Sally Machlis, an art professor colleague, once commented to me, “The artist’s focus is on the personal, while always alluding to the universal.”

The demise of spokes can also come about when the turning Wheel has gone awry. From other narratives my students and I learn what happens when the equality between the spokes is dismissed or even challenged, when the focus is only on the spokes, devoid of a

hub/rim consideration. When any sort of a shared humanity, any sort of hub/rim, seems implicitly or explicitly understood as something exclusively embedded only within "my" particular spoke. When the binaries are oppositional and hierarchical, the result can be hegemonic. There was a reason why Tom Yellowtail, along with the Dalai Lama and other spiritual leaders, were invited together on that October 1993 day in Chicago to offer prayer for world peace. Three descriptive processes exemplify a wavering Wheel: compartmentalization, assimilation and extinction.

Compartmentalization is a narrative involving an exclusive separation of the spokes, segregation without any form of integration between them. It can be witnessed in the schisms resulting from the contemporary "culture wars," in the ever increasing polarizing partisan politics between conservatives and progressives, or even within the academy itself, between the humanities and sciences, positivists and constructionists. It is exemplified at an insidious level in the history of segregation in the United States and of apartheid in South Africa.

While Tom certainly embraced inclusivity with the distinct others in his own community, welcoming them onto the dance floor with their particular regalia to partake of the powwow circle, others choose another altogether different dance which excluded his participation. While Tom could effectively communicate and collaborate with parishioners of his Little Brown Baptist Church, in Lodge Grass there was another Baptist Church down the street, the members of which refused participation with the Indian Baptists. Likewise, while Tom sought to work alongside his biomedical counterparts in the Indian Health Service Hospital, some IHS practitioners excluded him from doing the same. While seeking integration within a spinning wheel, Tom faced resistance and segregation in his own community.

Assimilation is a narrative entailing the dominance of one spoke, resulting in subjugation and often incorporation of another. These forced absorption practices were exemplified, beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with the European Christian Inquisitions and Crusades against "heretics" and "infidels," and with the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century United States federal policies toward American Indian communities, as Tom and Cliff's ancestors would attest. We continue to witness assimilation beliefs and practices, espoused by fundamentalist fringe groups within the Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim communities, towards others of differing religious

orientation. On a grand scale, the economic force and monoculturalism of “globalization” is yet another form of assimilation. Even the “ivy towers of academia” are not immune from a kind of fundamentalist, elitist ideology, which, if not acknowledged, left unchecked, can become inadvertently assimilationist. It’s voiced by some faculty who advocate “scientism,” asserting that only in the “natural sciences” is there a valid epistemology and method of inquiry, while down the hall an “artistic highbrow” would locate truth only in great literature and aesthetic expression. The suppression of others is most appalling in the levels of “human trafficking” going on world-wide today; that there are now more people suffering under the yoke of “slavery” than at any other time in human history. Assimilation can, in turn, lead to . . .

Extinction is the narrative involving the dominance of one spoke, through military, economic, political or some other hegemonic prowess, resulting in the failing, if not ultimate elimination of another. It is certainly exemplified in the policies of Nazi Germany toward Jews and other minorities during the 1930s - 40s, and in Rwanda of 1994, in genocide re-occurring far too often, in far too many places, to far too many species, right now. The forefathers of Tom, Alan and Cliff have all witnessed the horrific destruction of so much of their living traditions. And our human subjugation of the natural world, our insatiable appetite for energy and other natural resources, yet to be meaningfully addressed, is resulting in vast extinctions.

But out of the demise can also come a “rebirth” of a spoke, or even the genesis of an altogether new one. Out of the oppression and subordination can come a “revitalization” – a rejuvenation of ideas and ideals, or even a coalescing of innovative ideals and their practices, often led by a charismatic leader and a core of diligent disciples and followers, that can lead to the overturning of a hegemonic tyranny. We’ve witnessed such in the births of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This process was at the core of the birth of American Democracy, and we were getting glimpses of it again with what was being called the “Arab Spring.”

\* \* \*

**Coyote was traveling along one day, and begins to hear some strange singing and whistling. As he approaches an old buffalo skull, the sounds get louder. He still does not recognize the songs. Standing over the skull, the singing is coming from beneath it. Coyote turns over the skull and right there are mice holding a Sundance. They are dancing and**

**singing and blowing these tiny little whistles. They are doing exactly what you'd see in the Sundance. Coyote likes it so much that he wants to jump in and dance alongside the mice. He's about to, when the mice yell at him, "Stop, you're too big. You won't fit in our Dance." It is from the mice that Coyote learns of the Sundance and, in his travels, teaches it to the Human people (Frey 1987:37).**

\* \* \*

Alan and Cliff, and Tom and Susie would be quick to remind us of yet another expression of the dynamic Wheel, a way that a spoke within it can remain vital to the balance of that Wheel. Withstanding the onslaught of various assimilation and genocide pressures, from boarding schools to land allotment, from military defeat to smallpox, from poverty to discrimination, withstanding the demise the elders call it "tradition." It is a traditionalism that can bend with the winds of a tornado without breaking. It is a traditionalism that transforms the rigid dogbane fibers into strong and flexible twine, into a "living bag." It is a traditionalism that can anchor itself to the bones of the First Peoples, to the perennial *mi'yep*, while expressing and manifesting itself, its perennial integrity and meaning through ever-changing regalia and dance styles, through ever-altering storytelling styles and techniques of the differing and even succeeding generations of raconteurs, as with any re-telling of a Coyote story.

When I first experienced a great forked cottonwood about to be cut down to be used as the Center Pole in the Big Lodge, I anticipated seeing something "traditional." After driving some distance, over forty of us got out of our pickups and gathered around. In prayer and with an Eagle-feather fan in hand, the tree was first smudged with a burning braid of sweetgrass and then offered the kinnikinnick and tobacco burnt in the stone bowl of a Pipe. As the smoke, sweet to the senses, ascended from that Pipe, through its wooden stem directed toward the sky, so too did the words of the Sundance Chief, asking permission of the Tree for its use in the Lodge. Then as I stood there, I shouldn't have been surprised, but all the same, I was taken aback. I watched as a gas-powered chainsaw was brought out and started up, its sharp steel teeth easily cutting the Tree from its roots. No "stone axe" here. With steel axes and chainsaws, the downed Tree was "cleaned up," cutting limbs and branches to reveal its two great forks, though leaving their tips green with foliage. The forty of us lifted and pulled with

coordinated effort the huge Center Pole onto the trailer designed for telephone poles. Then back in our pickups, we were off down the highway, the Tree in tow to its destination.

And I ask in reflection, had any of the bones really been lost, had any of the *mi'yep* teachings really been discarded? Despite the high-pitched roar of the chainsaws and the pungent odor of burnt gas and oil that enveloped the Tree, it remained the conduit for the prayers of the dancers to the Creator. The Tree continued to be the avenue through which a healing might come to an infirm grandmother or wayward nephew, the *axis mundi* for a special gift from the Buffalo, the Eagle or some other Animal Person bestowed on a dancer. And from a knot on the Tree water was drawn and flowed so others could be refreshed.

The ritual expressions and styles of the Sundance over time offer an illustrative case in point of an ever dynamic yet tethered edifice. As viewed today, many of the overt ritual procedures of Sundance are rather distinct from the Crow Sundance as held during the 1800s, even though the same term is used to identify both (Lowie 1935:297). The structural arrangement of the Sundance poles was not as reflected in the Big Horn Medicine Wheel, but as modeled after a tipi, though large enough to accommodate numerous participants. A primary motivation for sponsoring a Sundance was to gain spiritual power to avenge the death of a relative. With intertribal warfare the Dance flourished. When the United States military triumphed and the conflicts resulting in death ceased so too did Apsáalooke Sundancing, all in conjunction with an imposed federal governmental edict prohibiting such "uncivilized, un-Christian" behavior. Interestingly and with the federal restrictions lifted, Sundancing resumed on the Crow Reservation in the early 1940s. The Apsáalooke borrowed the form of the Dance practiced by their neighbors to the south, the Wind River Shoshone, under the leadership and tutelage of their medicine man, "Old Man John" Trehero (Frey 1987:35-36). It was at a time of war, when relatives at home sought to offer prayers to those so far away, in harm's way. Added to this motivation and sponsorship of the 1941 Crow Sundance was the health of a small child. It is this Shoshone-derived expression of the Sundance that is witnessed today (Frey 1987:98-125). And certainly, as dynamic as the last two hundred years have been, speculating on the Sundance of 500 years ago, on the Sundance since time immemorial, their expressions would only vaguely be familiar to us today. Or would they?

