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## **Black Elk speaks says so : elders on telling about traditional tribes**

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***Black Elk Speaks Says So:***  
**Elders on telling about**  
**Traditional Tribes**

James A. Starkewolf

An Action Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education

College of Professional Studies  
School of Education  
California State University Monterey Bay

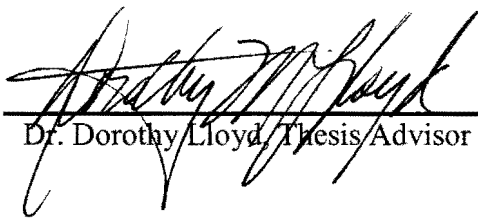
August 2010

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Elders on telling about  
Traditional Tribes***

James A. Starkewolf

APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

  
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*September 9, 2010*  
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*9-10-2010*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Dedicated in Memoriam to:

Bernice Ester Scott Torrez, B.E.S.T., Kashaya Pomo, Number One California Indian-Doctor

*“Go in prayer straight to the direct Source of light.”*

Rockman Jim Petersen, Latgawa Takelma-style traditional doctor

*“Everything in the Medicine World is upside down and backwards, including this statement.”*

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***Black Elk Speaks* Says So:  
Elders on telling about  
Traditional Tribes**

**By James A. Starkewolf**

In this action research thesis, Indian elders give suggestions on storytelling curriculum about traditional tribes. To see where we are going, we must know where we have been, who we come from, what we do and should do, and how to

sense the hand of the Trickster. Human beings are rooted in traditional tribes, ancient future societies such as those we are documenting. Indian Country is a world apart, under siege and, as renowned activist Leonard Peltier has said, prison is the fastest growing reservation.

Educational standards require children know of broken treaties, massacres, and internecine warfare, but not that Euro-Americans broke treaties and exterminated Native tribes. Acclaimed Native novelist Leslie Marmon Silko has said, "Through the stories we see who we are ...language is story." Interviews with elders suggest the value, purpose, content, theme, and audiences of storytelling. The overall goal is to develop a book and film devoted to storytelling as a means to define identity, further pan-Indian knowledge of Natives, and promote societal contribution,

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Storytelling about traditional tribes is as old as storytelling in the Americas. “Indian tradition is oral; language is story” (Silko, 1997, p. 50). To see where we are going, we must know where we have been and storytelling is the key. We are all rooted in traditional tribes, “ancient future” societies, regardless of the ethnicity of our storytelling roots (Orozco Hidalgo, 1996). Storytelling is “who we are and how we came to be,” where we come from and have been, what we do and should do, what we want to be and can be, how we honor our identity and our elders, how we survive and how we are to carry on, and how to know our fate and sense the hand of the Trickster [Coyote, Raven, and Spider in the Indian stories] (LaDuke 1999; 2005; 2010, p.1; Silko, 1981; Vizenor, 1993).

American Indian storytelling is the template, sustained by the elders, for Indian identity —“the stories [that tell us] who we are” (Silko, 1997, p.50). An ancient Yakima story, “How The Coyote Made the Indian Tribes” is a telling reminder from the elders that the vast quilt of nations that we call Indians have always told about the Creator’s many children in faraway places” (Deloria, 1997; Silko, 1997, p. 103).

To guide and inspire this work, I invoked the spirit of *Black Elk Speaks*, called “the bible of all tribes” (Deloria 1979, p. v.) and “the book that would not die” (Linden, 2000, p.80). This autobiography, “one of the 100 best books of the Twentieth Century” (Bookspot, 2009)<sup>1</sup>, is the storytelling of an archetypal hero’s vision-journey quest for identity and social contribution<sup>2</sup>. *Black Elk Speaks* (Neihardt, 1979) is the story of Custer-Fight<sup>3</sup> veteran and warrior/ storyteller, Nicholas Black Elk, who was later wounded in action at Wounded Knee and who had a “Great Vision” as a child. Black Elk’s Vision foretold survivance in the face of cultural conflagration and captivity at the hands of the Whites.<sup>4</sup> Even the name, Black Elk, is a powerful totemic

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<sup>1</sup> In turn, a canon for this study is Deloria, Jr.’s work, including his *God is Red* (1973) and *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969) gospels.

<sup>2</sup> The Great Plain’s four-day Hanblecheyapi vision quest, which has gained popular recognition, is translated “Crying for a Vision, and is often a sedentary travail. In the Far West, the vision journey is often a five-day pilgrimage to sacred spots for physical and spiritual tests such as diving, climbing, and navigating caves.

<sup>3</sup> The Battle of the Little-Big-Horn, 1876.

<sup>4</sup> A 17<sup>th</sup>-century-enlightenment term for physical survival and cultural renewal (Merriam Webster 2009)

inspiration that in Lakota symbolizes introspection, attraction, and strength to survive — core Indian values primary to my study (Brown, 1992; Sams & Carson, 1988). I sought the advice of Indianist elders and leaders concerning storytelling as a means to build pan-Indian knowledge about traditional tribes and identity based on contribution to society. I wanted their ideas about the purpose, value, content, theme, and audiences of and for storytelling because I am working with a team to create a storytelling film and book about traditional tribes.

Indianist elders refers, here, to inter-tribalist, wisdom keepers — modern Black Elks — committed to both the survival of their own ancient-future traditions, but also to a pan-tribal view (Arden and Wall, 1990). Today, men and women elders and their storytelling are regaining influence and encouraging urban Indians to find their tribal roots.<sup>5</sup> The traditions derived from Indianist, pan-Indian storytelling are appropriate adaptation to changing cultural circumstances per one's right to sovereign spiritual expression (Fields, 2000). Tribal storytelling gives a rooted identity in counterpoint to the Eurocentric narrative of crime, amnesia, and Indian-Holocaust denial (Allen, 1986; Forbes, 2008).

Traditional tribes and elders, and their storytelling, have been called “primitive,” even in the 70s by National Geographic (*Primitive Worlds*), and “vanishing” (resuscitating Edward Sheriff Curtis' label [1904; Kidwell, 1999]) which has become a double-edged stereotype), but Indians are both primal and resilient, and, increasingly, their storytelling is being re-recognized as a distinct academic discipline and a separate area of study within all of the disciplines (Highwater, 1982; Kidwell, 1999).

## Background

*Black Elk Speaks*, was a revelation for me as a youngster, so I call this thesis “*Black Elk Speaks\_Says So*.” The Great Vision of Black Elk had survived depression, world war, atomic bombs, another “Indian Country” (G.I. parlance for Vietnam), and the Indian Renaissance of the '60s and '70s<sup>6</sup>. Then, ten years ago, I first saw the severe drought and hunger of the Raramuri Indians in the *Barancas del Cobre* (Copper Canyons) of the *Sierra Tarahumara*, deeper and

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<sup>5</sup> Aged forty-four plus (D. Smith, Pomo, personal communication, 1982).

<sup>6</sup> For many non-Indians, myself included, it was also an awakening that connected George Custer, the 7th cavalry on the six o'clock news, and the “inseparable massacres- My Lai, Sand Creek, and Wounded Knee” (Vizenor, 1994, p.149).

vaster than the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Seeing was believing — physical survival is still precarious for Indian peoples. I began to volunteer with small, local, grass-roots projects that cooperate to promote indigenous survival and storytelling. We have delivered ten tons of food to the Raramuri twice a year for many years. One group, Mesoamerican Cultural Preservation became the motivation for this research.

I asked Mauro, a leader of cliff-dwelling Raramuri, about a newly opened road, symbol of encroaching change including tourism and drug traffic. “This road has always been,” he said with the aboriginal long view that sees the deer trail behind all roads, “Yes, our ancestors wore skins and we wear cloth, but our roads are still one road” (personal conversation, May 2005). This elder, and other leaders, have stressed to me the importance of storytelling about traditional tribes.<sup>7</sup>

### **Statement of Problem**

A hegemonic cultural transmission of anti-Indianism by the dominant, Eurocentric culture, and the censor of Indian-viewpoint narratives, are core social injustices (Cook-Lynn, 2005; Kidwell, 2002; Sainte-Marie, 2010). Socially-engineered diasporas, programs couched as “Assimilation,” Relocation,” and “Termination” (with Orwellian. double-speak mottos such as “kill the Indian to save the child”) mark relations between the U.S.A., other American states, and Indians nations. Exploitation, usually to expropriate Indian land and resources, and poverty have made “Indians ...refugees in their own lands,” cities home for two thirds of Natives (Means, 1995, p.1), and “prison the fastest growing Indian Reservation in the country” (Peltier, 1998, Track 4; Snipp, 1992, p. 358; Vigil, 1988). A Eurocentric point of view in public education promotes identity confusion for both Indians and non-Indians and restricts identity and knowledge of traditional tribes and for all citizens.<sup>8</sup> Virulently unjust, compulsory, assimilationist Indian schooling and linguacide are foundations for compulsory education in all

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<sup>7</sup> Mauro Lopez (personal communication, Lopez to Starkewolf, May 14, 2005 ).Jesus Chune Palma (personal communication , Palma to Starkewolf, December 27, 2008), Todos Santos Villalobos Vigil (personal conversation, Villalobos Vigil to Starkewolf, December 24, 2008)

<sup>8</sup> There is dialog in schools over what to call Indians (or Latinos or Chicanos), but no corresponding discussion of what to call Caucasians.

American nations. Minus the elders' advice and storytelling, both Indians and non-Indians develop false identity, not guessing that they are mis-educated.

"What you are looking for is not on Google," the elders told Don Coyhis when he was searching for an Indian-style recovery, "you will find it inside. Return to the culture. It comes from the Earth and from all our relations" (Public address, April 28, 2009). In the next chapter, I "google" not the culture, but what Native and interested non-Indian scholars are saying regarding storytelling about traditional tribes.

### **Statement of Purpose**

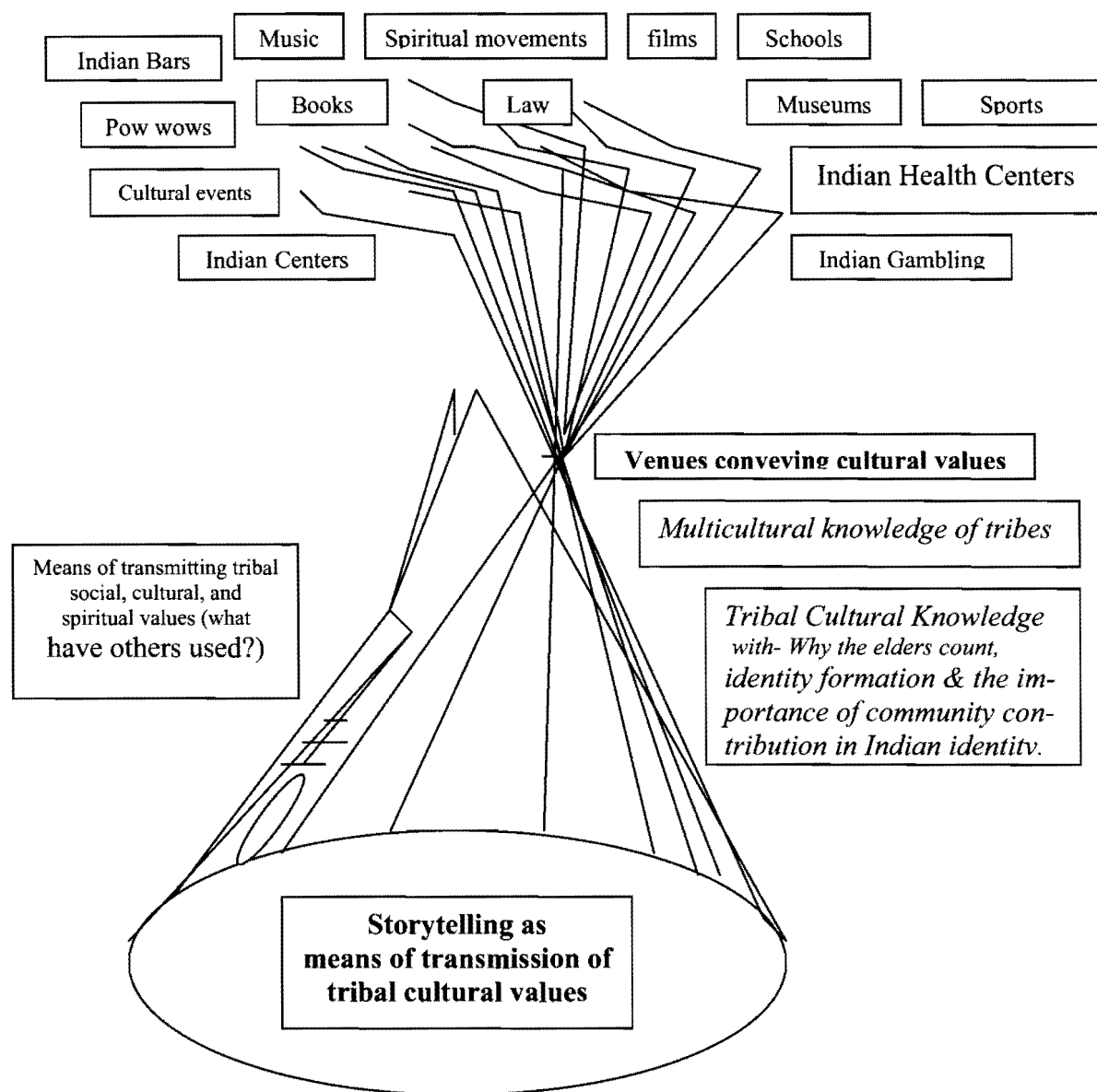
The purpose of this research project is to gain the advice of Indian elders and leaders on the purpose, value, content, theme, and audience of storytelling about traditional tribes. My overall goal is to develop suggestions from Indianist elders and/or leaders concerning storytelling in order to produce a film and book about four traditional Mesoamerican Tribes which we have visited in filming and supply expeditions over the past five years. The project is called Mesoamerican Cultural Preservation. These materials will be donated in the tradition of the Indian giveaway ceremony to youth in the tribes we visited in our expeditions, local and other youth with Indian identity, and to youth and people generally. The overall book and documentary film project (which is beyond the scope of this thesis) will be devoted to storytelling as a means to help youth and others form identity, build pan-Indian knowledge about Native peoples, and contribute to society. It is designed as a means to expand and enhance the value, content, theme, and audience of storytelling about traditional tribes, or ancient future societies, so that, as one elder said, through the storytelling we see who we are and where we are going. As my primary source of data for this project, I sought the advice of Indianist elders and leaders, today's Black Elks concerning storytelling. Elders are the tradition keepers, authorities, mediators, innovators, and teachers of culture, and thus, I relied on their counsel concerning storytelling about traditional tribes to shape my thesis. What I am learning from the elders and leaders will be used to frame a book and film. I asked specific research questions of Indianist tribal elders and/or leaders on storytelling about traditional tribes to help youth and others form identity, build pan-Indian knowledge about Native peoples, and contribute to society:

