WE SHOULD COME TOGETHER WITH A GOOD THOUGHT: THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE LIFE OF A NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH ROADMAN

by

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This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

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DEDICATION

Aho, Daukii

Dauk'yalii

Begya Daukii

Senkyahi

Aho

IN MEMORIAM:

Emory, *kwakhwá!*

Trudy, Ahiéhé and Thank you.

Aho, Khön and Grandma Erma.

Grandma Nina, ¡Muchas Gracias!

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ABSTRACT

As an example of personal inter-relational anthropology, this dissertation explores the nature of personhood, relationships, and affectionate adoption between relatives in the life of a Native American Church roadman, of Kiowa and Cheyenne heritage. As indigenous and Native American scholars have challenged hegemonic assumptions about indigenous communities and peoples, so too does this dissertation offer ideas and critiques from the indigenous perspective, thus reinterpreting an individualistic perception of identity with a perspective on identity based upon shared relationships. The centrality of religion, ceremony, and religious social dynamics form a context through which many of these relationships emerge, are expressed, and transform through time. This dissertation explores how relationships are created, maintained, and formed through the sharing of story, of experiences, and time. Also explored are issues of gender dynamics, gender identity, and their part in shaping family relationships. Other dynamics discussed include contemporary Native American life, economic insecurity, alcohol and substance use, humor and story telling.

AN INTRODUCTION

GREETING

I am known as Christopher Basaldú. I was born in California when my parents were experimenting with living in places other than Texas, where all of my family has lived for many generations. On both sides, my parents are, Mexican-American, Tejano, Hispanic. On both sides we are also descended from various indigenous American people, though mostly unknown to us now. One of my grandfathers remembers that both his parents were mostly Aztec. Another great-grandfather told me we were Aztec and Olmec. Certainly, the dynamics of history being what they are, there is European heritage mixed in our pasts somehow, maybe Africa too.

After growing up in South Texas, I went to college and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Harvard College in the Study of Religion. Then after working and traveling for a few years after graduating, I applied to graduate school, having been inspired by the memory of my college professors. I earned a degree of Master of Arts in American Indian Studies. Now I am working on the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology. This is why I am writing to you. This is why I am speaking to you.

I will talk to you about my relatives and about their religion, their relationships, their faith, their lives, and what is important to them. I will talk to you about how I am a part of those things and their lives. I will talk about how they are a part of my life. I will talk to you about the Native American Church, about the Medicine, about prayer, and

about healing, about being together on the good "red road." I will talk to you about pain and heartache. I will talk to you about Creator and creation, and about how we all hold on to each other while walking through this world together.

To be able to speak about all of these things, I must remember many things as best I can. To be able to speak about all of these things I must tell you about who I am and to whom I belong and from where I come. To be able to speak about all of these things, as best I can, I must be aware of my relatives and who they are, to whom they belong, and from where they come. To be able to speak about all of these things, as best I can, I must be aware of all of these things together.

OPENING

"Sonny Boy. You better get on that, Bo." Thau says with a laugh. He continues "how else you gonna graduate unless you write that paper," he continues. "Yeah, yeah, Thau, I'm working on it. I'm working on it," I reply lamely. "Thau" is the Kiowa word for "father" or "dad." The Kiowa call themselves Koigu, which is sometimes translated as "the principal people." The word "bo" is translated as "son." He calls me Bo; I call him Thau.

I do not remember when exactly I first called him "thau." Nor do I recall the moment when he called me "bo." But I think that it was a bit more difficult for me to accept the reality of these terms, and use them properly. These simple, standard terms of address reflect many things. Most importantly the terms reflect a shared relationship. One person means something to another. It means that there is importance, significance,

feeling, trust, expectation, responsibility, duty, and many other things. It is not the focus of this dissertation to fully enumerate the meaning of these terms, but rather to hint at some of the possibilities, to describe some of the importance of the meanings, to talk about the reality of the in-between-ness of interconnections. I mean to look at the heart of humanness and find it within what is shared between relatives, relationships.

Though, mainly I wish to write about relationships, I must also write about many other things, ideas, feelings, and un-knowings, uncertainties, and ambiguities. There are so many things that are connected to relationships and to the people and communities that live through them. Most central, I will be focusing on the relationship that I share with my Thau. But even so, I must also talk about other people very important in my Thau's life and their shared relationships. In order to do that, I may also explore the context(s) in which these relationships arise and are maintained. To name a few of the perceivable contexts, I look at the importance and centrality of the Native American Church in my Thau's life, how my Thau's life and relationships weave in and out of faith and religion, urban and rural and reservation lands, movement in and around communities and ideas, and how all of this speaks about who people are; who we are. I am drawn to exploring the ideas and processes of relationships because I see them as (interrelated with) identity.