On this grand temporal scale, I ask in reflection, had any of the bones of the *Ashkísse*, in whatever form and style through which they were expressed, really been lost, had any of the *mi'yep* teachings really been discarded? In the timeless *in illo tempore*, the Apsáalooke go without food and water, and dance hard, offer themselves in sacrifice for a loved one; they pray through an *axis mundi* and receive special communications and gifts of spiritual power and healing through that “center.” The tipi of old is re-told, modified, its converging poles now aligned with a Center Pole. Hierophanies shine through, while history is trumped. Coyote’s voice continues, accounting for and bringing forth the varied and changing styles and expressions.

Joseph Epes Brown, the quintessential scholar of American Indian religion and student of the famous Lakota holy man, Black Elk, once relayed to me a wonderful story of “adaptive traditionalism.” Joseph had spent some remarkable time with Black Elk at his home in South Dakota during the winter of 1947, recording in depth the ritual processes and symbolism of key Lakota rituals. Black Elk wished to have the rites associated with the Pipe recorded, “for as long as it is known, and for as long as the pipe is used, their people will live; but as soon as the pipe is forgotten, the people will be without a center and they will perish” (Brown 1953:xiii). While traveling far from home, Black Elk was staying at the elegant Brown Palace Hotel in downtown Denver. He had a desire to hold an *Inipi* ceremony, which centered on the use of the Sweat Lodge. Normally, access to a Sweat Lodge would be no problem, but in downtown Denver? Being resourceful, adaptive, Black Elk held his ceremony, right there in the middle of his hotel room with a window to an asphalt street of noise below. The Lodge was constructed by rearranging the chairs and blankets from his bed, fashioning them into a Lodge, its door opening to the east. After securing a few loose bricks from the fireplace wall and heating them red-hot in that fireplace, they were placed in an ash bucket and the bucket placed in the middle of the little Lodge. With a pitcher of water and a cup to ladle the water over the bricks, steam and prayers rose from that Sweat Lodge, from downtown Denver. And a soul was cleansed “from the inside out,” a body reborn, words were shared from the heart with *Wakan-Tanka*, the Great Spirit, words to nurture and protect the “two-leggeds, the four-leggeds, the winged ones,” “all my relations.” Even in this altered form and style of presentation, the sacredness

and efficacy of the *Inipi*, this rite of purification, was in no way compromised, its hallowed center found amongst the concrete and steel of the Brown Place. In the context of our discussion of the Wheel, it is worth noting that, like Tom Yellowtail, Black Elk too traveled many seeming disparate paths, without conflict. While having received a powerful vision as a youth and throughout his life traveling “the good red road,” and as the “keeper of the sacred pipe” for his people, Black Elk was also a practicing Catholic and could perform the rite of catechism.

Traditionalism is not to be equated with a static or even stagnate community, but one that is alive and dynamic, as with a re-telling of a Coyote story from generation to generation, its style and techniques of expression accommodating the creativity and discovery of its varied raconteurs, as well as adjusting to external and internal pressures, that would seek to knock the Wheel off balance, seek to bury the bones. While there is “an unequivocal relationship” between the *what* and the *how* of something, between the bones of an oral tradition and the style of re-telling that tradition, there can be multiple ways of re-saying the same thing. As with any symbolic expression, the meaning attached to a given symbol is not bound by its “unit of reference,” that is, a “referent” can be linked by any number of units of reference. Take our experience of a transitory intersection of water mist in the air, in relation to sunlight, in relation to your perceptual and conceptual participation, the unit of reference for this referent experience can be *wacámyos* (Nimíipuu), just as it can be “rainbow.” I can still vividly remember, at a Sundance encampment many years ago, listening to a wonderfully told story of a young boy hopelessly lost but eventually saved, “adopted” by the Little People. Almost immediately following this re-telling, another elder stepped in and said, “Oh no! It wasn’t the Little People but the Buffalo People how took the boy in” and went on to re-tell some of the story her way (Frey 1987:156-57; Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995:71). I was never certain if the difference between the two accounts was in relation to *where* the story was being re-told, a sort of deictic technique anchoring the story to a particular place, as we were just north of and viewing the “Castle Rocks” where the *Awakkulé* are known to reside, or as we were camped at the edge of the prairie where the buffalo once roamed farther to the east and north of us. Or perhaps the difference was a *generational* distinction between the two raconteurs, a son and his mother, reflecting altogether differing communication styles. Nevertheless, in both

instances the exact storyline was repeated and the bones of the story remained intact, differentiated only by styles of re-telling, by differing clusters of units of references.

Traditionalism is thus a timeless, re-occurring set of stories anchored to perennial bones, very distinct from the historic stories of Greece and science, the bones of which are replaced by newer ones with each succeeding shift in style pattern and paradigm. Coyote's story can be effectively re-told, be it orally in Apsáalooke, in English, on the written page, in a dramatized school play, by a son, by a mother, by an elder, or with permission, by an ethnographer, each differing in style, so long as each style leads the way to the Indigenous bones. Coyote's story along the Clearwater River, approached historically as a "pre-scientific" account, is not supplanted by a geological explanation. The traditional ways of the Sundance and Jump Dance continue to reverberate, anchored to their bones, with renewing Indigenous meaning and identity for their dancers, in a historic world that has sought their demise. The integrity and sovereignty of Alan and Cliff and Tom and Susie's Tin Shed spoke of the Wagon Wheel is maintained; its paths and territory continue to guide and be traveled.

**The Ethnographer: Reconsidered.** If we're to travel the territory of the spoke, indeed the many spokes of the Apsáalooke, the Schitsu'umsh and other Indigenous peoples of this land, and those beyond, as students, as teachers, we'd need to attempt to gain some level of competency in being able to don the regalia as an ethnographer. As I mentioned previously, an "ethnographer," in its distilled yet inclusive definition, is "one who seeks to understand the stories of others, and then of re-telling them for the benefit of others" – something we all seek, regardless of our particular disciplinarity upbringing? These are the stories of others that could be engaged by an archaeologist or historian, others of our temporal past. These are stories of others that could be engaged by a sociologist or journalist, others just down the block from us, our spatial neighbors.

Following Alan's lessons from the Tin Shed, we learned that the ethnographer's competence is predicated on first obtaining permission from our host and then of traveling in collaboration, he as our guide, always attempting to see from his perspective. This is a competence predicated on acquiring the language of our host, and of being as if a child, swaddled in the fabric of his Indigenous blanket – skilled in our application of sampling



techniques, semi-structured interviewing, and participant-engagements, all in consort with our host. This is a competence predicated on adapting our research design and methods, our research legitimizing criteria, our publication format and classroom pedagogy to an Indigenous learning style – to the place-bound, experiential, non-Cartesian knowledge, the *mi'yep* of the oral traditions and the power of the spoken word. This is a competence that can mediate an unbridled literacy with a nuanced orality and posted signage. This is a competence that seeks to render the stories accessible, welcoming all to the cross over the bridge, be they from an Indigenous community or from our worldwide community. This is a competence that seeks to “give back” to the others we serve, to those in need, of doing applied collaborative-based anthropology. This is a competence that seeks to “give back” to all in need, to our humanity, with applied and pure research. In seeking this competency I’ve come to realize the rich and vibrant terrain of this very unique Indigenous landscape, as well as just how much differentiates the landscape of this spoke from that of my own spoke, thus seeking a degree of competency of the many, many spokes that ring the hub.

And continuing our powwow regalia metaphor, the ethnographer’s regalia is remarkably similar to that of the contemporary powwow . . . . clown! Certainly devoid of spiritual qualities that can be imbued in the powwow clown, the ethnographer is nevertheless like the clown with its own distinctive albeit ambiguous regalia, often a combination of styles, Indian as well as Euro-American, fused in an amusing if not contrary fashion.<sup>15</sup> While clearly standing out from the crowd, standing out as unique, the clown is begrudgingly accorded a place within the Grand Entry and on the dance floor, a place within an interdependent whole. And while dancing, the clown/ethnographer provides a translation, an interpretive albeit comic pantomime of the other dancers – the fancy, the traditional, and the many styles about, all for the benefit of the on-lookers in the bleachers and chairs that surround the dance floor. And you know where I’m

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15 Paul Stoller (2009), with a wealth of personal experiences and theoretical extrapolations from the discipline of anthropology, insightfully wrestles with the positioning of ethnographers, as someone “between” cultures and realities, between the experiences of scientists and sorcerers, between universal rationalists and relativists, as someone like a Sufi master, pursuant of “embodied rationality.”

going with this; both clown and ethnographer can be made to look . . . . . the fool! We should never take ourselves too seriously, too self-assured, too Coyote.