- What is the purpose of storytelling about traditional tribes?
- What is the value of storytelling about traditional tribes?
- What should be the content of the storytelling about traditional tribes?
- What themes should be in storytelling about traditional tribes?
- What would you advise on the audience for storytelling about traditional tribes?

### **About the Literature Review Diagram**

Prior to examining the literature for my study, I diagramed thematic areas my literature review would cover in the following Figure I.

:



*The tipi-- a symbol of Pan-Indianism*

**Figure I:** Tipi of Texts on Materials and Venues For Teaching Cultural Identity and Community Contribution. Literature on educational materials as means of transmission of tribal cultural values is broad based like the tipi floor, but, like lodge smoke, funnels to a nexus of Pan-Indianism. The pole tips represent separate venues for the conveyance of tribal cultural values and are flagged, as in a stiff plains wind, with topics for further consideration.

## Terminology

There are a number of terms I will be using throughout this study, and I am defining most of them here:

- *American Indian, Native, and Indigenous People*: I follow Indian common usage and interchange these terms to refer to peoples indigenous to the Americas, in the style of Lomawaima and McCarty (2002; Colton, 2000).
- *BIA* is an abbreviation for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a federal agency of the United States of America.
- *Black Elk* was a Lakota warrior veteran of the battle with George Custer, wounded in action at the Wounded Knee massacre, who wrote *Black Elk speaks*. The name Black Elk symbolizes primary Indian values- Black corresponds to East and both represent introspection. The Elk is a powerful bugler and symbolizes strength, perseverance, and preservation. I use Black Elk to mean a storytelling elder (Sams & Carson, 1988).
- *CET* is a Spanish acronym for Tarahumara Coordination (*Coordinación Tarahumara*), the Tarahumara Indian agency of the State of Chihuahua, United States of Mexico (Estados Unidos Mexicanos).
- Deloria is the surname of a prolific Sioux family of clergy, scientists, educators, lawyers, and authors, and, as cited here, principally, Vine Deloria, Jr. (1933-2005), the late dean of Indian academics, nephew of anthropologist-novelist Ella Cara Deloria (January 30, 1888 – February 12, 1971), also called *Aṇpétu Wašté Wīn* (Beautiful Day Woman), and father of lawyer-activist-author Phillip Deloria,
- *Euro-American* refers to the dominant, hegemonic culture of American States and particularly of The United States of America (U.S.A.) and of Mexico (E.E.U.U.M.). American societies may be multicultural, but the ruling classes and media are Euro-American and Eurocentric.
- *IEFA* is an acronym for Indian Education for All, a State-of-Montana program (based in a rewrite of the state constitution) and a model concept for teaching about traditional tribes.

- *Indian Country* is an, often, idiomatic reference used broadly to indicate all areas with large concentration of Indian People, and, though used broadly, is meant to include Indian legal jurisdictions including tribal courts (See below *Storytelling Venues- Law*).
- *Indian Renaissance* refers to the resurgence of *Indianist* consciousness during the late 60s and early 70s.
- *Indianist*, here, means Pan-Indian, inter-tribalists, committed to both the survival of their own traditions but also to a pan-tribal view. Indianism is “policy designed to further the interests or culture of American Indians” ( Merriam Webster, 2009)
- *Inmigration*, here, refers to the migration of Indians to cities and other areas within their own homeland or continent and was used by Fiske (1977).
- *Manifest Manners*, a term coined by Vizenor (1994), refers to those who exhibit the manners that would promote manifest destiny.
- *New Indian* became a popular name for the proponents of the resurgence of Indianist consciousness of the late '60s and early '70s.
- *Linguacide* is the deliberate eradication of native language.
- *Pan-tribal and pan-Indian* refer to an Indian consciousness that includes both individual tribal traditions and common cultural and economic interests of all Indians. The Pan-Teton and Pan-Pueblo are subcategories for their regions.
- *PostIndian* is a term used by Vizenor (1994) for post-modern Indians.
- *Survivance* is a re-coinage, including by Vizenor (1994), of an archaic term that connotes cultural continuance and resistance to genocide (Merriam Webster, 2009).
- *Traditional* refers to tribally-rooted, living history and ceremonial ways-- of cultures and individual- with appropriate and valid adaptation to changing cultural circumstances (per one's right to sovereign spiritual expression in accordance with the sacrosanct sovereignty of the individual soul), a common spiritual tenet in tribal traditions (Fields, 2000).



## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Related Literature**

Storytelling, to encourage identity formation and to build knowledge of traditional tribes and contribution to the community, is a theme of both Indian and non-Indian writers. This chapter begins with definitions and descriptions of, one, tribal elders and, two, identity formation for societal contribution. A background discussion of storytelling in general, and then of tribal-cultural storytelling, explains some of the content and themes of storytelling that influence identity formation and contribution to society. A review of literature about storytelling specifically for transmission of multi- and inter-cultural, pan-Indian tribal identity and knowledge follows. Examples of storytelling that others have used are models for our projects. A discussion of storytelling venues where we might find audiences for our book and film concludes the chapter.

#### **Research Questions**

The overall goal, restated, of this thesis, is to investigate the question: what do selected Indianist elders and/ or leaders advise on storytelling about traditional tribes to help youth and others form identity, build pan-Indian knowledge about Native peoples, and contribute to society? From this overall goal, I developed more specific research questions for Indianist tribal elders and/or leaders. The sections in this review reflect these research questions: What is the purpose and value of storytelling about traditional tribes? What should be the content and themes, of the storytelling about traditional tribes? What would you advise regarding the audiences for storytelling about traditional tribes?

#### **The Elders**

In native society, the revered, “wisdom-keeper” storytellers of ancient, sacred knowledge and sovereignty are the elders (Arden & Wall, 1990; Dick-Bissonnette, 1998; Thomas, 2005; Price, 1994; Wall, 1994), that is, meritorious women and men of any age, but

usually older than forty four.<sup>9</sup> For example, traditional Lakota extended families have *itancan*, “fathers of the band,” and *wakiconza* elders’ executive groups for storytelling and leadership (Dick-Bissonnette, 1998; Price, 1994). Women among the Diné, Cherokee, Maya, and Tarahumara (the largest tribes of North America) and many others of the Far West are storytellers and leaders (Dick-Bissonnette, 1998).<sup>10</sup> Navajo (Diné) women are attracted to traditional roles because, as reservation elders, they stand to inherit homes, herds, wealth, motor vehicles, equality, respect, and leadership (Deyhle & Margonis, 1995). Elders renew storytelling tradition. For example, Christianized, Tlingit elders have constructed modern versions of the “old customs” of their religion (Kan, 1991).

### **Identity Formation for Societal Contribution**

Identity comes through storytelling. Deloria defines identity as a sense of contribution to one’s society. This contribution includes success in school and life, both humility and strength, esteem of others with positive self-concept, achievement understood as the accomplishments of the family (not the individual), and finding a “home in the landscapes and ecologies [one inhabits]” (Reyner, 2006, p. 2). To build identity for Indians raised away from Indian traditions is the goal of the community and an aim of Indian education (Deloria, n. d. c.; Deloria, 1981; Deloria, 1999). Indian education policymakers have expressed the goal of emphasizing societal contribution (e.g. the Crow in Montana, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Indian Education Programs, the Raramuri in Chihuahua, and the Maori in New Zealand [Bordewich, 1996; Harrison & Rahui Papa, 2005; Paciotto, 1996; Paciotto, 2004; Reyner, 2006]).<sup>11</sup>

Indian goals for storytelling about traditional tribes for identity formation have developed against a history of the use of residential schools to remove children from storytellers and suppress Indian storytelling. Governments saw that cultural genocide was less expensive than

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<sup>9</sup> Even worthy youngsters may be considered elders, e.g., Evon Peter, Gwich’an Athabaskan (the people of the Porcupine Caribou herd), chosen chief of Arctic Village, Alaska at twenty three, half the age of most new chiefs (Thomas, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Yokoch, Mono, and Miwok women are storytelling leaders.

<sup>11</sup> The Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.) Office of Indian Education Programs goal is that “students demonstrate knowledge of culture for academic achievement [because] research and experience show that individuals rooted in their past are best equipped to face the future.” (Reyner, 2006) .I travel to the Sierra Tarahumara each year to deliver food for the lunch program of the first independent, bilingual Indian [Raramuri, a tribe that has resisted assimilation (Marak, 2003 ; Paciotto, 1996)]school in Mexico

genocidal warfare. For example, after 1868, the U.S. determined that the cost to subdue Indians through force of arms would be many millions of dollars. An Indian child could be subjected to acculturative schooling, in institutions designed to “kill the Indian to save the child”, over eight years, for \$1,200. Sexual abuse was as high as 70% to 80% in the boarding schools, and many children died. Off reservation schools, beginning with Carlisle Institute in Pennsylvania, diminished the problem of runaways by removing children far from Indian Country, e.g. from South Dakota to the East. (Gibbons & Tomas, 2002; CERD, 2008).

To know what writers, both Indian and non-Indian, say about the value of storytelling about traditional tribes, I have looked for academic discussion of pan-Indianism and for tribal, intertribal, native, and indigenous citations and specifically for the word “Indian” with its connotation of groupings beyond a specific tribe (i.e. Bartra, 1974; Fiske, 1977; Hausman, 1988; Lawrence, 2003; Masaquiza & B’alam, 2000; Nagel, 1995; Richland, 2007; Sylvain, 2002; Talbot, 1972; Toy, 1969; & Vizenor, 1994).<sup>12</sup> Indians first usually identify themselves to each other by their family lineage, clan, region, tribe (Nagel, 1995) or tribes (as many young Indians are multicultural) (Kasten, 1992), rather than as Indians (Deloria, 2003; Fiske, 1977).<sup>13</sup> Pan-Indianism and intertribal storytelling, in our era, are, largely, a result of immigration to urban areas. Nearly two-thirds of the Indians in the United States now live in urban areas, often far removed from a tribal land base. Three times as many people reported themselves to be American Indian in the 1980 U.S. census as did twenty years before. This had to be “ethnic switching” rather than an increase in births, a shift caused by U.S. Indian policy, national ethnic

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<sup>12</sup> In over forty years experience, I have found, as others have commented (), Indians commonly use “Indian” themselves, often abbreviated and pronounced “Nyn,” closer to two than three syllables, and often refer to their languages as “talking Indian”(Carlin 2006, Colton, 2000; Gill, 1987). Indian and indigenous sound similar and are often used interchangeably, especially in Latin America. Russell Means claims that the etymology of Indian is Columbus’ *En dios* — praise for Indians as godly, rather than a reference to Hindustan, as India was then called (2004). By contrast, Native American is a term largely imposed from academia and external politics and has contributed to the ideology, hurtful to Indian primacy and sovereignty, of Indians as immigrant nations and the term “America” to be the property of the U.S.A. e.g. the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriations Act defines Native American as “indigenous to the United States”(NAGPRA).