Over all of these years of study in religion and in anthropology, I continue to be fascinated about what it means to be a human being. What does it mean to be a "person"? Who is? Why is somebody who he or she is? What is a person's identity? And does that identity have boundaries? Are they fluid and permeable, or are they solid? Is "who-ness" shared or individual? Is it fixed or temporary? Is it all of these things and many others? Is

"who" something that can be fully expressed, or something never fully known? Or communicated?

I do not think that I can sufficiently answer these questions to the satisfaction of all of my potential readers. Everybody potentially has a different take on reality. As my mother has always said to me, "Cada cabeza, un mundo." Though I cannot answer these questions in their totality, I can offer possible answers, glimpses, while continuing my attempted awareness of my own personal boundaries, permeable or not, and limitations, expanding or contracting. I believe that some of these answers can be addressed through the exploration of relationships, the living in them, the expressing of communications happening in the context of relationships.

I can try to answer through things that I have learned at school, at home, and through the relationships and interactions that I have with my relatives. I can attempt to answer these questions and other questions, and even ask more questions while trying to find some answers through reorienting myself into perspectives that reflect more the writings, ideas, and thoughts of Native American and other indigenous scholars and relatives. I can offer some thoughts from my own being as I have interacted with my Thau, my Kiowa dad, Waldo Daukei and some of his and our relatives.

INTRODUCING, OUR STORY

Waldo Daukei is a person. He has a life. And he has many stories. Some he tells. Some he keeps to himself. And others he shares; he lives them with other people, including myself at times. In many ways, this dissertation can be thought about as a life

story. And the "default" value for such life story may be something like the life-story-of-Waldo-a-Kiowa-and-Cheyenne-roadman-and-his-wacky-adventures. But that particular story would not reflect a real person, or a true reality. At least it would not reflect his reality without the many relatives that share that life. Beyond that, at this moment, in this place, here, I am the person responsible for telling this particular story. So, I am not telling "Waldo's" story. I am telling "our" story through my eyes, so to speak. After Ruth Behar, I am translating my Kiowa/Cheyenne dad across this academic border.

Similar to Esperanza's story (Behar 1993) my Thau wanted me to study him for my dissertation. Ruth Behar speaks of knowing about Esperanza through the talk of her community of study. It was Esperanza who sought out Ruth, in order to establish a *comadre* relationship. Esperanza provided the impetus to the storytelling and subsequently inspired Behar to write her book that is Esperanza's story. Ruth Behar understood that as she heard and then re-told Esperanza's story, that the story Behar was telling was also her own story; and Esperanza's though translated across multiple boarders. I cannot ignore the fact that I too am now a translated translator.

"Sonny Boy, what do you have to do?" my Thau asked me one evening. I replied, "I have to study some people, research, and write about it to graduate."

"Well you have to study Indians?" he continued. "Well, yeah. I want to study Indians."

"Well, shit, I'm an Indian. Why don't you just study me?" I heard my Thau say as I stared incredulously at him, his laughter filling my ears. It really did start as easily as that. Two relatives sitting on a couch with the widescreen TV blaring some bad movie or

annoying commercial. I mention this because it is part of the story. This is how my Thau became a so-called "research subject," yet another accident of history.

But unlike Esperanza and Ruth, my Thau and I were already relatives/friends/family prior to the beginning of "research." We were already sharing stories at that point. Let me be perfectly clear, this research is not central to the life and times that I share with my Thau and the lives that we share with other relatives. In the broader scope of our lives, this project is like an afterthought; it is a shadow; it is like a stray rez dog to whom you sometimes throw scraps of food you don't want or don't like, sometimes you try to kick it in the face, without actually making contact, to get rid of it. Yet over the course of the project, the "research project," the "ethnography" has been almost ubiquitous in our interactions, kind of like a rez dog. I feel that it is unfortunate that many ethnographies are written as if doing the ethnography itself is most important. In this case, the ethnography is one of the ripples in the pond. It is an effect, not a cause. "Remember, Sonny Boy, I want you to tell it like it is, you know. Not make it all pretty and shit. Tell the truth. Lot of those books out there, they don't tell the real truth." My Thau provided the impetus for this dissertation and in some respects its parameters.