I had this role and lesson wonderfully re-iterated during a powwow Cliff SiJohn was emceeing a few years back. It was a pretty well-attended dance, mostly Indian families, but a few non-Indians as well, a couple hundred in all, with several drums providing song. As with most powwows, various dances were highlighted, including Men's Traditional, Fancy and Grass, along with Women's Traditional, Jingle and Shawl, with plenty of Intertribal dances for all to partake. Then Cliff announced on his PA system, I'd like "Rodney Frey, . . . *professor* from the *University of Idaho*, and . . . . ," naming other specific white males in attendance, "and all the non-Indian men" to go out onto the dance floor. Surprised, we reluctantly did so, some twelve or so of us. On the floor we were greeted by several women, who loaned us their dance shawls, with its bright fringe. Most of these women then sat back down in the chairs that surrounded the dance arena, but a few women remained on the floor, as judges. Then Cliff gave the signal to a drum to begin the song and we were told to dance, dance the "Women's Shawl Dance!" You could imagine, or maybe not, but the laughter started almost immediately, continuing until the drum beat ceased. It seemed like forever, awkward, trying to move with the beat, legs and arms going every which way, a shawl having a mind of its own. What a way to learn and what a way to bring a good laugh to everyone, and a reminder to oneself!

But as ethnographers on the dance floors of others, would attaining a degree of competency in being able to don the regalia of the many diverse and unique spokes be enough? Was there something still missing, still needing to be acknowledged or acquired, in order to more fully understand and engage the Wheel, to enter and then travel within the Tin Shed, to enter and engage the many, many spokes of the Wheel?

We are reminded that while the many spokes of the Wheel certainly acknowledge and celebrate our differences, our collective diversity, and bring a strength and balance to the spinning Wheel, the Wheel only turns, without faltering, when the spokes are securely united and anchored in a common hub, and tightly embraced by an encompassing rim. We are reminded that we share in being part of a single, interwoven Grand Entry, a greater whole, an *ashammaléaxia*. I am convinced that Tom welcomed me in and guided me through his home

and that of the Sundance Lodge, not so much because I should or could, in some semblance, don the Indian regalia and dance this spoke, but because of our recognized shared humanity, conversing through our common languages. We played, explored and discovered through story, and laughed, wept and cared through empathy.

As ethnographers seeking to travel the Tin Sheds of others, we need to have the competency to don the regalia and dance a range of distinct spokes of our diverse humanity, while at the same time acknowledge and be able to speak the hub and rim languages of our shared humanity. Is not empathy a prerequisite for entry, and story a necessary condition for communicating and engaging within and outside the Tin Sheds? Is not empathy the quality that facilitates the very communications between humans, as Tom Yellowtail and the Dalai Lama stand before the 8,000, or as a *biilápxe* sings his “praise songs” for a clan son? Is not empathy that fundamental quality that allows humans and plants and animals to communicate, as in a prayer or song shared with a Camas or a Deer? Is not empathy that quality that ultimately serves to enable human and spirit peoples to commune with one another, be it before the Sundance Center Pole and to the Creator bringing forth a little water, with the Medicine Fathers beside a hospital bed as bullets are removed, in a *suumesh* song with one who has “Blue Jayed,” with the Little People as a face is made as a “child’s,” or as Coyote “swirls around” and a lake is made blue? And is not story the necessary condition that enables each of us to begin our engagement and appreciation of these mysteries? And what other languages of the hub await discover?

Surely intransigent exclusivity and separation, segregation by another term, should not prevail, but that there are many languages of the hub that can bridge and dissolve schisms. In mathematics I am reminded of the “Möbius strip,” named after August F. Möbius (1790-1868), a German mathematician (Frey 1994:184-85). When we take two separate and parallel lines, each with discrete beginnings and ends, never crossing over the other, we perceive an irrefutable exclusivity between the two lines. But Möbius responds by challenging our perceptions. Take a long narrow strip of paper, the outside lines of which represent the two exclusive lines. Twist the strip of paper by 180° and link both ends. What



was once separation is now an inclusive circular singular line, without beginning or end. In music theory I am reminded of the “*appoggiatura*,” from the Italian word “to lean upon.” When we hear dissonant notes, the sound resonates with an emotional jolting, while harmony comforts us with the anticipated. Used by Western musicians, from classical to popular music, an *appoggiatura* is an important ornament to elicit a very specific and intense emotional response. While much more nuanced and complex than suggested here, it is not unlike a grace note. Upon hearing two dissonant notes played together, the unexpected discord is immediately and emotionally registered by the listener. But as the melody continues, the dissonance is at once followed by a consonance, a harmonic cord that perceptually fuses what was once dissonant in one entity, often resulting in those “goosebumps” or “tears of joy,” shared alike by the once diverse strangers. From the separate spokes followed by a hub, comes goosebumps from a pat on the back. The varied languages of the hub, perceptual inclusions and affective consonances, might be discovered right before us.

When teaching the ways of Plateau Indians, I have sought to offer my students a classroom infused with an Indigenous pedagogy, rich with teaching methods that are family-based as opposed to solely individual-based, experiential and place-based as opposed to solely analytical-based, orality-based as opposed to solely literacy-based. I needed to attempt to swaddle my students in the fabric of an Indigenous blanket, and nourished on an appetite of heart knowledge, so they could begin to appreciate and engage the regalia of the Plateau People’s spoke. I have sought to provide an opportunity for my students to gain a competency in dancing the spokes of the Plateau Indians, as well as to become much more aware of the languages of our shared humanity. In stepping into someone else’s dance moccasins, the size and contours of one’s own feet become that much clearer.

When teaching anthropological research methods, I have sought, with renewed commitment, to offer my students some level of competency to be able to don the regalia of both head and heart spokes, of both positivist and constructionist/Indigenous research design, methods and interpretations; of both empirical (validity and reliability) and post-modern/Indigenous (authenticity, trustworthiness and appropriateness) criteria for legitimizing research, of both scientific (formal) and aesthetic (narrative) forms and styles of writing. I have

sought to provide an opportunity for my students to gain a competency in dancing the spokes of our human diversity, as well as in speaking the languages of our shared humanity.

In my Plateau Indians and research methods courses we experience something of the intersection of the lessons of both Alan's Tin Shed and Tom's Wheel. Interestingly, I've found the academic discipline of anthropology to be generally equipped, both methodologically and theoretically, at creating competencies in appreciating and understanding cultural diversity, in the ability to don the regalia of the varied spokes. In contrast, the discipline seems to be less accommodating at creating a place, albeit perhaps a liminal space? for us, as researchers, as writers, as students, to discover the languages of the hub, what we share in common.

**Ethnography: Humanities Style.** As an ethnographer conducting research, writing monographs, teaching courses, while attempting to travel with one foot on the spoke of the Tin Shed and the other planted on the spoke of the academy, I've always felt more comfortable wearing my collegiate shoe in the style of the humanities. More than in other academic disciplines, those of the humanities have offered a style that has facilitated for me travel over the many diverse spokes, while also allowing me to explore possible hub languages.

The humanities certainly share with other academic disciplines, such as those within the natural and social sciences, and with the arts, the goal of seeking to understand and appreciate the human condition, in all its rich expression in time and place. What distinguishes the humanities from other disciplines is not so much its content and subject – a creative playwright, a behavioral psychologist, and humanities professor could each be dealing with the same subject, for example, gender identity.

What distinguishes the humanities from other disciplines is its style, a method that is "interpretive." Taking my lead from the Idaho Humanities Council, the IHC defines the humanities as belonging to the "interpretative disciplines." These include cultural anthropology/ethnography, communications studies, cultural studies (such as American Studies, American Indian Studies, International Studies, Religious Studies, Women's Studies); they include the languages, law, literature, history, philosophy; and they include the *reflection and theory* in creative writing, in the performing arts of music, dance and theatre, and the *reflection and theory* in the visual arts of painting, sculpting and architecture.