<sup>13</sup> Indians of mixed tribes may face quadruple jeopardy, as part of the ethnic-Indian minority, a “breed” and, as is my Dine-Zuni friend Matilda and Pulitzer-nominee, Miwok-Hopi Wendy Rose (enotes, 2009), because parents are both, respectively, the low-status sex for their particular tribe. The fathers are from matrilineal tribes, so their daughters can not inherit land Patriarchal tribes do not recognize their mothers. Mixed-Tarahumara, bestselling author Luis Rodriguez writes about his experiences in L.A. street-gangs, is Chicano-identified, but teaches Indian rituals to give children a spiritual outlet (Rodriguez, 2009).

politics, and Indian political activism (Nagel 1995). Some tribal people, e.g. among the Diné people, have resisted pan-tribalism, even in urban areas such as Los Angeles (Fiske, 1977). Stargazer, the central character in Gerald Hausman's book of that name, considers himself Navajo, not Indian (1988). Ethnic identity is a social construct, but also an enduring and powerful social force (Nagel, 1994), and some see pan-Indianism as a symptom (Fiske, 1977; Hausman, 1988), if not a plot, of assimilation. On the other hand, many others, i.e. Grace Spotted Eagle *Wambli Galeshka* Black Elk, Sun Bear, Russell Means (Gill, 1987), without minimizing their tribal identity, identify as, and speak as, Indians. Pan-Indianism is largely a mix of pan-Teton culture (Pan-Puebloism is another manifestation). Powers coined a dictum "better pan-Indianism than no Indianism" (1968). Pan-Indianism promotes a sense of the honor of being Indian (Hagan, 1961). Anthropologists, Indian and non-Indian, have advised to not let concerns about Indian factionalism paralyze us from taking a stand for cultural survivance of traditional tribes and knowledge (Talbot, Mathur, & Partridge; 1976).

### **General Uses of Storytelling**

Indian tradition is oral; language is storytelling (Silko, 1997). Authentic Indian storytelling, folklore, and culture are communal oral traditions (Kasten, 1992; Silko, 1997), more so after Euro-state-sponsored linguicidal campaigns and exorcisms of Indian writing (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2002; Silko, 1997). Indian storytelling is told and understood at deep levels of structure, pattern, and history, and is a powerful transmitter and tool for understanding culture (Bonney, 1985). Indian storytelling, education, epistemology, and culture are set in physical place and interior landscape of a land-based ethic to promote sovereignty, identity, and contribution to society, rather than an emphasis on an explicit commitment to schooling (especially with its current, non-native-language, standardized testing [Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Harrison, 2005; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Marken & Walton, 1982; Silko, 1996; Tuhiwai Smith, 2005]).

### **Tribal cultural storytelling**

Elder Che-Na-Weitch-Ah-Wah wrote in 1916, "I can understand every word, every nod and gesture" of our storytelling (Palmquist, 1991; Thompson, 1991, p. xxx). Indian storytelling is

hegemonic, global, pervasive, (with incessant references in the material culture to tribal storytelling), reinforced in song, sign, rite, art, dress, puppetry, rock art, beadwork, woodwork, quillwork, horticulture, agriculture, sand-painting, earthworks, and monumental sculpture (i.e. Ohio serpent works, Nazca Lines, shell mounds, and Berkeley C- stone-walls that run scores of miles)- hundreds of writing forms/ media. Because in the oral tradition storytelling is always only a generation from extinction, at the death of an important elder, survival and transmission of an entire worldview and culture depend on captivating stories and collective, intergenerational memory of subtle storytelling details and nuances (with communal participation from all the community) youngest to oldest, even if only a word or phrase. (Ball, 2001; Bonney, 1985; Mallery, 1972; Martineau, 1976; Silko, 1996). Ohkay Owingeh (formerly San Juan) Pueblo has always known its heritage matters, explains the governor Earl Salazar, but now sees its importance not just for its citizens and for history, but ,with their storytelling center, the Pueblo can provide a new lens for all people to look forward into a better world (*Eight Northern New Mexico Indian Pueblos*, 2009).

### **Content and Themes of Storytelling**

Storytelling should stress knowledge of traditions and pan-hemispheric and pan-Indian cultural survival, but without essentialism,<sup>14</sup> and with storytelling artists on educational teams. (Bartra, 1974; Deloria, 1984; Favre, 1985 Harrison, 2005; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Marken & Walton, 1982; Masaquizas & Balam, 2000; Ross, 1989; Suina; 2004; Sylvain, 2002; Tuhiwai Smith, 2005) The model Montana Indian Education for All, IEFA, public-school initiative requires that all children learn and all tribes are covered in a culturally responsive manner so that all curricula become a habit or way of thinking about how education relates to Indian people and their storytelling.” (Kelting-Gibson, 2006; Starnes, 2006).

Effective storytelling is, like Indian culture; multi-leveled; intercultural; intertribal; transmitting and receptive; process oriented; affective; analogical; metaphoric; primary; cognitive; initiatory; and reflective of primacy of means over product, student initiated “how” inquiry over “why,” and over multiple-choice questioning. Educational curricula should correlate

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<sup>14</sup> Essentialism is a focus on traditional culture to the exclusion of class consciousness and can be a barrier to forming alliances with other underclass groups.

with storytelling and emphasize the importance of the elders and children, in their own words, with primary sources where possible, and reflect linguistic sophistication, social complexity, and continuity with spiritual practice that connects tradition, current conditions, nature, and natural change, sovereignty, nation-building, health, tribal government, and economic development. Curriculum should reflect multicultural, extended family, clan, tribe, Indian, regional and community-of-American-youth membership (Cook-Lynn, 2005; Kasten, 2000; Seale & Slapin, 1993; Spindler, 1984; Wolcott, 1982). Many urban youth have lost their native language, so that other manifestations of storytelling shape their concept of Indian identity. Audio visual materials can bring Indian-country sights and sounds, from the Indian point of view, with Indian music to expose young people to native patterns, rhythm, and language (Aquila, 1988; Ballard, 2002; McAlpine & Ericks-Brophy., 1996). The Miccosukee, tribal-run, bilingual, bicultural Indian school values adapted whole group; cooperative; community; and collaborative, whole-language pedagogy because of the similarity to traditional teaching and for the opportunity to learn about each other and all tribes (Kasten, 1992). Ohoyo Ikbama, a twelve-hundred-item Indian bibliography of Indian curriculum materials shows women as storytellers and key cultural keepers. It includes tips for race-and-sex-bias-free materials (Marken & Walton, 1982). International conferences of Indigenous people propose ethical codes for recording traditions (Mander & Tauli-Corpuz, 2006). Storytellers, especially non-Native, should be alert for stereotypes, or manifest manners (Vizenor's term, 1994).<sup>15</sup>

Anthropologists and Indians have had an often uneasy history, yet many educational anthropologists including Alfred Kroeber and Margaret Mead support anthropology based in storytelling that is multi- and intercultural, affective, analogical, metaphoric, cognitive, and pairs cultural transmission with cultural learning, notes dramatic initiation rituals, includes values and value clarification, and furthers self-identity, relations to society, and learning of human cultures (Nader, 2001; Robbins, 1985; Smith, 2005; Spindler, 1984; Wolcott, 1982). Some indigenous groups work hand in hand with anthropologists, others put non natives behind the elders in a support role (Masurah, Ishmael, & Cazden, 2005). Native anthropologists should mitigate rifts between Indians and non-Indian "anthros" (Deloria's term, 1969) (Cook-Lynn, 2005; Jacobs-Huey 2002).

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<sup>15</sup> See Peeterse's (2005) "postcolonial" review of top-seller *On The Rez*.

## Pan-Indian Storytelling

“How The Coyote Made the Indian Tribes” is a storytelling reminder from ancient Yakima elders (Deloria V., 1997, p. 203) that they have always told of the “Creator’s many children in faraway places” (Silko, 1997, p. 103). If the translation holds, the elders used the pan-tribal “Indian” rather than Yakima. Likewise, *To The American Indian* (not “To The Yurok”), by Lucy Che-Na-Wa Weitch-ah-Way Thompson, the first California Indian woman to be published (Lang, 1916/ 1991), is titled in the spirit of pan-Indianism. When an Indian was asked by an anthropologist what the Indians called America before the white man came, Vine Deloria, Jr. quipped, the Indian said simply, “Ours”(Lorenz, 2008). Scientific Indian storytelling epistemologies; consistent with any such progressive, cognitive, affective science unhampered by Kuhnian paradigms substantiate geology, contradict pseudoscience, include interdisciplinary ethno-history, -science, -botanics, -geographies, and -entomology. and could teach intertribal understanding parallel to how we learn our own culture (Deloria, 1997; Deloria, 1999; Kidwell, 1985; Nader, 2001; Spindler, 1984). Quoting Black Elk, geneticist and television host/ producer David Suzuki constructed a syllogistic link of genetic, biological, and ecological diversity to tribal and language diversity as essential elements in survival of all life (1997). Nobel-Science-Laureate Gell-Mann held that the scientific method in indigenous thought is vital to human evolution (1994). Indian storytelling that recalls natural geological events was coined geom mythology by Vitaliano and can help dispute some of the plethora of pseudoscience about Indians (Deloria, 1997),<sup>16</sup> Modern Indigenous communities, especially polar settlements, are models of human adaptability, vital research subjects, inter-tribal co-researchers, and cooperative research according to Yvon Csonka of University of Greenland.<sup>17</sup> Tribal culture is based in storytelling; telling about diverse traditional tribes promulgates understanding of diversity and adaptation and is the virtual DNA of the cultural evolutionary code. Native People band together for cultural survival and use storytelling as a defense against the assaults by industrial society (Mander & Tauli-Corpuz, 2006;

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<sup>16</sup> Deloria cites the The Bridge of the Gods collapse on the Columbia River at The Dalles, which geologists dated to eruptions and earthquake up to a thousand years ago, though a Wishram woman over a hundred years old told that the dark tunnel under the bridge was used much more recently for canoe travel. Lewis and Clark saw the tops of preserved trees several fathoms deep seemingly substantiating a more recent crash.

<sup>17</sup> Indeed, *The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Modern Polar Science* was a novel session hosted by the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research Conference in St.Petersburg, Russia during the International Polar Year, through Spring 2009 (Brooks, 2008).

Thomas, 1965).<sup>18</sup> Historically, people of the East recognized others beyond their own nation as human beings, met the Europeans, but still the concept of Indian was not necessarily formed. Horse nomadism, pan-Tetonism, pan-Plains storytelling and culture, and pan-Puebloism contributed to the birth of pan-Indianism. Pan-Puebloism is another pan-Indian variation to continue the tradition of Indian alliance for survival (Thomas, 1965; Thomas, 2005). Indians are exogamous (Goldenweiser, 1911) and often polygamous, even today, so the impulse to look outside one's group is culturally traditional.<sup>19</sup>

### **Means of Transmitting Culture (What Have Others Used?)**

Storytelling media produced in cooperation with Natives are models for transmitting cultural values, for example solar-powered radio, XETAR-AM *La Voz de la Sierra Tarahumara*-in Spanish, Tarahumara (Raramuri), Tepehua'n (O'Odam) Pima (O'Otham), and Guarojio (XETAR, 2009). Students of Mexico's first independent bilingual school wrote *The Lesson is From the Raramuri People; Oral Tradition Tales of the Raramuri People* books in Raramuri/Spanish Raramuri/English, and Raramuri/ German. *A Life of Their Own: An Indian Family in Latin America* depicts Maya daily life in middle-school-reading level prose (the style in which we are writing) and photographs (Jenness & Kroeber, 1986). "Homeland; Four Stories of Native Action" is a model for our film project- an hour documentary about four tribes in struggle for sovereignty (Thomas, 2005).

Anti-Indianism is an "anti-example" of transmission of cultural values- virulent, hegemonic. The Anti-Indianism of the dominant, Eurocentric culture, with enormous investment in eradication of Indian cultural and linguistic uniqueness is based in centuries of terrorism against tribal people (Bartra, 1974; Forbes, 2008; Kidwell, 2002; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002). As a survival countermeasure, tribal people parry anti-Indianism with their own form of post-modern or "post-

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<sup>18</sup> Nations allied in the Great Peace of the Six Iroquois Nations Confederation, under Tecumseh's Red Sticks, to thwart for thirty years U.S. encroachment into the Ohio Valley, as the Pueblo alliance under Pop and as the Five Civilized Tribes after removal to Oklahoma Indian Territory. A United Nations draft declaration by indigenous people states that indigenous children, along with their parents, have educational rights equal to all and the right of control their education, in their own language, and cultural manner of teaching and learning. The International Cancun Declaration of the United Nations recognizes and their Mayan hosts in particular and Indigenous Peoples as a group to continue the tradition of Indian alliance for survival . (Mander & Tauli-Corpuz, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> A Raramuri family we know consists of a husband and three wives and among our friends of a another traditional Raramuri family, a daughter recently married a U.S. Mennonite doctor who works in their community.



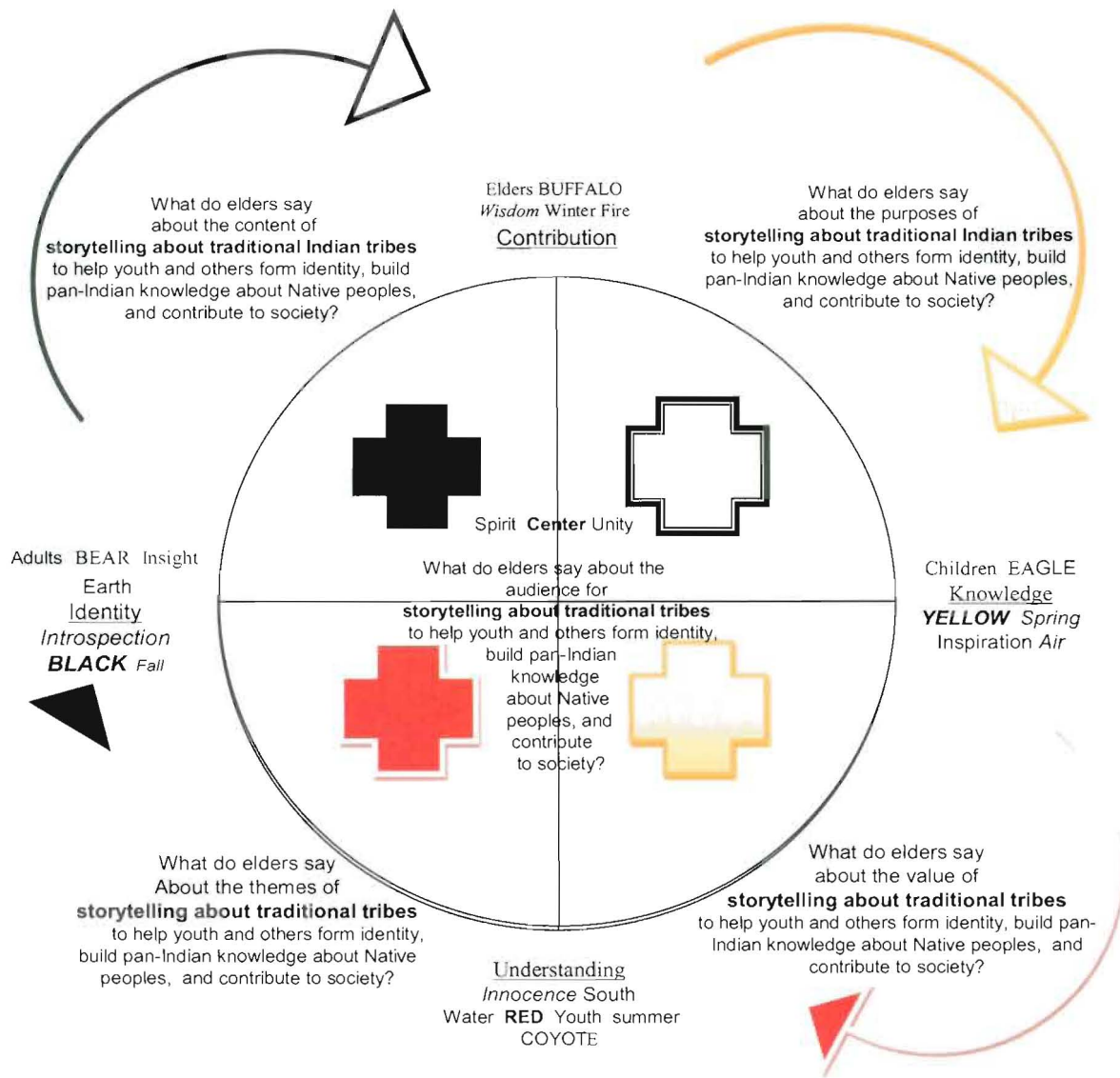
Indian” storytelling cultural transmission, i.e. joking about Anglo behavior. Indians mimic their detractors with a boomerang irony that reveals much about themselves. For example, Western Apache and many other tribal groups imitate the “White Man” in linguistic play (Basso, 1979; Deloria, 1968; Gelo, 1999; Vizenor, 1994).

Survival humor is perhaps the one, universal Indian storytelling trait suggested a prominent Indian novelist (Erdrich, 1994). Pan-Indian venues such as pow wows and spiritual movements; media, schools, sports, and even the law include constant joking. An example is the joking showmanship that powwow emcees use to define Indian identity, ethnicity, and space (Gelo, 1999). One author quipped that it’s a wonder anything gets done in Indian Country with all the joking (Deloria, 1969). The stoic Indian stereotype , hurts Indians because the general public has little sympathy for the stolid (Deloria, 1969).<sup>20</sup>

Figure II is a medicine wheel of the of the research questions for this thesis.

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<sup>20</sup>This stereotype is itself the butt of joking in at least one book and movie scene [i.e., *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. (Alexie, 1993) and *Smokesignals*, (Eyre [Producer], 1998)]



**Figure II: Medicine Wheel of Elders' Advice** Elders advise on storytelling about traditional Indian tribes—to build pan-Indian knowledge and to build personal identity with contribution to society?

*Italicized values are traditional attributes associated with specific cardinal directions*

## Storytelling Venues

New Indians (including borderland and Latin American), from the sixties on, revived storytelling to resist assimilation and retain cultural vitality in multiple settings including urban Indian centers and clinics, Intertribal clubs, bars, athletic leagues, beauty contests, powwows, dance groups, Indian papers, newsletters, social service agencies, political organizations, ceremonials, churches and, more currently, in cyberspace. Immigration to urban areas has created a new context for pan-Indian venues (Fiske, 1994; Kearney, 1991; Nagel, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Snipp, 1992). These new expressions of Indian space extended traditional Indian venues and are clues for distribution of the storytelling book and film of Mesoamerican Cultural Preservation.

***Cultural Events: Pow Wows, Spiritual, and Social Movements.*** The intertribal pow wow is a storytelling venue that has spread from the eastern Plains people, especially Omaha and Ponca, throughout the country even to Maui.<sup>21</sup> Pow wows mold identity, partly as a pressure valve for the tensions from the dominant culture and the “pow wow patter” of masters of ceremony creates pan-Indianism, ethnic cohesion, and “Indian space,” a venue to be Indian (Biolsi, 2005; Deloria, 1999; Gelo, 1999; Howard, 1983).

Religious revival movements such as the Ghost Dance Religion and Peyotism (Bee, 1965) are adaptive venues for storytelling. Christianity is a relatively new revival movement for many tribes. (Fields, 2000; McCarthy, 1999; Steinmetz, 2000; Stolzman, 1995). Mayan and other prophesies; pseudo-tribal raves and jam bands; and the internet are inspiring serious storytelling and also carnivalesque media (Del Cook, 2000; Nelson, 2001; Van de Bogart, 2008). Indians seek out elders, societies such as the reinitiated warrior societies, e.g. the Dog Soldiers, and intertribal ceremonies. Some go to other tribes which may have their own traditional ways more intact (The Red Road to Wellbriety, 2002; Ross, 1989). For example, many Newfoundland Mi'kmaq developed their Indian identity through borrowing from other tribes (Owen, 2005).

The peyote religion is a Pan-Indian faith of scope, depth, and longevity.<sup>22</sup> (Deloria, 1999; DEOMI, 2009; Talbot, 1972). Pan-Indian abstinence and addiction recovery movements overlap

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<sup>21</sup> From, including Manitoba and Saskatchewan, to California, the Southwest. Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Delaware, New Jersey, The Carolinas, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas (74-81).

<sup>22</sup> According to story, great Comanche war and spiritual leader, Quanah Parker, son of an *Angla* captives brought the peyote religion from Chihuahua, the land of the Raramuri. The Comanche probably got peyote from the Lipan

with other cultural revival movements.<sup>23</sup> The founder of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) told that the advice of Indian Elders led to A.A.<sup>24</sup> Indian non drinkers exceed forty percent on the Northern Plains and are close to half in the Southwest. Association with traditional Indians and Indian storytelling greatly increases the statistical likelihood of abstinence (Bezdec, 2006). There are many basic Indian health practices. The Indian Health Service (IHS) centers promote traditional medicine, culture, and spirituality along with Western medicine. (Primeaux, 1977). Martial Arts are an Indian tradition and Indians have made their mark in the military, first as foes and then as service members (Arbogast, 2002; Holm, 1996).

Eurocentric politics have led to popular Indigenous insurrections, each with its particular storytelling; Latin American uprisings, the Alcatraz and Wounded Knee occupations, and the Mohawk armed resistance in Canada (Beck & Mijeski, 2000; Churchill & Vander Hill, 1988, Favre and Cusminsky, 1985; Nelson, 2001).. During the 1920s-1940s, Mexican tribes, including the Tarahumara, Lacandon, and Huichol tribes we are documenting, were labeled primitive because they resisted the official *Indigenismo* program which acknowledged some cultural traditions, but limited sovereignty (Dawson, 1998; Marak, 2003).

**Media: Books, Music, Films, etcetera.** Native and Pan-Indian storytelling through music, dance, literature, and identity are nationalizing Indians and Indian media and tribalizing world culture. The extent that Indian nationalization is overtaking tribal identity has not been well investigated but pan-Indianism may be leading to a stronger appreciation of tribal traits (Powers, 1968). The New York Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of the American Indian collaborated on the First Nations, First Features Film Showcase, world-class venues for international, indigenous film, to launch Indian film festivals onto the international scene and create interest for festivals in Australia and Norway (Dowell, 2006). “Postindian warriors of

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Apache (Neely, 1995), then, Quanah was healed with peyote by a native Chihuahua *curendera*, (healer) became a Road Man practitioner, began the Quanah Parker Way (also known as Half Moon, Commanche, and Kiowa Ways), and spread the religion widely. (Bee, 1965; Bezdec, 2006; Dugan, 1993; Foreman, 1983; Hiltz, 1987; Howard, 1983; Martin, 2001; Meyer, 1992; Neely, 1995; Owen, 2005; Powers, 1968; Primeaux, 1977 ).

<sup>23</sup> The earliest began in the 1750s, In 1722, Indian people were speaking out against government complicity in the Indian liquor trade (The Red Road to Wellbriety, p.d.

<sup>24</sup> Bill Wilson would travel by motorcycle to the Onandaga and other elders [ .(Address by Marlin Harley, White-Bison Trainer, May 5, 2009 recalling the words of Gene Begay (Dine) in a 2000 A.A., world-conference, keynote speech.

survivance” are the writer, storytellers of the post-modern era- Standing Bear, Rollins, McNickle, Allen, Momaday, Silko, Alexie (Dix, 2001; Vizenor, 1978; Vizenor, 1994 )Dix (2001) contrasts Leslie Marmon Silko’s telling of Laguna Pueblo tradition with cultural disintegration in Sherman Alexie, as for example in *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (Alexie,1993). and the “Smokesignals” movie version, where contemporary, tribally-identified, chronically unemployed, reservation Spokanes clash with a pan-Indian, urban professional.<sup>25</sup>

**Sports.** Basketball, baseball, all-Indian rodeo, horse racing, and even golf (now with a top professional and Indian Casino courses) reflect individual, warrior society, and tribal values such as cooperation with teams, animals, and nature. Sports spread pan-Indianism as competitors and fans have traveled throughout Indian Country for generations and now Indian sports are available on the internet and at Indian casinos. Indian ball games began in ancient ceremonies to renew the spherical universe and to celebrate victory over the lords of the underworld.<sup>26</sup> Indians invented the rubber ball and many of the games that use rubber balls. America’s first cowboys were Indians, so stereotypical cowboy/ Indian polarity as racial marker is ironic (Alexie, 1993; Begay, 2010; Blanchard, 1974; Brown., 1953; Colton, 2000; Derby, 2002; Dewey, 2002; Eyre, 1998; Eyre, 2003; Frazier, 2002; Loew, 2004; Margolin, 1993; Penrose.2003; Smith, 1991; Weatherford, 1988).