While not a black and white distinction, the interpretative methodologies of these disciplines are typically distinguished from the positivist and empirical methodologies of the natural and social science disciplines, and from the creative and imaginative endeavors of the arts. Such interpretative methodologies, for example, include hermeneutics, literary criticism, phenomenology, and in my own discipline of ethnography, “thick description.”

These are distinctions that have been both the source of strength and the source of schism within my discipline of anthropology. Its subfields of physical anthropology, with its study of human evolution and biological diversity, and archaeology, with its study of prehistoric and historic societies, are primarily grounded in the sciences; while linguistics and ethnography, with their study of language and “living” cultural phenomena, are themselves splintered between those practitioners adhering to a humanities approach and those to a social sciences approach. A strength, in the sense that anthropology can claim to be *the* holistic study of the human condition; a source of schism, because at times a lack of ability, or will, to communicate and collaborate across disciplinary divides, an allegiance to method over goal, dividing faculty among faculty, students among students, and academic departments on campuses. We in the discipline can be our own worst enemy, creating strangers amongst us. Not a real confidence builder for those we seek to serve.

The humanities uniquely offer an interpretive style. To “interpret” certainly seeks to render something meaningful and understandable, serving to inform, enlighten, instruct. Likely first expressed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Middle English, “interpret” is derived from the Latin, *interpretārī* – “someone who serves as an agent, a negotiator.” Hence, to interpret seeks to (1) generate new knowledge, rendering something meaningful, be it culturally or historically distant, be it something more immediate but veiled in some fashion. But to interpret also seeks to (2) render that knowledge accessible, applicable, relevant, that is, linking and integrating. Indeed, “negotiating” known and knower. Indeed, to interpret, I would suggest, entails rendering knowledge empathic, of projecting the knower into the known, of placing you into the shoes of another . . . . of projecting the listener into the story as a participant with others!

The Idaho Humanities Council goes on to state that “through [the] study [of the humanities it seeks to] yield wisdom.” As written in the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts

and Humanities Congressional Act, which established the National Endowment for the Humanities and all the state councils, “Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens.” Wisdom is that deep understanding that goes beyond knowing, to thicken and extend our understandings, to apply, to engage that knowledge in civic life, both locally and globally, to address the challenges faced by humanity. To take up and tackle the “big questions.”

In his 2007 keynote address, Gary Williams, my predecessor in this role of Distinguished Humanities Professor, and building upon the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities statement, emphasized that the Humanities are “. . . a way of thinking about and responding to the world – tools we use to examine and make sense of the human experience in general and our individual experiences in particular. The humanities enable us to reflect upon our lives and ask fundamental questions of value, purpose, and meaning in a rigorous and systematic way.” As the 1965 Congressional Act stressed, the term “humanities” pays “particular attention to our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life” . . . . to both the particular and diverse, as well as the national and general “shared in common.”

With this understanding of the interpretative, wisdom-seeking nature of the humanities, the humanities are particularly well suited for our travels on the many spokes, traveling the Tin Shed of Heart Knowledge and, for example, the STEM disciplines – of science, technology, engineering, and math, of Head Knowledge. In interpreting and reflecting upon, in the re-telling of the Indigenous and STEM stories, the humanities can more fully render them accessible and applicable, and to integrate them more fully into our lives. The humanities, with its affiliation with empathy and storytelling, might just also offer another dialect of the language of the hub, a means for transversing the material and imaginative, the head and the heart in our lives, the varied spokes of the many strangers amongst us? And the anthropological discipline might just already have the means within itself to bridge the disciplinarity that at times divides itself?



### Addressing the “Mutually Exclusive”

Returning to the question posed earlier – do we have to give up our seat on the wooden bench if we’re to enter the Tin Shed (regardless of which academic shoe style we don while seated on that bench)? Tom’s Wheel certainly suggests an ambidextrous map, indeed a “strategy” for traveling the many diverse spokes, while at the same time conversing in our shared languages, without threat of divisiveness and schism. As exemplified in Tom and Susie’s lives, one can remain grounded in a scientific paradigm, in a world of discrete objects and Head Knowledge dualism, while also experiencing a transitory world co-created by those participating, a world of Heart Knowledge holism. One can keep the well-worn wooden bench of the natural and social sciences warmed, without need of reducing Indigenous knowledge to “mere fantasy and quaint beliefs and practices, to imaginary myths and superstitions,” or relegating it to some sort of “pre-scientific-stage” of human cultural development, of “primitive” albeit misplaced observations and explanations about what otherwise cannot be understood. Geology and Coyote can each account for those rock formations. Validity and authenticity can each be used as epistemological evaluative criteria. Two seemingly irrevocably distinct clusterings of units of reference can indeed account for and bring forth the same referent, absolutely the same thing. Hmm, the same symbolic process that facilitates travel over multiple paths is also that which facilitates the viability of a single path, traditionalism?

The Wheel can be kept balanced, any schisms bridged, the “mutually exclusive” rendered irrelevant, when successfully donning the varied regalia and shoes of our collective diversity, while speaking the common languages of our shared ubiquity. But it does take a will and desire to muster the competencies of the varied dance styles and of the shared languages.



University of Idaho students presenting a bag of the *Sqigwts*, “Water Potatoes,” to the Lucy Finley and the other elders.

Photo: Frey 1998



### **Huckleberries yet to be Gathered and Shared: Our Journeys Continue**

During a colloquium talk given by University of Idaho writer Brandon Schrand (2011), I was introduced to the literary genre known as the “personal essay.” Brandon pointed out that throughout its long literary tradition, first articulated in 1580 when Michel de Montaigne coined the word, the “essay” can be a deeply personal and informal literary device that, through the revealing of one’s own particular journey, seeks to evoke and engage the reader’s own experiences, helping bring meaning to our shared humanity. While etched in the particulars of one’s own story, as Montaigne wrote, “In every one of us is the entire human condition.” As thus conceived and implemented, a personal essay is not so much a definitive statement, a formal treatise on the subject, confined within a standardized format, as a wondering exploration into one’s inner territories, yet asking questions of us all.

In my own discipline of anthropology Paul Stoller, along with other essayists such as Ruth Behar (1996), have eloquently written and evocatively attested that, “As in ethnography, the memorable memoir is usually a text . . . in which the author constructs the personal as a bridge . . . that connects outer realities to inner impressions, others to selves, and readers to writers. In this way, these memoirs bring together disparate worlds and construct a deeper awareness of our common humanity” (Stoller 2009:164).<sup>16</sup>

As re-told here, I see the text now held in hand as having an affinity, in so many ways, with the Western literary genres referred to as a personal essay and the memoir – an Indigenous *baaéechichiwaau* genre. This is a re-telling of my journeys, of Alan Old Horn pointing the way into the Tin Shed and, then within, even if only at just the beginning of the trek, of Tom Yellowtail pointing the way into the Big Lodge, and of wondrous landscapes subsequently traveled, ripe with huckleberries to be gathered. Perhaps it is the case that the deeper we travel within the Tin Sheds of the many strangers amongst us, that the deeper we lay bare our personal, inner stories, discarding our overt distinguishing regalia, the farther out of the Tin Sheds we have actually emerged, merged with what we share in common, with our

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16 Ruth Behar (1996) and Paul Stoller (2007 and 2009), among others, provide strong, well-articulated arguments for the role and importance of “memoir” and “story,” of the “sensuous” and “emotive,” and of the blurring of the observer/observed distinction in ethnography.

adopted families. Perhaps the farther up the spokes of diversity we travel we eventually are fused with the hub of our shared humanity. If my own personal essay has in some way succeeded, perhaps it also illustrates another form of the interplay between the unique, about me, about others, about each of us, our spokes, and the common conditions of our shared existence, in me, in others, in each of us, our hub, dissolving those distinctions and asking questions of us all.