**Schools and Museums.** Mass compulsory education was piloted in the Indian schools in an experiment in assimilation that has backfired. At the end of the U.S. Indian wars and soon after in Canada and Latin America, governments designed Indian education and boarding schools to destroy cultures by removing and assimilating children. Inadvertently this led to intertribal identity and relationships. For example, a Chickahomony met a Seneca at Bacone Indian School, became the Chickahominy schoolteacher and planned to marry the Seneca to teach with him

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<sup>25</sup> Dix’s examples of cultural loss in Alexie are serial behaviors, e.g. repetitive play of Jimi Hendrix, basketball, and stories, yet his characters are tongue-in-cheek obsessive-compulsive. Jimi Hendrix and ball dribbling are essentially Indian, as are many of our storytelling forms. Jimi in *The Lone Ranger* and Robert Johnson in *Reservation Blues* (Alexie, 1995; Lockwood, 2009) are the Black-Indian stuff of storytelling— magician legends of the Indian guitar obsession, the so-called “new drum.” Jimi’s Star Spangled Banner is pan-Indian motif (The flag - symbol of the first-nations’ campfire circles and of societal-contribution. The stripes are the red service-to-the-people path and the white service-to-the-spirit road.).

<sup>26</sup>e.g. *Tapa Wanka Yap*- “ sacred throwing of the ball,” Black Elk’s seventh,,final rite of the Oglala (Brown., 1953)

(Stern, 1988). Historic trends in pedagogy which parallel traditional native teaching styles are giving Indian students more opportunity to learn about each other and all tribes (Kasten, 1992). Artists such as T.C. Cannon and Fritz Scholder were exposed to many cultures and advanced pan-Indian art at the B.I.A Institute of American Indian Arts. Bilingual programs initiated in the 1970s unwittingly proliferate Indian languages, intertribal relationships, and reservation income. Indian education has become so integrated into communities that on some reservations it is the primary income source (Deloria, Jr., 1981; Deloria & Lytle, 1983; Frederick with Cannon, 1995; Masurah & Cazden, 2005; Stern, 1952).

College Indian studies programs and departments have created a rich body of scholarship focusing on identity, community, and sovereignty i.e. the University of Alaska at Fairbanks offers indigenous epistemologies and ethno math (Barnhart, 2005; Kidwell, 2009). The tribal college movement is a fast growing venue generating extensive scholarship which is expanding Indian sense of identity and societal contribution. Sinte Galeska University, for example, is a four-year college with an education Master's degree and is one of the thirty two tribal colleges for Natives and non-Natives (Barnhart, 2005; Bordewich, 1996; 2005; Kidwell, 1999; Kidwell, 2009; Wilkinson, 2005).<sup>27</sup>

Federal Indian policies, including the Indian New Deal under John Collier and the 1972 Indian Education Act (Deloria & Lytle, 1984), have long advocated that Indian culture be taught in schools. In 1975, Congress made Indian self-determination official educational policy, but the reality falls far short (Cook-Lynn, 2005). Though Indian scholars have argued it is unrealistic to expect thousands of years of experience to be taught from a textbook, an original demand of the "Indians of All Tribes" Alcatraz occupiers, was an independent center for Native American studies (Churchill & Vander Hill, 1988; Cook-Lynn, 2005; Deloria & Lytle, 1984; Manuelito, 2005). The Montana constitution requires Indian Education for All (Juneau, 2006). Some argue that Indian museums reify the vanished Indian stereotype, but a demand of the "Indians of All Tribes" Alcatraz occupation was for a museum (Churchill & Vander Hill, 1988; Hilden, 2000; Kidwell, 2009). The National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Institution, in New

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<sup>27</sup> Sinte Galeska, Spotted Crow, a Lakota *wicasa itancan*, highest leader, advocated survival through White methods and traditional ways, but then realized the cultural genocide at the new BIA, Carlyle, Pennsylvania boarding school. He removed his grandchildren in favor of bilingual, bicultural education.

York, New Jersey, and adjacent to the U.S. capitol building, and with traveling shows, is a showplace for pan-Indianism.

**Law.** A dialectic of indigeneity and hegemony, in tribal courts and Indian legal cases have set precedents for national and international law and sovereignty in adjudicative fashion consistent with traditional tribal jurisdictions over unrelated people visiting or living within tribal bounds. For example, in Hopi court, a plaintiff sued to live on tribal land and use tribal utilities because his elder gave permission and asked the judge to allow testimony in Hopi (Quinn Jr., 1993; Richland, 2007). Popular frontier concepts of Indian Country, which were early recognitions of pan-Indianism, have grown into mega-technical legalese that is redefining sovereignty (Deloria & Lytle, 1983) as tribes legally articulate their relationships to the provinces or separate and national states that surround them. In Indian country, storytelling is the law of traditional tribes, words are arrows, stories the canon, metaphors the terminology, and multigenerational telling the precedent (Ball, 2001)

### **Conclusions on Literature Concerning Storytelling about Traditional Tribes**

Overall, the literature on Indian storytelling about traditional tribes indicates that telling, guided by the elders, is integral to Indian life. Immigration and pan-Indianism are facts of our times, so storytelling today reflects story venues and themes that are evolving rapidly within traditional frameworks that emphasize tribal knowledge, identity formation, and societal contribution.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to gather information from Indianist elders and leaders, today's *Black Elks*, on the purpose, value, and audience of storytelling concerning traditional tribes, and seek advice about content and themes that would build greater knowledge and understanding about traditional Indian peoples. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to ask, through personal interviews with carefully-selected participants, specific research questions. I asked Indianist tribal elders and/or leaders specific research questions about the purpose, value, content, themes, and audiences for storytelling about traditional tribes to help youth and others form identity, build pan-Indian knowledge about Native peoples, and contribute to society. Mesoamerican Cultural Preservation will use the data collected to produce a (documentary) film and a book. Both the film and the book are beyond the scope of this thesis.

#### Setting

The data for this study was collected at locations where the tribal people interviewed are from of where they currently reside. The locations were in ten (10) states: California, Arizona, Colorado, Washington, Alaska, New Mexico, Minnesota, Montana, Hawaii, South Dakota, and three countries five countries (5) The United States of America, Northern, Central, and Western Mexico, Canada, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

***California: Chumash, Inupiat Inuit and Métis in Southern California, Oglala Lakota, Aztec in Central California, and Iss, Aw'te in Northern California.*** Today, as historically, the greatest population of Indians north of Central Mexico lives in California. During the past sixty years the U.S. policies of relocation, civil war in Central American, and economic warfare throughout North America have brought many Indians to California. A number of California Elders interviewed, both Native Californians and Indians from other cultural areas. An Iss/ Awte participating elder is from the Pitt River in the far north of California, tribes of diversified economies based in fishing, hunting, horticulture and trade. A southern California Chumash elder was interviewed from a tribe of master boat builders that fished and hunted mammals and birds on land and sea and harvested the chaparral with fine baskets. I also interviewed Indians from the Great Plains, Alaska, and Mexico who now live in California.



**Arizona: Hopi, Havasupai, Diné (Navajo).** I interviewed people in *Dineteh* (Navajo land) in the Four Corners Area <sup>28</sup>, home of the largest tribe in the United States and the largest north of central Mexico. The Diné occupy reservations that have a larger total area than West Virginia and are one of the poorest peoples in the U.S.A. Much of their economy is based on sheep herding. The Navajo Nation leases large coal and uranium concessions which provide revenue and jobs, but also sicken many with lung disease and cancer. Also in Arizona, the Hopi, with a corn based economy are one of the oldest and most traditional tribes. At the bottom of the Grand Canyon, the Havasupai are a very remote people.

**New Mexico: Rio Grande Pueblos.** I will interview an elder from one of the long-inhabited pueblos along the Rio Grande River.

**Colorado: Mohican.** Denver, Colorado, today, is an urban center for Plains, Southwest and other Indians. The Mohican was part of a New England confederacy that extended south to along the Hudson. James Fennimore Cooper's nineteenth century book, The Last of The Mohicans both publicized the tribe's existence in Euro-American popular culture, yet exemplifies the Euro-American view that Indians are vanishing. Many surviving Mohicans live in Connecticut.

**Montana: Absaarooke (Crow), Tsitsstas and So'taeo'o People (Northern Cheyenne), Hohe (Assiniboine), Lakota (Sioux).** The Absaarooke, or Crow, from the Little Big Horn Valley and the Northern Cheyenne in Southeastern Montana were formerly Buffalo-hunting tribes that have tribal herds today. The Crow are known for their fine geometric design and the Cheyenne for warrior societies. The Assiniboine tribe is Nakota speakers, the Eastern Siouxian dialect, former buffalo hunters who migrated through Canada and now share a Northern Montana reservations with other groups. I included elders from the Lakota Sioux, a Northern Plains tribe that included some of the last free-ranging buffalo hunters and that today has a strong influence on pan-Indian spirituality.

**Washington: Songhees/ Nook Sack.** The Songhees/ Nook Sack are master cedar boat and pole carvers and salmon fishers of the Northwest.

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<sup>28</sup> The Navajo Nation is most of Northern Arizona and Northwestern New Mexico, and parts of Southern Colorado and Southern Utah

***Alaska: Inupiat.*** Yet another leader is Inupiat Eskimo, the people of the North Slope who had fished and hunted sea mammals, and Métis, a group of mixed Nēhilawē (Cree) Indians and Europeans that formed their own tribe in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Cree are a large hunting-trapping-and-fishing tribe of Canada.

***Minnesota: Anishanaabeg (Ojibwe).*** I interviewed several Anishanaabeg (Ojibwe), a large tribe in Northern Minnesota and Canada working to revive their culture, language, and Wild Indian Rice economy.

***Hawaii: Nēhilawē (Cree).*** One of the great singer/songwriters ou2□time lives in Hawaii and is Nēhilawē (Cree), a large hunting-trapping-and-fishing tribe of Canada.

***South Dakota: Lakota and Sioux tribes.*** The Sioux I interviewed are living in California and Montana.

***Mexico: Raramuri, Huichol, Maya, Aztec.***

Another major setting was Mexico where I interviewed Raramuri who live in the Sierra Tarahumara in high mountains and canyons deeper than the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. The Raramuri is the second-largest Mexican tribe, has largely resisted assimilation, and is currently suffering long-term hunger and drought. Our friends there have indicated that they want our storytelling film and book translated for the school that they have built, the first independent Indian school in Mexico. The Huichol are another very remote mountain and canyon agricultural and herding tribe of Western Mexico, known for ceremonialism. We travelled six hours by truck and six more by horse, after landing in Western Central Mexico to visit our Indian friends, deliver supplies, and record five days of ceremonies. I interviewed a Mexica, or Aztec, a large tribe that established Tenochitlan, and give their name to the city and nation of Mexico. One of the elders is from the largest tribe in Mexico and in all of Central America, the Maya, famous for their ancient temple cities and development of the great ball game corn, and weaving. This research investigation sought the advice of Indianist elders and leaders, today's *Black Elks*, concerning storytelling, I gathered this information through personal interviews with carefully-selected participants.

## **Participants**

Elders are the tradition keepers, authorities, mediators, innovators, and teachers of culture, and thus, I relied on their counsel concerning storytelling about traditional tribes to shape my thesis. I approached 24 participants, elders and leaders, for the particular perspective that their unique backgrounds can bring to my research, as well as for their availability via either personal visit or telephone. Due to their unavailability for interviews, I eliminated one and have postponed five interviews. The elders and leaders I called on for this study are individuals who have been known to me, share an Indianist perspective, i.e., common cultural understandings, as well as their individual tribal and personal points of view. They come from a range of tribes, occupations, educational experiences, and backgrounds but all are community advocates who work with their youth and have overviews of their particular communities as well as wider perspectives on intertribal groupings, that is, their Indianist views give them similar cultural understandings and intertribal outlooks beyond their particular community, individual tribe, or personal viewpoints. Elders are the tradition keepers, authorities, mediators, innovators, and teachers of culture, and thus, I am relying on their counsel concerning storytelling about traditional tribes to shape the editing and writing of my thesis. My completed thesis will contribute to a book and film being produced for the children of the tribes, for other Indian and Latino youth, and for the young and people in general. The following names that I use are pseudonyms and I have grouped them into broad cultural areas.

### ***Great Plains.***

- “Margie Bison” is a Crow (Absaarooke) woman, who lives on the reservation, is authorized to lead ceremonies often restricted to men, and who directs a foundation for reservation youngsters. I chose her as a model of societal contribution and because she was one of the first to ask for completed copies of our movie and book to use in her work with Crow and Cheyenne youth.
- “Brave Runner,” Oglala Lakota, is an international sports and Olympic gold medal runner. I chose him for his track record of fostering Indian societal contribution among youth. He is in his seventies and lives in California.

- “Dr. Meinz,” a Lakota, is a professor at a Western University and is in her sixties. I chose her for her service in academia, promoting traditional values.
- “Dr. Fox,” a Lakota in his seventies, is an academic and author who lives in Colorado. I chose him for his work with young people to understand tradition and history.

### ***Woodlands.***

- “Forrest” is the Mohican founder of an Indian recovery movement, He lives near Denver and is in his sixties. I chose him because his technical background as an engineer and his commitment to a sober Indian sense of identity make him a role model for Indians.
- “Sonya ,” Anishanaabeg (Ojibwe), is a national political candidate and advocate for Indian spirituality, sovereignty and ecology. who I chose for her renaissance spirit, resolution and way with young people. She is in her forties and lives in Minnesota.
- “Firestone” is Anishanaabeg (Ojibwe) and works as a trainer for an Indian recovery and wellness program. He lives in Minnesota and is in his forties. I chose him because of his involvement in education throughout Indian Country and the special insights he could give us about promoting the film.
- “Vanna,” Anishanaabeg (Ojibwe), is an award winning, bestselling author of adult and children’s books who grew up on a North Dakota reservation. She is in her fifties and lives off the reservation in Minnesota. I chose her, my favorite author, for her eloquence in depicting Indian identity, building identity, and her commitment to the written word;
- “Reverend Cross,” Assiniboiné, is a Protestant minister, in his fifties, who lives on the Fort Belknap Assiniboiné, Gros Ventre reservation in Northeastern Montana and ministers to the eight reservation tribes of Montana,. I chose him because he is a model for community contribution and his commitment to get things done that makes a difference for Indian people.
- “Eagle Woman,” Cree, in her sixties, is an Oscar-winning songwriter, performing star, fine artist, and producer of Indian curriculum. She lives in Hawaii. I chose her because she has been an international voice for traditional tribes and Indian history and identity for nearly a half century.

### ***Pacific Coast.***

- “Delfina” is a Chumash tribal elder, ceremonial healer who lives on the reservation and is a local leader and model of eclectic spirituality. She is in her sixties.
- “Dr. Diamond,” Iss/ Aw’té is a essayist and storyteller, in his sixties, who lives in central California, I chose him for his eloquent chronicling of California Indian Culture
- “Thunderbird,” Songhees/ Nook Sack, is in his sixties and lives in Seattle. I chose him because he is one of the best informed, insightful, and informative pow wow master of ceremonies that I have encountered. For a number of years, while I was on the Pow Wow committee, We chose him to officiate the Red Road Sobriety Pow Wow at Casa de Fruta.

### ***Artic.***

- “Quina,” Inupiat and Métis, is a movie star, fine actress, and musician, in her forties, who lives in Southern California and the East, she directs an acting and music program for Indian youth. I chose her because she is a face of the Indian community and a teacher in the indigenous arts world, with concrete understanding of cinema.

### ***Mesoamerica and the Southwest.***

- “Compa” is a Raramuri (Tarahumara) former coordinator of the Chihuahua state Tarahumara Indian bureau. He is in his fifties, lives in a town near the Raramuri rural communities, is an acknowledged ambassador for his traditional tribe and a member of our Apoyo Tarahumara team, a small grassroots effort that delivers ten tons of food to the Sierra Tarahumara every six months.
- “Tania” is a Raramuri educator and activist in her forties who lives in a traditional, mountain Raramuri community where she has been instrumental in starting the first independent Indian school in Mexico, for which the Apoyo Tarahumara team supplies the food for the lunch program; I have chosen she and the principal of the school because they are involved daily in teaching about traditional tribes to build knowledge and identity. We have helped sponsor her to come to California to teach about her people.

- “Maria,” Raramuri, is the principal of the first independent Indian school in Mexico. The school is bilingual in Raramuri and Spanish. She is in her fifties and lives in a traditional , Sierra community.
- “Yerba Buena” is a Mayan healer in her sixties who lives in New Mexico. I chose her for her advocacy of spiritual freedom5) “Abuelita” is a Mexica who brought many of her ceremonies to California and whose status as a living repository of knowledge of traditional tribes can serve as a bridge between Mexican and U.S. Indians. She is in her seventies and lives in Sacramento.
- “Marco” is a Huichol artist and merchant in his forties. He lives in an Indian community in the Sierra Huichol. I chose him because he is an ambassador for a traditional tribes and has been a long time friend and collaborator with our project.
- “Abuelita” is a Mexica who brought many of her ceremonies to California and whose status as a living repository of knowledge of traditional tribes can serve as a bridge.
- “Ms. Singer,” Diné or Navajo, is the Principal of a bilingual Navajo school in the Southwestern part of the Navajo Big Reservation. She lives in Northern Arizona and beyond teaching does social work with Navajo around the reservation and is extending her outreach to the Supai School in Havasupai in the Grand Canyon. I picked her for her educational work and traditionalism as the daughter of a lately deceased medicine person.
- “One Horn” is a Hopi artist in his sixties who lives in New Mexico. I chose him for his dedication to preserve traditional material culture and his storytelling.
- “Mirabel Madrid” is a Rio Grande pueblo tribal member in her forties, who lives in the Washington D.C. area and works for the U.S Department of Education Indian Education office. I chose her for her knowledge of Indian Education Programs.
- “Mariposa,” Havasupai/Hopi, is in her sixties and lives in Phoenix and is a member of a council of Native elders from all over the world. I chose her because of our mutual interest in Deep Canyon dwelling Indians and the special cultures that they have developed in isolation.

## **Procedures: Interviews**

My data source was personal interviews. For those participants who agreed to be interviewed and who live within an hour or so driving distance from me, I traveled to them to conduct in-person interviews at a location of their choice. In the course of the research, I traveled to the Crow, Fort Belknap Assiniboine and Cree Reservation, and the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana; to the Chumash Reservation in Southern California; to Pomo land in Northern California; and to the Hualapai, Hopi, Navaho, Zuni, and Acoma reservations in Arizona and in New Mexico, and to the Raramuri in Northern Mexico. I visited and dispensed supplies twice with Raramuri tribal communities in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua conducting interviews on the Navaho Reservation as I went, and three times to the Crow Reservation in the Little Big Horn Valley of Montana where I do volunteer work with youth each summer. For other participants who live a much greater distance from here, I interviewed by telephone or by e-mail.

The Interviews were over the winter months, during the traditional time for storytelling, the season of the winter tales. The specific questions focused on the areas of interest to our Mesoamerican Cultural Preservation group — primary producers of the book and film mentioned earlier, and included: traditional Indian tribes, intertribal awareness, pan-Indian identity, identity formation, education, and contribution to society. As a whole, my questions were to elicit from the elders their advice concerning the purposes, value, content and themes of storytelling. Specifically, the questioning was for advice on storytelling as a means to build pan-Indian knowledge about traditional tribes and to build identity and societal contribution. Respondents answered questions about the content, themes, audiences, promotion and distribution of the film and book we are developing. Effective strategies for disseminating materials are essential for their maximum effectiveness.

## **Data Collection**

The data in this study is from interviews (over a period of four months with the 18 of 24 Indian elders or leaders that I was able to interview) conducted on site in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, and Mexico or in telephone conversations. Each interviewee answered the five specific research questions in a tape recorded interview. While conducting the interviews

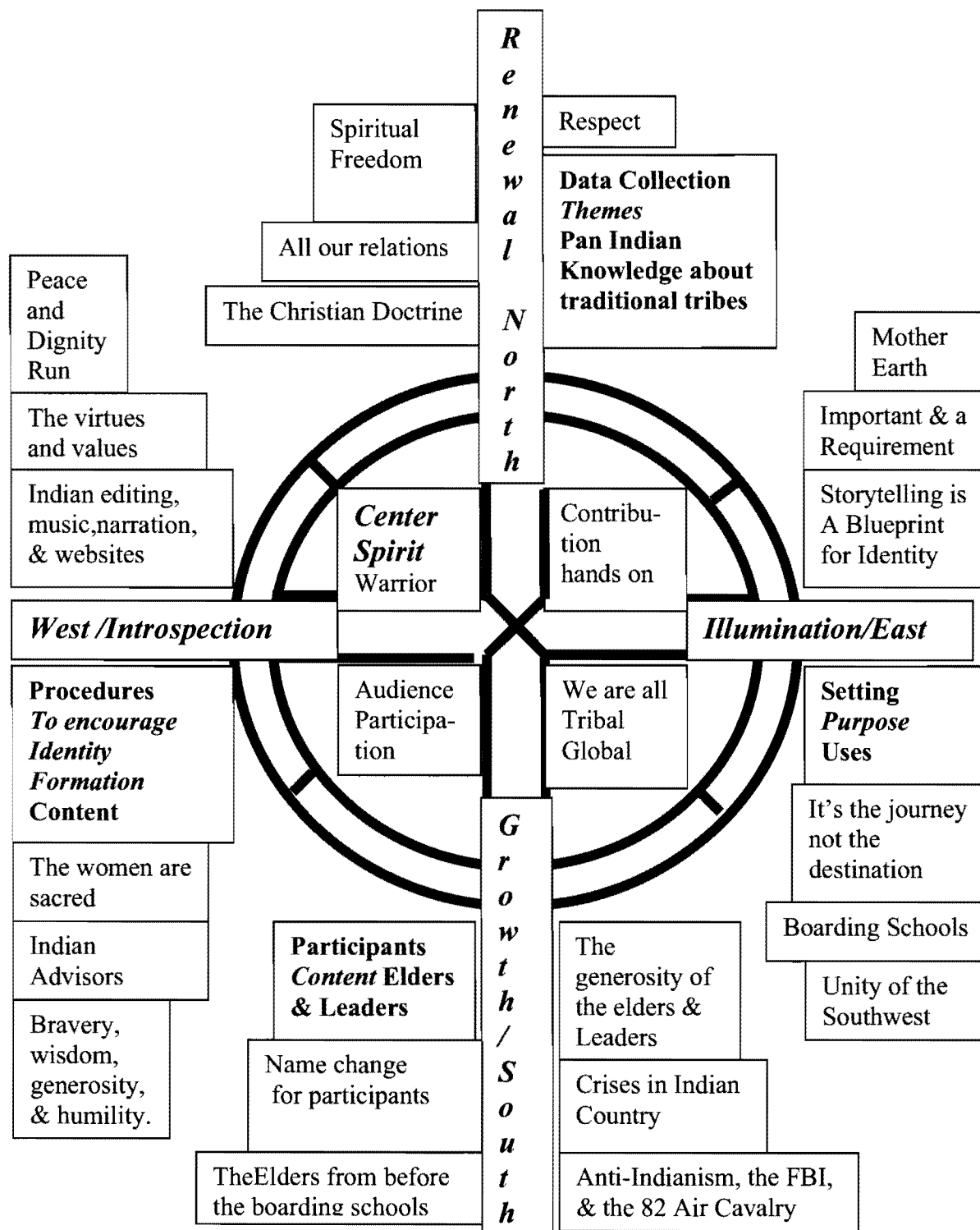
I asked for advice and permission to delve deeper through the course of conversation with awareness of Indian sensitivities and protocols about questioning. I also wanted advice and information on typical errors made by non-Indians writing about tribal people—for example, stereotype, prejudice, ignorance, over-analysis, insensitivity, classism, sexism, and racism.

### **Data Analysis**

The respondents often answered in conversation and not directly in answer to a specific question, so the responses are categorized to my research questions. The Mesoamerican Cultural Preservation team, friends, and elders in the Indian community consulted with me for our book and film since a larger purpose for this study is to advise for these projects. My sample is small and statistically insignificant, so I have not quantified multiple responses, but use qualitative “most” and “many” to show patterns of general agreement that informed my project as I analyzed, characterized, summarized, organized, and matched the responses to my research questions.