Tom and Susie Yellowtail, Alan Old Horn and Cliff SiJohn certainly remind us that there are so many strangers amongst us, so many Tin Sheds distinguished by such divisions as class, ethnicity, economics, gender or religion, by cultural distances, distinguished by academic disciplines and theoretical paradigms, distinguished by political affiliations. And Tom and Susie, and Alan and Cliff reiterate to us the questions: If we're to enter the Tin Shed of others and re-tell their stories, can we with competence effectively swaddle ourselves in our host's blanket, patterned in its particular perspective, learning style and epistemology, woven with the fibers of ethical, collaborative research, a blanket that can, in turn, be given away to provide comfort for others? If we're to effectively engage with and understand, communicate, and work together and build community in a world of so many strangers amongst us, are not the lessons from the hub and rim, of our shared humanity, just as critical as the lessons from the spokes, the lessons of our human diversity? If we're to travel within and outside of the many Tin Sheds, with the many strangers amongst us, can we with competence don the regalia of the many spokes, while also speaking our shared languages, languages such as those of empathy and of story?

And Tom and Susie, and Alan and Cliff ask, are not the implications of the interplay between our human diversity and shared humanity, between the unique and universal so essential and timely that they go to the very heart of how we can effectively communicate, collaborate, create and build community? Can we embrace the teachings of inclusion and interconnection, of equality and empathy as easily as they did? Can we, in our own lives, transverse the seemingly "mutually exclusive" as easily and effectively as they did in theirs? Cannot we overcome the entrenched partisan politics, the "my way or the highway," so endemic today? Do we have to wait to be galvanized by some external threat, some sort of

catastrophe, to re-discover what we already know, what we already can do? In our interactions with the many strangers amongst us, can we not find compromise and consensus, as we respect the integrity of the many diverse spokes and speak the languages of the common hub?

Let's come together to re-tell some stories. Let's swirl with the Coyote and talk with him. Let's do some *baaéechichiwaau* and see what awaits. Let's see what huckleberries we can gather – huckleberries that might guide and nourish, for ourselves, for others, for those in need, huckleberries that might meet the challenges and chart the world, huckleberries that might even create the world.



To re-iterate Tom Yellowtail's prophetic declaration, so elegantly and precisely spoken in 1993, just before his passing. We were at his cabin, far from the noise and bustle of the highway. Tom was re-telling his most cherished stories, including that of "Burnt Face," all of whom were to be included in our anthology, *Stories That Make the World* (1995). He wanted to leave these stories for his grandkids and for others. Late into the evening, after he completed his re-telling, Tom turned to me and stated, "If all these great stories were told, great stories will come!"



Tom at his cabin, sharing a story with the grandkids.  
Photo: Frey 1993

### A Proper Introduction: Acknowledgements

While this essay is certainly a re-telling of my own story, *baaéechichiwaau*, it is as much a re-telling of the great stories shared with me by some great storyteller hosts. Who I am is the culminating intersection of the lives of so many others. Let me now properly introduce myself, give you my name.

I am Rodney Paul Frey, the son of Wallace and Jeanne Frey, of German and English ancestry, and the husband of Kristine Roby and father of Matthew. My Crow name is *Maakuuxshiichíilish*, “Seeking to Help Others,” and my Coeur D’Alene name is *Kw’lk’ijl Sqqj*, “Little Red Hawk. I am the adopted grandson of Tom and Susie Yellowtail, of the Crow and Whistling Water clan. I am the adopted brother of Alvin Howe (Crow), Diane Medicine Crow-Reynolds (Crow), Rob and Rose Moran (Little Shell Chippewa and Warm Springs), Cliff and Lori SiJohn (Coeur d’Alene and Cayuse/Umatilla), Rayburn and Janet Beck (Wind River Shoshone) and Heather Kae Binkley (Nakoda/Saami).

Among the many others who have touched my life so deeply are Johnny Arlee, Vic Charlo, Agnes Vanderburg and Clarence Woodcock (Bitterroot Salish and Pend d’Oreille), Shaina Nomee (Cayuse/Umatilla), John Abraham, Dianne Allen, Felix Aripa, Lawrence Aripa, Lucy Finley, Dave Matheson, Quannah Matheson, Kim Matheson, Alfred Nomee, Mariane Hurley Nomee, Norma Peone, Frenchy SiJohn, Dixie Saxon, Ernie Stensgar and Marjorie Zarate (Coeur d’Alene), Leonard Bends, Marshal Left Hand, Joe Medicine Crow, John Old Coyote, John Pretty On Top, and the Real Bird and Yellowtail families (Crow), Francis Cullooyah (Kalispel), Basil White (Kootenai), Ann McCormack, Sam Penney, Josiah and D’Lisa Pinkham, Angel Sobotta, Leroy Seth, Vera Sonneck, Mari Watters, Silas Whitman and Nakia Williamson (Nez Perce), Thomas Morning Owl (Umatilla), Evaline Patt, Theron “Mish” Spino and the Spino Family, Lorraine Suppah and Bridgett Whipple (Warm Springs and Wasco), and John Trehero (Wind River Shoshone).

As a re-telling, inclusive of so many Indigenous stories, terms and concepts, gathered and re-arranged in this essay along a particular storyline, I give a special thanks to the various Bitterroot Salish, Coeur d’Alene, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Crow, Kootenai, Nez Perce and Spokane mentors, consultants, Cultural Committees, Circle of Elders, Tribal Councils

and/or Executive Committees who had invited me to engage in collaborative, applied research, writing and teaching, and previously reviewed and approved these stories for public dissemination (Frey 1979 and 1987; Frey, Aripa and Yellowtail 1995; Frey and the Nez Perce 2001; Frey and the Schitsu'umsh 2001 and 2002; Frey and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs 2003; Frey and Pinkham 2005; Frey and Williamson 2005; Frey, Yellowtail and SiJohn 2008).

Thank you to my colleagues and especially to my students, who “underwent” earlier versions of this essay as a “course packet,” but whose reactions and suggestions helped reawaken and bring to print many of my life’s stories now held in hand. In their honesty, students can be among our best teachers.

While they never fully understood my Big Lodge journey, so alien to their own upbringing, I owe my parents a huge thanks for preparing me with such core teachings as honesty, being attentive and taking responsibility. I doubt there would have been an invitation to enter the Tin Shed without them.

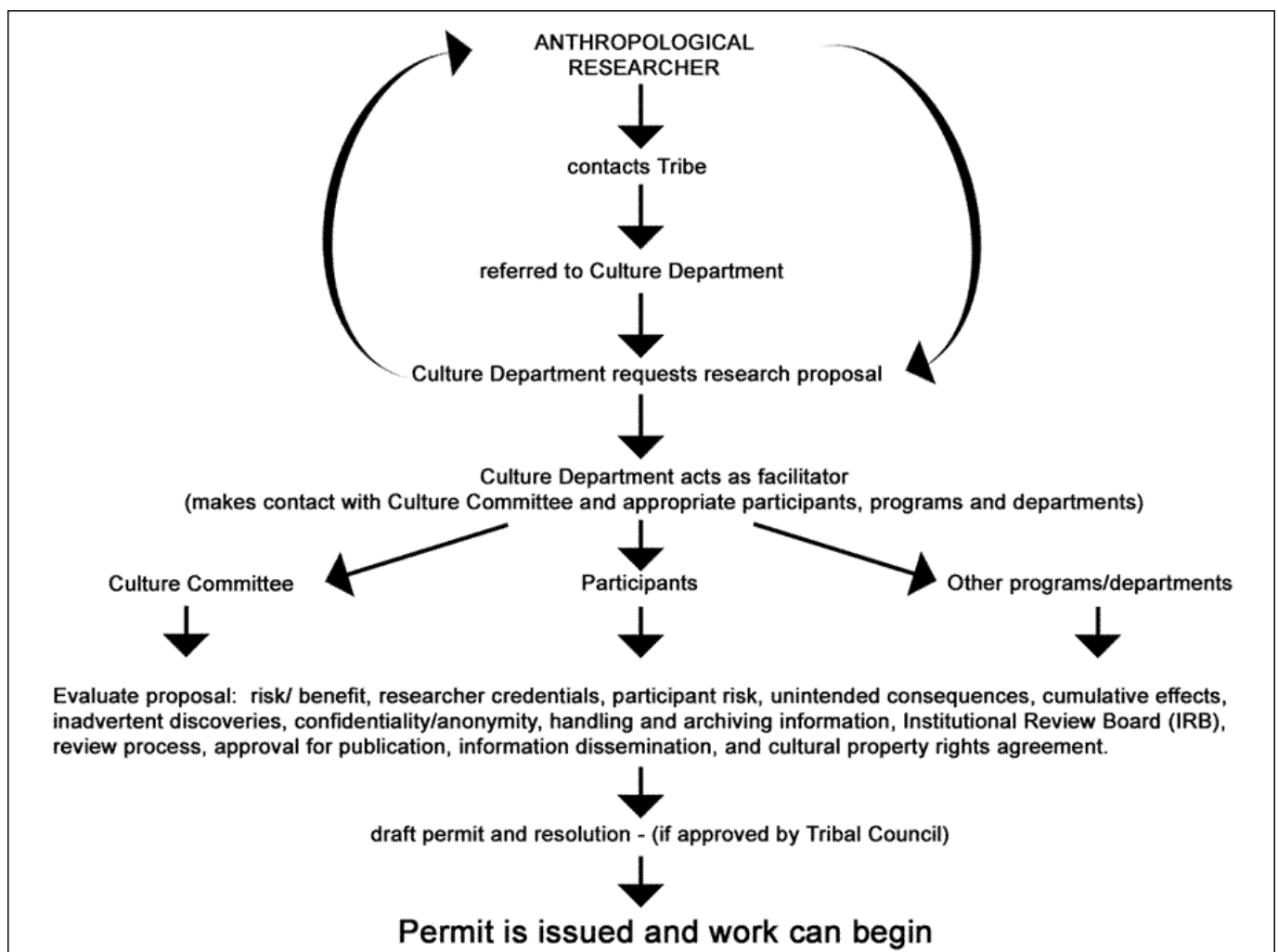
In some respects, my own upbringing was closer to the alien I would later experience. Attending a Denver highschool, with a graduating class of 799, over a quarter of my classmates were African American, with significant numbers of Asian American and Hispanic students. And I was a runner, a member of a state-champion track team, my senior year anchoring our mile relay team. We traveled together to meets throughout the state. We worked hard and depended upon each other. We shared disappointment, and we celebrated together. On this predominately Black team, I participated in difference, that made all the difference, yet in those fluid moments as the baton was handed off, there was no difference. What a wonderful preparation for entering the Tin Shed and for appreciating the Wheel.