The advice of the elders and leaders conformed to the medicine wheel schema that I have also used in Figure II. Figure III is a medicine wheel of findings.

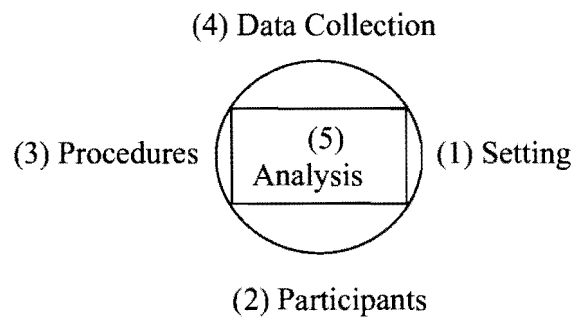




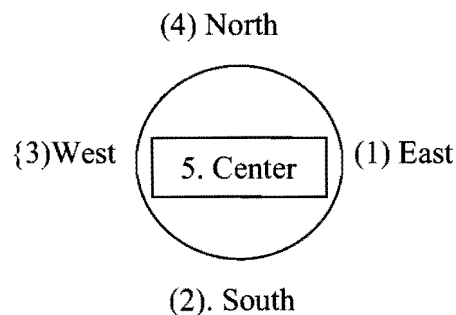
**Figure III: Medicine Wheel of Findings of Elders on Storytelling About Traditional Tribes**

## Chapter Four: Findings

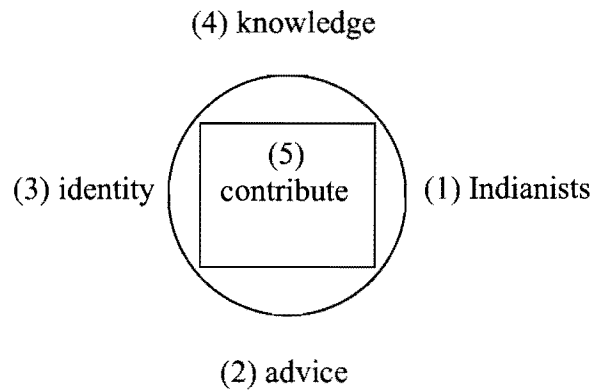
The data in this study is from taped interviews. Each of the 18 participants (out of 24 that I approached) in the study responded to five research questions. The analysis is categorized into fives to correspond to many themes of five in the five chapters of this thesis, including the five sections of Chapter III, Methods.



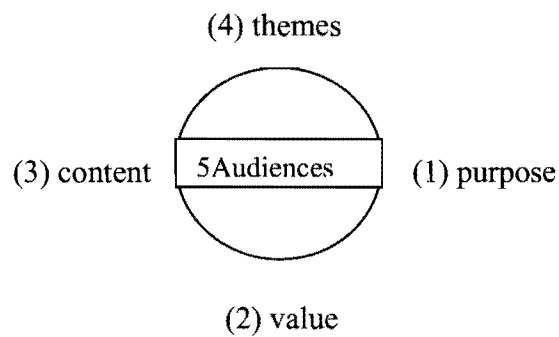
The number five is considered sacred by many Indian tribes (e.g. the Huichol and many California tribes) because it encompasses the four cardinal directions and the center.



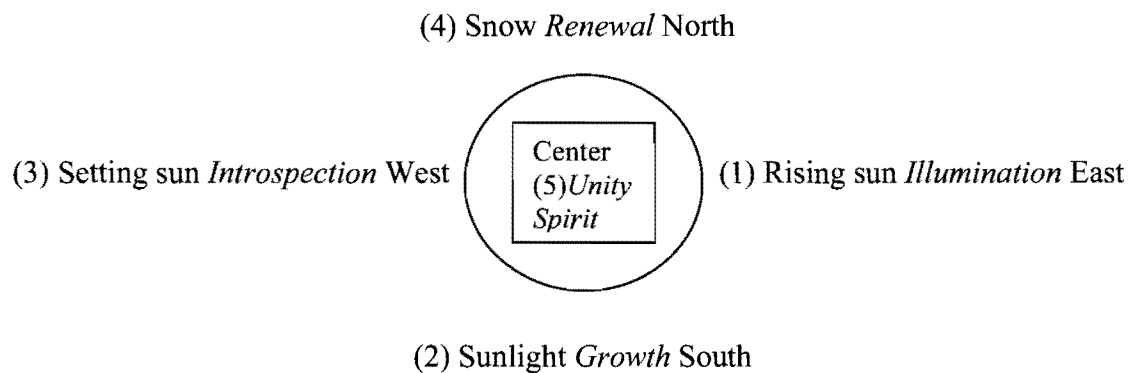
There are five parts of the basic research question, what do (1) Indianist Elders and/or leaders (2) advise on storytelling about traditional tribes to help youth and others (3) form identity, (4) build pan-Indian knowledge of Native peoples, and (5) contribute to society.

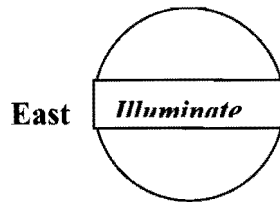


There are five research questions to Indianist tribal elders and/or leaders about the (1) purpose, (2) value, (3) content; (4) themes, and (5) audiences on storytelling about traditional tribes to help youth and others form identity, build pan-Indian knowledge about Native peoples, and contribute to society. These match the findings sections.



The cardinal directions can be matched to points of the medicine wheel (Figure III), a figure that is used by indigenous nations. and can be associated with spiritual attributes.





### **I. Setting: The Purpose and Advice on Storytelling**

What would you as a tribal elder (and/or leader), say is the purpose of storytelling about traditional tribes?

Mother Earth is the first setting. Each of the hundreds of cultures receive the illumination for their storytelling, tradition, and understanding of the unseen worlds directly from Nature. Storytelling should revere Mother Earth and promote ecological technologies (many respondents), including ceremonies to promote health, crops, cultivated fields and, especially, water, its sacredness and purity (Maria and Tania in the Sierra Tarahumara). Storytelling about traditional tribes is not only important, but a requirement (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010).

Sense of place comes from Nature, from water source. “What is North for the Europeans, seafarers surrounded by water, who looked to the stars, is not necessarily North for the Indian who is oriented to the river and sunrise (Forrest, January 21, 2010; Compa, December 27, 2008). People define the spiritual world through storytelling. Each being, the salmon and the elk, has a blueprint for its identity. For humans, storytelling is the blueprint.. Elders use storytelling as an allegory, koan, or flower that keeps opening up to unlock the intuition to a seeker's own question. Elders recognize, the importance of independent problem solving and free thought (Forrest, January 21, 2010). Though Indian people battle the stereotype of the vanishing Indian, elders sense their own mortality and understand that their cultures are under attack with ground lost and, so, supported the value of storytelling about traditional tribes.

#### ***“It is the Journey not the Destination”- Brave Runner***

Setting for nomadic, Indian people became more complex with European contact and removal of Indian children from their families, forced expatriation to reservations, relocation from reservations, termination of reservations, and more removal of their children. Indian people are of three groups, each with distinct storytelling needs:

reservation Indians, off-reservation Indians with reservation ties, and Indians at complete remove (Reverend Cross, June, 2009).

Sedentary nations also recognize the setting as a journey. The Hopi have inhabited their three mesas in Arizona for eons, yet Hopi storytelling and prophesy are about prior migrations. “The Tarahumara are our relatives to the south,” said One Horn, late 1990s), expressing the unity of the U.S. Southwest and Mesoamerica. Hopi relation to the ancient, ancestral-pueblo cliff dwellers is now accepted anthropology.<sup>29</sup> Abuelita, an Aztec, Nahuatl speaker, found that through her native language, she could understand the archaic language of centigenarian Hopis.

When I laughed at what an old man said, people thought I was being disrespectful. I told them, “No, he said something funny.” They thought this was an excuse until they asked and he said he had told the other old Hopis, in a funny way, that he had had to relieve himself and thought no one else could understand. From my Nahuatl language, I knew what he was saying (July 7, 2010).

### ***The Boarding Schools***

Most participants mentioned the boarding-schools (designed with the motto “kill the Indian to save the child”), the setting of severe historical trauma to contemporary elders. Canada replicated the U.S.A. model with similar atrocities including sexual abuse at rates of 70% to 80% for both sexes (Gibbons & Tomas, 2002; CERD, 2008). Participants Tania and Principal Maria, with the women of their community, started the first bilingual, indigenous school, wholly independent of Mexican government control, funding, and abuse.<sup>30</sup> Forrest, led a 2009 pilgrimage to the schools, collected stories, presented a petition to the President for an apology (similar to Canada’s and other governments’), and prayed for forgiveness for Indian families, who were often forced to make a “Sophie’s Choice” to save some of their children.<sup>31</sup> For example, Margie Buffalo emotionally told me, while we drove across Montana from the Crow to

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<sup>29</sup> formerly called Anasazi.

<sup>30</sup> The school is called “Lessons of the Raramuri People.”

<sup>31</sup> From the book of that name where a mother is forced to decide which of her children to sacrifice.

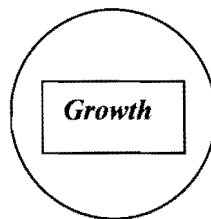
Fort Belknap reservations, that after many years, her parents explained they knew the government would take at least one of their children, so had decided that Margie would survive, that she was the strongest. She sent her story, “Mr. Boo Hoo,” to Forest and the pilgrimage.

“Mr. Boo Hoo” was the name of the wooden paddle at my last school.

Day or night, I was surprised, often awakened, to witness paddlings with

“Mr. Boo Hoo.” At my graduation I felt guilty because I was the only student who had not been paddled and I ran away, hoping to be spanked with “Mr. Boo Hoo.” When they caught me, they didn’t hit me because I actually wanted “Mr. Boo Hoo” (July 7, 2009).

The setting for many Indians is remote rural areas, unexposed to the outside. Tania, Raramuri, has seen our film trailer and said the Huichol and Lacandon peoples we are covering in our film are important for Raramuri children to know about and someday visit in exchange programs (December 24, 2009). Brave Runner said that his warrior calling is to build global unity through diversity (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010). Others mentioned this theme and contribution (i.e. Raramuri of the Sierra Tarahumara).



**South**

## **II. Participants, Indian elders and leaders on the value of storytelling**

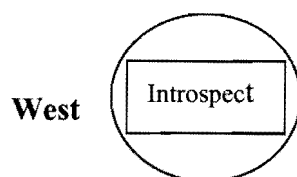
What would you say is the value of storytelling about traditional tribes?

The respondents, two thirds of the 24 elders and or leaders that I asked for interviews, support the value of storytelling about traditional tribes. All twenty-four were encouraging, generous, enthusiastic, and willing to help, if possible. One, only, an Indian academic who is in high demand, declined. Her adopted grandson, another interviewee, seconded that she truly does not have extra time. Another educator postponed the interview until after my timeline. Academic schedules, including my own, rather than traditional roles, precluded some interviews. Thunderbird called universities racist, but agreed to interview, only, he said, because I teach at a prison. He asked that I send him one

cigarette as payment, then, with typical Indian hospitality, invited me to his house when I am next in Seattle (March 11, 2010). Other elders I interviewed by telephone allowed me to dispense with the traditional token payment. The generosity of the elders confirms their role as promoters of the culture and wisdom-keepers.

Some talks were short, but I have included the data as I see it an honor and duty to represent any of these people. Elders and/or leaders are the terms I call participants rather than my original term, “elders,” because of the distinction that Forrest made between the boarding school generation of seniors, like himself, with assimilationist education, versus his elders, who had remained free and untainted by boarding schools. Women are sacred to tribal people (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010). Fourteen of the 24 participants were women.

Reservation extended families (and, often, off-reservation families) are characteristically embroiled in multiple crises (Reverend Cross, July 9, 2009). Complications of travel, illness, hospitalization, sick children, legal problems, and cell phone dysfunctions are exacerbated by anti-Indianism. Several stories of why I didn’t fully complete interviews are as telling as the talks themselves. For example, one family, while I was visiting, had their mentally impeded son jailed, facing six, consecutive life sentences, then charges were dropped and they all<sup>32</sup> went into a Federal Bureau of Investigation protection program because they had witnessed reservation corruption. A surprise from the skies aborted an interview with a Lakota Elder at the Little Big Horn battle site on the anniversary of Custer’s Last Stand. C-150 cargo planes dropped sixty air-cavalry paratroopers who marched through the river and mustered in the midst of a battle reenactment. This Eighty-Second Airborne appearance was the first cavalry assemblage on the Little Bighorn since the 1876 fight.



### **III. Procedures: Content of Storytelling To Encourage Identity Formation**

What would you say about the content of the storytelling about traditional tribes?

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<sup>32</sup> As a result, I decided to postpone some interviews rather than have my interviews interpreted as factionalism.

Firestone, who travels extensively as a trainer for Native sobriety and wellness, gave procedural ideas and validation of this research with the advice that Indians should be part of content and production because Natives can always recognize Indian editing. As we develop segments of the film, Firestone, who has produced documentaries, volunteered to view the footage and help recruit an eloquent narrator and Indian musicians for the soundtrack (April 12, 2010).

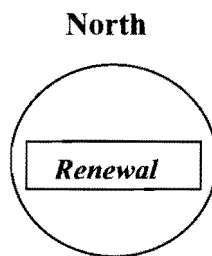
By teaching the contribution of the man and woman warrior, storytelling about traditional tribes should counter drugs (especially methamphetamine and alcohol use) (according to many participants), suicide, addiction, a punitive legal system, gang involvement, domestic violence and confusion from loss of traditional gender roles. When relatives and survivors of a typical Indian epidemic of suicide (in this case on an Oglala Lakota reservation) were questioned, they said that this was a desperate last try to show the bravery and dedication of a warrior. The difference between a gangster (and there are maybe 50 or 60 gangs on Indian reservations) and a warrior is that a warrior empowers the community and the community empowers the warrior (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010).

The four spiritual steps of the the warrior build identity (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010). Indian websites, including Firestone and Forrest's, get thousands of contacts. We can post messages and links at no cost. Our giveaway project might send out hundreds of video disks for only a remuneration for shipping. Firestone reminded me that a director of the Peace and Dignity Run is a mutual acquaintance. We could send materials every four years with Indian Runners to the Native villages, Indigenous supporters, and sponsors that they visit on the runs from Alaska's Point Barrow, and from Tierra del Fuego that meet in Panama (Firestone, April 12, 2010).

The principles, laws, and values are embedded in the storytelling (Forrest, January) and the virtues and values that empower the cultures should be the content of storytelling (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010). The core values are bravery, wisdom, generosity, and "the incredible balance of humility — that we are no better and no less than one another." It is the "generosity of the warrior" to share the virtues and values of traditional tribes. A warrior is one who assumes self responsibility with accountability. Contribution to society is the warrior way. The warrior seeks to pass on the wisdom of and about the culture (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010).



The women are sacred because when the culture and the virtues and values that empower the culture were in shambles because the old roles were virtually gone, the women took on many of the roles. The elders had no wisdom because their old hunting-and-gathering ways were gone, the warriors felt impotent to protect and to hunt big game, and the women, the gatherers and nurturers, had no ability to gather. The women, nevertheless, nurtured themselves and the children and the men, and kept alive the wisdom of the elders (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010). Two of the participants have joined with a council of Indigenous grandmothers (Yerba Santa and Butterfly) to promote women's wisdom.



#### **IV. Data Collection, Themes of Storytelling for Pan-Indian Knowledge**

What are themes you would include in storytelling about traditional tribes?

That “We are all related” — two-leggeds, four leggeds, wingeds, the standing (plant) people), the creepy crawlers, the swimming nations, and even our elders, the stone people-- is a recurrent theme in Indian Country. Renewing, sustaining, and making our relationships, give identity. Today, Indian people have a relationship to the family, to the tribe, to the elders, and to the nation, so each of these relationships and the respect required to nurture are themes of storytelling about traditional tribes. Relationships were so important to Quina that she studied physics before she started acting school (May 7, 2010).

It is controversial, but Brave Runner thinks a priority theme of storytelling is the journey that Indian people had to make after the European invasion. Though music, dance, and the drum are sacred, it is the journey that kept these cultural elements alive. He often says that “it is the journey not the destination” — the genocidal history of Indian relations with Europeans and Euro Americans should not be glossed over. This includes the “Christian Doctrine” (he

distinguished the Christian religion, which he adheres to, as very similar to Oglala spirituality)<sup>33</sup> that denies humanity and allows theft, rape, and murder of Indians. We will be among the first to tell the true journey of Indian people, Brave Runner encouraged us (February 7, 2010). Actually, the elders I interviewed agreed with Brave Runner that the journey of indigenous people is a vital theme.

Participants stressed the living, renewing nature of tradition and one's right to sovereign spiritual expression with appropriate adaptation to changing cultural conditions. One of the four steps of the emerging warrior is find one's personal uniqueness (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010). Prayer includes communion with the elements, the sacred fire, the stones of the earth, the winds, and the water, then courageous acceptance of spiritual guidance, even when it is not expected and does not fit into the iconography or strictures of a particular tribal lineage. Yerba Santa, for example prayed, then had a vision of an angel with full wings, a symbol that clashed with her Maya teachings. She followed her visions and calls herself a universal healer. "I don't consider myself a traditional person, but a universal person. Instead of abiding rigid rules, I want to be free in my heart"(June 3, 2010).

Respect is a theme of traditional tribes, most elders agreed. Abuelita explained that this involves respect for the values and teachings of our country, of the family, of one's Father, of one's Mother, of one's teachers, of one's medicine people,<sup>34</sup> of one's brothers including, (because we live on the same planet) the "four-leggeds" and the "wingeds," and respect for oneself. "If you can't respect yourself, no one else can respect you.." A primary way to show this respect is to spend more time with our teachers because these themes of storytelling are the things that elders teach and feel (Abuelita, July 7, 2010). Another way to show respect is to translate storytelling and use the actual, self-given names of tribal people, i.e. Raramuri is a people's own name and language; outsiders use Tarahumara (Dr. Diamond, May 17, 2010).<sup>35</sup> There are hundreds of languages to translate in North America, but bilingual English/Spanish materials is the way our project will start.

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<sup>33</sup> Brave Runner cited Stolzman, W. (1995). *The pipe and Christ: A Christian-Sioux Dialogue* as evidence.

<sup>34</sup> This is sad for Principal Singer who very recently lost her medicine man father.

<sup>35</sup> As a compromise, I often use Sierra Tarahumara for the region and Raramuri as the tribe.

The English translations of Native words are not those words, Quina reminded me. When, as a child, she returned to her native village from Anchorage, the elder's words were alive and, she said laughingly, she would roll her eyes with emotion. Many of the traditions are translations, e.g. the traditional tribe has been translated into a nation, (the Navajo Tribe is now the modern Navaho Nation), the fire for storytelling has been translated into a video screen that we sit around, and rap music and guitars have replaced the drum and traditional song. All of these translations have a good and a bad side and, like the internet; are technologies that can be used for freedom and expressing fundamental values, but also by "Big Brother" (Quina, May 7, 2010).

A theme in Indian law is renewal through reconciliation and rehabilitation which is at odds with the Eurocentric punitive legal system, said Compa, who lives in a prison town in the Sierra Tarahumara where the majority of prisoners are Indians (December 27, 2008). As a prison teacher, I work with large numbers of Indians and am aware, in both my vocational as well as volunteer work supporting Indian prisoners' spiritual practices, of these philosophical differences



## **V. Analysis, Audiences for Societal Contribution**

What do you advise on the audience for storytelling about traditional tribes?

In the final analysis, the audience is the object and most crucial element of storytelling. Audiences develop cultural learning strategies that push or slow cultural transmission. When Indian students are involved, both as audiences and producers, they see themselves, make the materials relevant, grow, and build their identity as contributors (Quina, May 7, 2010). This has been the traditional way that storytelling stays authentic. It is important students work with their hands to experience the cultures (Compa, December 27, 2008). In her own work, Quina exposes students to the dynamic of changing tradition by including them in making the film and media

she produces (May 7, 2010). We have done this with our film and book, using student film makers and writers.

Wherever we are from, we have tribal roots; all have a personal stake in storytelling about traditional tribes. It is both personal heritage and the heritage of all of us, so we learn about ourselves and all people (Quina, May 7, 2010). The information should be for everyone (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010; Firestone, April 12, 2010). Though as principal Singer said, “I will do anything I can for my people”(January 2, 2020), this is not inconsistent with Indian education for all. Indians have been a minority and disenfranchised in many areas of the Americas for generations and have sought to educate the wider population about who they are. Many elders and leaders supported the idea that because this information was passed down to us at great cost, it is our duty and requirement to pass the information to everyone that we can, support Indian Education for All, and be “among the first to tell the true journey of Indian people” (Brave Runner, February 7, 2010).

### **Conclusion to Findings**

The elders and/or leaders I interviewed were generous and enthusiastic. All agreed that storytelling about traditional tribes will help youth (and others) foster identity formation, build pan-Indian knowledge about Native peoples, and encourage contribution to society. These modern Black Elks concur that storytelling of the journey of indigenous people is a vital responsibility.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Summary, Limitations, Implications, Next Steps and Action Plan**

The Indianist elders and/or leaders that I interviewed eloquently answered with examples the research questions on the purpose, value, content, themes, and audiences for storytelling about traditional tribes to help youth and others form identity, build pan-Indian knowledge about Native peoples, and contribute to society:

These elders and/or leaders support storytelling about traditional tribes, not just their own peoples, their allies, or cultures similar to their own, but also distant and distinct tribes. Most advocated a global consciousness among their youth, their people, and all people. They see intrinsic value in knowledge about traditional tribes and importance for formation of identity for societal contribution and to create “Indian space” — a venue to be Indian and for the education and identity of all of us as inheritors of the tribal legacy of humankind.

Elders spoke of common pan-Indian values amongst native tribes of North America, especially reverence for Mother Earth and all her creatures and resources in alignment with traditional Indian invocations, “All my relations” or, “We are all related.”

. These are voices and the advice of two dozen Indianist elders and leaders who agree with us that teaching about traditional tribes is valuable and any resemblance to the ideas of most Indians is a matter for further study. There are an additional five elders that I plan to interview in the months to come and I would like to talk to all at further length. In the months to come, and, if the experience of the past few months is an indication, I will gain suggestions to add other elders and/or leaders.

In late June and early July, I traveled to the Crow reservation and showed our trailer. I plan to return to show our trailer, footage, and the completed film to community gatherings at Little Big Horn College, Dull Knife Memorial College at Lake Deer Montana on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, and at Fort Belknap College on the Assiniboine/ Cree reservation. These community meetings will give us more advice to write, edit, and produce the Mesoamerican Cultural Preservation books and films. I have been asked by Marianne Mangold to co-author the book and we have written an outline and a draft of the first of the four chapters. We plan to send

drafts to our film editor (so that he can use the theme to begin cutting) and finish the writing for the book this year..

The leaders and elders made recommendations that will help with distribution and promotion of the book and film. I plan to contact Indian websites and post links to our project. I will also oversee making copies of the film available to the runners of the next Peace and Dignity Run from the farthest northern and southern points of the Americas to meet in Central America in 2012;

It is our bond and responsibility to carry our film back to the traditional tribes and we are beginning plans for a return to Chiapas to show our still photographs and distribute our film and book at *Na Bolom*, the Indigenous and Lacandon support institute in San Cristobal de Las Casas (Founded by anthropologists Franz and Trudy Blom) and to the Lacandon Maya villages. We are also talking about a second book that would be the adventures of our remote expeditions by canoe and horseback, to document ceremonies and life ways rarely seen by outsiders..

The Mesoamerican Cultural Preservation team has a great opportunity to take this advice of the elders to heart, re-contact them to clarify key points, and ask for stories and examples. I continue to act as a director and to solicit donations and recently gained a strong referral to a popular film actor to narrate the film. I will e-mail segments, as we edit them, to Firestone, for his suggestions and I recommend to any curriculum developers producing storytelling about indigenous nations that they work with the elders in content, production, and distribution. As elders and leaders said, we are all tribal people with the responsibility to teach Indian-Education-for-All about representative tribes and their journey. This film and book are part of that larger effort.

Last year, I was recognized by the Dalai Lama for drought relief in Indigenous communities ([http://article.wn.com/view/2009/04/26/Dalai\\_Lama\\_honors\\_the\\_2009\\_Unsung\\_Heroes\\_of\\_Compassion](http://article.wn.com/view/2009/04/26/Dalai_Lama_honors_the_2009_Unsung_Heroes_of_Compassion)). The Dalai Lama stressed that if we were tempted to stop, now that we had gained recognition, that would be wrong! The Dalai Lama says so; Black Elk Speaks Says So.

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