While I’m the intellectual offspring of the Boasian family, and such exemplary teachers as Deward Walker and David Carasco, I’ve been swaddled in the lessons of many great teachers and storyteller hosts, young and old, women and men, and acknowledge being transformed as a Euro-American ethnographer and as a human being by the damp of the Tin Shed. It’s been a truly humbling experience, one that I am forever indebted and most grateful, with all my heart, to so many. *Ahókaash*, for all the Huckleberries.

### Appendices:

- A. **Research Approval Protocol of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.** Developed by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe Cultural Resources Office (2012)
- B. **Schitsu'umsh - Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online Project: Cultural Property Rights and Copyright Agreement.** I originally drafted the language of the agreement, had it reviewed by the University of Idaho's attorneys and then submitted to the Tribe for their legal review, before Tribal approval (2001)
- C. **Department of Education / University of Idaho Internet Project – Cd'A Tribal Resolution 134.** (2001)
- D. **Letter of Introduction L3.** Developed by the project's co-facilitators to introduce the L3 project to potential interviewees (2001)
- E. **Informed Consent Form L3.** (2001)

### Coeur d'Alene Tribe Research Protocol (2012)



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO  
SCHITSU'UMSH INTERNET PROJECT

CD'A RESOLUTION 134 (2001)

**WHEREAS,** The Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council has been empowered to act for and on behalf of the Coeur d'Alene tribe pursuant to the revised Constitution and By-Laws, adopted by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe by referendum November 10, 1984, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, December 21, 1984; and

**WHEREAS,** The Coeur d'Alene Tribe and University of Idaho maintain a collaborative relationship including the American Indian Studies Program and the Memorandum of Understanding (November 2000); and

**WHEREAS,** The desire to improve college educational opportunities for the Coeur d'Alene people as well as increase an appreciation and understanding of the Coeur d'Alene people and culture by the general public exists; and

**WHEREAS,** The project will utilize funding from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration with completion to be timed with the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial; and


**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** That the Coeur d'Alene Tribe hereby approves the development of a series of educational and cultural resource Internet modules to tell the unique story of the Coeur d'Alene people; and

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED,** That the final project results will be made available in October, 2002, to the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council for review and approval of dissemination.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at a meeting of the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council held at the Administration Building, 850 A Street, Plummer, Idaho, on April 12, 2001, with a required quorum present by a vote of 6 FOR 2 AGAINST 2 ABSTAIN 0 OUT.

  
ERNEST L. STENSGAR, CHAIRMAN  
COEUR D'ALENE TRIBAL COUNCIL

  
NORMA JEAN LOUIE, SECRETARY  
COEUR D'ALENE TRIBAL COUNCIL

**Schitsu'umsh - Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online Project****Cultural Property Rights and Copyright Agreement  
6 August 2001**

**Objective:** The objective of this agreement is to safeguard and protect the cultural property of the *Schitsu'umsh* (Coeur d'Alene). Cultural property is defined as knowledge and information concerning ideas, practices, objects, landscape, or any other expressed view associated with the culture of the *Schitsu'umsh* people. As cultural property information is obtained for this project, we seek to protect it from uses other than those designated by the *Schitsu'umsh*, and specifically approved by the Tribal Council and its designated agencies.

**Considerations:** 1. "Patents, copyrights, and trademark are mechanisms designed to protect an inventor, creator, or designer's individual creations or novel company investments. Inventions, defined by the World Intellectual Property Organization as new ideas that solve a particular problem in a technical field, are covered by patents, which protect the owner of the patent from having his product copied by competitors. Copyrights protect literary, scientific, and artistic works, as well as computer software. Copyrights do not protect ideas as such; rather they protect the specific way in which the author has chosen to express the idea. Trademark, another form of intellectual property protection, distinguishes the products of one firm from those of other firms in a related field. According to Greaves ("Tribal Rights," in *Valuing Local Knowledge*, Island Press, 1996), such legal measures fall far short of protecting the intellectual property rights and biological resources of indigenous peoples. Indigenous or local knowledge is unique to a given culture or society, and it contrasts with knowledge generated, say, within universities or other research institutions; it is a communal inheritance, often specific to a particular locality or way of life. The use of traditional knowledge is governed by community regulation. It has no identifiable author and is already in the public domain, and therefore cannot be protected under current copyright and patent laws." (Ian McIntosh, "Intellectual Property Responsibilities," *Cultural Survival*, Winter 2001:4).

Patents, copyrights and trademarks evolved out of Euro-American legal consideration to protect individual property defined in terms of a commodity. Such legal safeguards were and are not fundamentally designed to protect the collective cultural and intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples.

2. Recognizing the sovereign status of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the tribe has the right to monitor and regulate how *Schitsu'umsh* cultural property is used and shared publically. This right is exercised through its Tribal Council and any other bodies it so designates.

3. The agreement is entered into by the principal investigator (and any research assistants under his supervision) in the *Schitsu'umsh* - Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online Internet Project and by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe (as approved on April 12, 2001), and is applicable and binding between these two parties.

**Action:** 1. Utilize a thorough review process to access, adjust, and approve the cultural property



and information obtained for this project by the principal investigator, accessing its accuracy, authenticity, and appropriateness for public sharing and dissemination. The review process would involve each interviewee involved in the project, the Department of Education, Office of Cultural Resources, the Internet Project Committee (formed for this project), and, finally, the Tribal Council. No cultural property would be publicly disseminated as part of this project without prior approval of the above said individuals, committees, and agencies.

2. Copies of all cultural property and informational materials obtained for this project (e.g., still photos, video and audio tapes, and print materials of interviews and imaging) by the principal investigator, whether used in the final Internet modules or as supplemental, non-used research materials to the modules, would remain with the tribe and housed in the Office of Cultural Resources. Such materials are considered the cultural property of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, to be used as deemed appropriate by the tribe and its agencies.

3. No additional or future uses (e.g., print or web publication) of any and all cultural property and informational materials obtained for this project by the principal investigator would be permitted without the prior approval of the Tribal Council.

4. The *Schitsu'umsh* have the continued right to monitor and adjust the content of the *Schitsu'umsh* - Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online module. If any adjustments are requested, they would be coordinated and facilitated through the principal investigator or through an internet technician working on the Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online Project. The monitoring shall begin upon final the Tribal Council approval of the project and shall continue as long as the module continues to be linked from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's web page (<http://www.cdatribe.org/>).

5. All web-based materials approved by the Tribal Council for use on the Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online site will carry the copyright © sign, identifying the module web-based pages as copyrighted to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

Signature of Principle Investigator: Rodney Frey, Professor of American Indian Studies,  
University of Idaho

Date: 6 August 2001

Witnessed by a Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Department of Education Representative: Dianne M. Allen, Director of Education, Coeur  
d'Alene Tribe

Date: August 6, 2001

Witnessed by a Coeur d'Alene Tribe Legal Counsel Representative: Alice Koskela, Director,  
Legislative Affairs, Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Date: August 6, 2001

***Schitsu'umsh* - Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online Project**  
**Letter of Introduction**  
August 2001

Among the key questions addressed in the *Schitsu'umsh* - Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online Internet Project are: What is the *Schitsu'umsh* perspective on Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery; Who were the *Schitsu'umsh* before the arrival of Lewis and Clark; What are some of the subsequent consequences of White influences on the people; And, most importantly, who are the *Schitsu'umsh* people today and how and in what ways have they continued to prosper and grow as a sovereign people?

This project will develop a series of interactive, educational and cultural resource modules, to be conveyed over the Internet and designed to be accessible for the local public and schools in our region and throughout Idaho, as well as for a world-wide audience. The *Schitsu'umsh* modules will be part of a larger endeavor conveying some of the perspectives of all the peoples along the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery trail. The project is being funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

It will be critical that information on the *Schitsu'umsh* be presented accurately and appropriately. Before any cultural materials would be approved for public dissemination a thorough review process would be conducted by the various *Schitsu'umsh* consultants interviewed for the project, by the Department of Education, by the Office of Cultural Resources, and by Tribal Council, examining the proposed materials for their authenticity and appropriateness. For example, we are not seeking information on specific sacred sites and medicinal plant uses that would be shared publically.

We appreciate any advice and direction you might offer for this project. Thank you.

For additional information, please contact one of the Coeur d'Alene Internet Project Co-Facilitators:

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**Informed Consent Form**

Project Title: *Schitsu'umsh* - Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Life-Long Learning Online Internet Project

Principle Interviewer: Rodney Frey

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_ (interviewee), state that I am over 18 years of age, and freely and voluntarily wish to participate in the *Schitsu'umsh* - Lewis and Clark Life-Long Learning Online Internet Project. 2. I am aware that I will have an opportunity to review, modify, and approve of any specific information I share with the interviewer. 3. I am also aware that the final use and disposition of any information I provide for this project will be subject to review and approval by the Tribal Council before it is publically shared. 4. A written description of the project, as a Letter of Introduction, has been given to me.

The description of purposes and explanation of its procedures have been verbally provided by the interviewer to the interviewee:

1. A statement that the study involves research.
2. An explanation of the purposes of the research.
3. The expected duration of the subject's participation.
4. A description of the procedures (including methodology) to be followed.
5. A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts.
6. A description of any benefits to the subject, or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research.
7. A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of data and privacy of subject(s) will be maintained.
8. An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research, subject's rights, and research related injury to the subject(s).
9. A statement that participation is voluntary.

I acknowledge that the Principle Interviewer, Rodney Frey, has fully explained to me the purposes and procedures, and the risks of this research; he has informed me that I may withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice; and has informed me that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I freely and voluntarily consent to my participation in and release information I share to the above mentioned research project.

\_\_\_\_\_ I waive my right to confidentiality, i.e., my name may be used in the research.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not waive my right to confidentiality, i.e. my name may not be used in the research or disclosed to anyone other than the project researcher(s)

Signature of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 2001

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Cedar-bark basket ready for  
huckleberrying.  
Photo: Frey 2012

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### Glossary



*sqha'wluṭqwe'* - flowering camas  
with a bee.

Photo: Frey 1996

Let me reiterate the relationships between several pivotal terms developed in this essay and listed below, doing so through the metaphor of “landscape,” such as that of the “Palouse.” If “story” represents the defining characteristics and boundaries of a particular landscape, i.e., the Palouse of eastern Washington and northern Idaho, then “symbols” are analogous to the visual, natural features of that landscape, i.e., rolling hills of rich fertile soil. The “mi'yep-teachings” and “ontology,” encapsulated and preserved within the enduring “bones,” represent the underlying climatic and geological processes and events that have given form and substance to the natural features and character to that landscape, i.e., wind erosion and the Missoula Flood of 15,000 BP.

And there are two particularly distinguishing attributes of this landscape. It is a landscape not so much made up of relatively static objects as of unfolding events and ongoing transformations. An “event” represents the manner by which the landscape is engaged, i.e., as momentary points of interaction with its inhabitants – humans in relationships with coyotes, hawks and camas, with water, soil and the sun, with the Spirits and the Ancestors. “Swirling” is the capacity and act of rejuvenating that landscape, i.e., the collective seasonal winds and the bygone Flood re-sweeping the land and its inhabitants, transforming them as originally and perennially conceived and formed.

“Epistemology” is the means and criteria by which the community of inhabitants establishes what is knowable about their entire landscape, its particular story, symbols, bones, events and swirls, i.e., there is a certain way to come to know the Palouse, as the “Palouse.”

With permission from its inhabitants, we as ethnographers seek to travel this landscape, applying an appropriate collaborative research design – sampling, interviewing and participant-engagement skills, i.e., raised and swaddled in the blanket of our hosts, a blanket suited for that



environment. By being “attentive, from our ethnographic experiences we attempt to “code and interpret” the key symbols, the underlying teachings and ontology, and the epistemology of that landscape, constructing a “text” inclusive of its many “voices,” i.e., “discovering” the “bones” and then effectively wearing the blanket in the style of our hosts, as we re-tell the story of the Palouse, bringing “flesh” to its bones. As in any re-telling, something of the “name” and “style” of the ethnographer is infused in the narrative, i.e., the raconteur has left footprints on the rich soil of the Palouse. Nevertheless, the interpretation seeks the epistemological perspective of our hosts’ community, applying its evaluative standards to this knowledge, i.e., a story etched by the footprints and linked to the bones of the Ancestors and their living descendents, they confirming it to be indeed, “Palouse.” The purpose of the re-telling is to aid the hosts’ community, as well as to educate others not of that landscape, i.e., taking the blanket off our shoulders to warm the shoulders of someone else in need, and allowing them to potentially “swirl” within the story of the Palouse and with its various inhabitants. And in this re-telling, the Palouse can be rendered meaningful, renewed and perpetuated.

Certainly some of the terms used in this essay are not of an Indigenous origin, seldom heard spoken by elders, such as “epistemology” and “ontology.” Their use is nevertheless intended to help bridge our differences, a starting point from which all of us can be welcomed into the Tin Shed and onto the Wagon Wheel. Once there, may the interplay of the Wheel’s spokes and hub allow us, the ethnographers, to acquire the competencies and languages to travel the rolling grassland hills of the Palouse prairie, as effectively as the peaks and ridges and dense rainforests of the Cascade Range of mountains – allow us to travel farther into the Indigenous Tin Shed, while still warming the wooden bench of science.

The Bones and the Flesh – From an Indigenous perspective, the oral traditions, including the stories, are understood as “living beings,” a “person” with “flesh and bones.” The flesh is the re-animation brought to a story through the techniques and styles of telling of raconteurs and elders, allowing a story to be engaged by listeners. The bones are the enduring and underlying structures that give substance and form to the flesh and thus the story. The bones are inclusive of the narrative’s storyline, its essential and perennial teachings/*mi’yep*, as well as its ontology

principles. The bones were first established and then embedded into the oral traditions and the landscape by the Creator and actions of Coyote and the other First Peoples. The responsibility of the elders and storytellers is to keep all the bones in the oral traditions. The responsibility of the youth and story listeners is to discover the bones for him or herself. While enduring, the bones can be forgotten, only to be re-discovered, re-membered, as in the process known by the Greeks as anamnesis.

Coding and Interpreting – Seeking to avoid ethnocentrism, and distinguishing between text (what is said), context (who, when and where is it said) and texture (how it is said), coding and interpreting entails a methodology of identifying the characteristic and essential symbols of a landscape, as well as their underlying “teachings” and ontological principles. Coding and interpreting are akin to the Indigenous heuristic learning style of “being attentive” and “discovering” what is embedded in a story.

Discovery – Relating to the Indigenous learning style involving being “attentive,” i.e., actively listening and engaging in an oral tradition under the guidance of an elder, and then of becoming keenly aware of the “teaching,” the *mi’yep* embedded within the experience of that oral tradition. It is heuristic learning, learning through discovery, learning made on the part of the learner, relative to the learner’s maturation level and pace of learning.

Empathy – The capacity to understand, appreciate, and/or project one’s self into the situation of someone else. To feel what another is feeling or experiencing.

Epistemology and Evaluation – The theory on the nature of knowledge, of what is knowable and known. Knowledge can be inclusive of ontological principles, utilitarian skills, as well as aesthetic and spiritual capacities. In this essay two fundamentally distinct types of epistemology are considered, Head (equated with scientific) and Heart (equated with Indigenous) Knowledge. As established by a community of adherent members (e.g., scientific or Schitsu’umsh), what is knowable can be accessed through any variety of means, from empirical to intuitive, from experiential to cognitive, from rational to imaginative, and can be

evaluated and legitimized through a given criterion or multiple criteria. Such criteria can include, for a given set of material variables, reliability (using a systematic and standardized method, the ability repeat the observations, data collection and findings of someone else's study), internal validity (the ability to correspond the theoretical description of the data with the actual data collected), and external validity (the ability to apply and generalize the results of one study to other studies) – measuring objective, objectified evidence. Such evaluative criteria can also include, for a given transitory event of relationships, authenticity (are all the participant “voices” that should be included, included), trustworthiness (of the “voices” included, are they credible and dependable), and appropriateness (should these “voices” be publically disseminated and shared) – assessing an experiential re-telling of an event, inclusive of its essential participants and their bones.

Regardless of which criteria is applied, as Indigenous learning and experiences are place-bound, as the stories are specific to a particular landscape, the ultimate responsibility for evaluating Heart Knowledge should reside with the local sovereign community, be it a Cultural Committee and/or Tribal Council. The academy's Institutional Review Board has a critical role in assessing ethical issues relating to protecting “human subjects,” but overzealous IRB members should not have a hand in determining and setting parameters on any of the ethnographic content proposed to be studied in a research project.

Event – The prominent Indigenous mode through which reality is experienced, as a transitory intersection of those participating, as an unfolding occurrence inclusive of human, animal, plant, Spirit and Ancestor. The oral traditions are thus made up of these ongoing momentary points of confluence. It is an experiential reality predicated on certain ontological principles of spiritual animation and monism – no spatial and temporal dualism.

Huckleberry – Edible fruit of a bush from the genus *Vaccinium*. As used in this essay, a huckleberry is a lesson learned or discovered that can provide moral, ethical, pragmatic, practical, aesthetic and/or spiritual assistance to someone else or to yourself, when in need.

Literacy – A symbolic means of communication structured and emanating out of a linguistic and societal infrastructure that emphasizes writing and reading.

Ontology – The theory and guiding principles of “being and existence,” giving definition to temporal, spatial and causal attributes, to the totality and essence of reality. Ontological principles are the basis upon which reality is structured and experienced. In this essay we are considering the ontological principles of scientific and Indigenous knowledge. Science is predicated on such principles as Aristotelian material reductionism and René Descartes’ Cartesian dualism, among others – an independently observable reality of discrete objects in motion. Indigenous knowledge is premised on such ontological principles as spiritual animation and monism, among others – reality as the transitory intersection of those participating, an event of interrelationships.

Oral Traditions – An assemblage of critical expressions, including narrative stories, as well as dances, songs, regalia and clothing, architecture, and the spoken language itself. The oral traditions contain the essential bones of a community and are experienced as transitory events.

Orality – A symbolic means of communications structured and emanating out of a linguistic and societal infrastructure that emphasizes speaking and listening. While the nature of orality helps spawn a participatory engagement with the oral traditions and thus with reality, literacy contributes to an objectification of reality. Orality is not to be equated with illiteracy.

Story – A narrative entailing a storyline of action, events, and/or characters, understood itself to be a “living being, with flesh and bones.” A narrative’s storyline can run with heroes and tricksters, with quests and transformations, with sorrows and joys and humors, with rise and fall and redemption, with insights of all kinds. Story can be encapsulated in extended phrases and short vignettes, in poetic re-tellings and formal essays, as well as in mega-narratives of entire civilizations. It can be expressed in oral and written forms, in song and dance, through artistic designs and architectural grandeur, through economic and scientific prowess, and above all, throughout the actions of human actors. From an Indigenous perspective and embedded

with the bones, the stories define, guide, and bring forth the phenomenal world, creating and perpetuating it. As an event with a particular participant composition, each re-telling of a story is necessarily a unique expression.

Swirl – Given the ontological principles of spiritual animation and monism, when the symbols of an oral tradition are aligned with their bones, in the act of re-telling the stories, re-singing the songs, re-dancing the dances of the oral traditions, a hierophany can occur, a “shining through of the sacred.” You can “swirl around with Coyote, as Coyote talks to you.” The world and its inhabitants are made meaningful and rendered spiritually endowed with life-force.

Symbol – A specific unit of reference, e.g., object, behavior or sign, that refers to a particular referent, e.g., concept, process, object or behavior. In the Indigenous experience, the oral traditions are a predominate form of symbolic clusterings, expressed through oral and written, behavioral and visual modes of communications.

Teachings - Mi'yep – From an Indigenous perspective, the teachings are inclusive of the grand “perennial archetypes,” moral and ethical codes, practical utilitarian skills relating to religious, social and ecological roles and responsibilities, and aesthetic and spiritual sensibilities. They along with *suumęsh/baaxpée/wéyekin* are necessary for humans to thrive and prosper. Teachings are understood as “gifts” embedded in the world by the Creator and the First Peoples, to be discovered by humans by being “attentive, listening” to the landscape and the oral traditions. In this essay, two examples of teachings are *té·k'e* – “to give and share [food with others]” and capitalism – “self-interest, seeking to maximize gains and minimize losses.”

While a blurred nomenclature, as used in this essay I would suggest a couple of critical distinctions between teachings and ontology principles. Teachings are more overtly expressed in a story and specific to particular stories, while ontological principles are more implicit, embedded pervasively in all the stories of a community, be it a community of scientists or Schjitsu'umsh. Further, teachings have more to do with defining the nature of relationships between participants, while ontology helps define the assemblage of possible participants, as well as the configuration of the stage upon which they travel.

Text and Voices – With an Indigenous perspective in mind, a text is an ethnographically-constructed symbolic clustering of a transitory point of intersection of those participating. The participants are expressed through “voice,” all in experiential interaction with one another. For example, a text can be expressive of a particular social encounter among family members. It can be inclusive of the ethnographer’s interviewing and participating at that family encounter. The text can be the ethnographer’s coded and interpreted written text of that encounter, inclusive of those that might be holding that text in hand and reading it, or inclusive of those listening to that text as it is re-told among students in a classroom, as well as the “voices” of those in the original family encounter. “Voice” refers to all the participants of a transitory intersection, be they “in the flesh,” the living participants of an event, or those embedded in a spoken or written word, inclusive of Coyote and the elders, as well as ethnographers and even future participants of a text, a student reading or hearing that story. An interpreted constructed text would seek to anchor itself with the host’s landscape and story, while also welcoming “perfect strangers” to this landscape by providing “signposts” pointing the way. Any interpreted constructed text includes the author’s “name,” and hence the importance of reflexivity. From an Indigenous perspective and synonymous with story, those participating in any given text, of any given type, can potentially include human, animal, plant and spirit. Each text is necessarily a unique text, contingent upon its particular composition of participant members; each text is necessarily an ephemeral event of confluent members.

Wheel of Spokes and a Hub – As used in this essay, the spokes are any number of ways of acknowledging and representing our collective diversity and individual uniqueness, that which is differentiated and distinguished. The hub is any number of ways of revealing and representing what is shared in common, the universal, the ubiquitous. As suggested, the hub can be as a “language” that can transcend differences, that which can be comprehended and spoken with some degree of universality. The interplay of spokes and hub can accommodate travels over the many distinct paths, helping address the “mutually exclusive” in our lives. This interplay has implications for communications, creativity, collaboration, and community.

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