But telling my Thau's story (or stories) is not the only function of this dissertation. Though my Thau volunteered to be studied, it was not my intention to make this project only about my Thau's life or just his life story. We both recognized together that there are just too many other people populating our lives and consequently our stories. So, with this said, this dissertation is not "life according to Waldo Daukei as-told-to-Christopher." I am not Alex Haley interviewing Malcolm X. I am not trying to vanish

behind the text, nor pretend that only my Thau is speaking. The story that I am telling you is my story about the relationship that is shared between my Thau and myself, and shared relationships with other relatives. And certainly in order to do that, there are things, ideas, and people that I must describe so that more of the story can make sense to those who read this. These other things may contribute to what may be called "context." In its widest, context is everything all the time. I can only describe some of all that. But I will do my best to describe what will help make these stories within a story more understandable, translatable. Telling my readers something that they already know, I must say that this project can only provide small glimpses. Yet at the same time, I and we, invite you listen, to come and see.

As this is a dissertations, parts of it must read as academic and must present aspects of synthesis and analysis. Some of these pages will do that too. These academic ideas and processes are interwoven, sometimes imposed, and other times resisted in this text by the lives and stories of my Thau and our relatives and by myself. There are moments when the academic must take a lower priority to the story being told. This is part of the shaping of this text.

It may be perceived that there are two types of contexts that interplay in this dissertation. First there are the social contexts, the relationships, institutions, and lives and thoughts, hopes and dreams of the people interacting and sharing, namely Thau, myself and some of our relatives. Second, there are the intellectual/academic contexts that give rise to the perceptual boundaries and discourses manifesting in the writing of

this particular document. I will try to be aware of how these interact in producing this text. And indeed both types of context, as written, influence each other.

A few of the social contexts that are pertinent to this story include our family and our respective extended families, religion most notably present through the Native American Church, being Indian and/or indigenous in the 20th/21st centuries, living on the reservation (the "rez") or off the rez, living in an urban setting, school/university, work, and traveling on the road, both the "Good Red Road" and just plain highways and roads. Another context closely and intimately related to "who we are" and how we interact with our fellow beings is gender identity and gendered subjectivity. In our case many people in these stories are male, and certainly three of the four central actors are male. And one of the most important contexts that is intimately tied to family and relatives and their interweaving relationships is telling and sharing stories. Relationships and story telling are mutual dependently arising contexts for each other. Closely tied to these dynamics are, of course, strong feelings between relatives, emotion and sentiment.

Some of the salient intellectual contexts, which intermesh with the social contexts include ideas and authors, writers, teachers, and thinkers and the ideas that arise and spread from their thoughts and writings. This dissertation features and forwards a Native American bias. In other words, Native American and other indigenous authors and thinkers influence heavily the perspective of this dissertation. Moreover, the central "subjects" and the "author" are Native American and/or indigenous people especially in the perspective of my Thau. "You know what I mean, Sonny Boy? All us brown people, brown skin people, up here, Mexico, South America; we're all Native people. We're all

indigenous." This is one of the explicit statements that my Thau has made to me about who is and who is not an indigenous person in North and South America. At the time, I thought that it was my Thau's way of saying who the "native" people are. It was also a gesture of inclusion that brought in everyone sitting at the dinner table that morning, my Thau, my buddy DaveRay, and my Thau's significant other, Beverly. This in itself is part of the interweaving of both social and intellectual contexts.

I questioned my Thau a little further at this point, "Even us Mexicans?" And my Thau responded, "yeah, most of them. Even our Kiowa people would take Mexican captives too." One of my Thau's ancestors, that he can recall, was a Mexican captive that was completely assimilated into the people, as some captives were. As captives became part of the family (depending upon the particular situation) so they become fully Kiowa. So, here I learned two important lessons from my Thau. First, indigenous people are the brown people of these American continents that "look like" each other. Second, that non-Kiowa people were fully integrate-able and assimilate-able into Kiowa society. As I put these two lessons together, I realize that in taking me as his son, my Kiowa dad was continuing a process of making relationships and a process of enculturation. He taught me that my own "brown-ness" was visible, notable, and in some regards, valuable. This is a message that I have absorbed from neither from mainstream American society, nor from the University of Arizona.

Let us turn our attention to a few indigenous scholars who heavily influence my perspective. I would like to review a few concepts and ideas that are helpful to the reader to understand the perspective I am developing as I write this dissertation. First, I would

like to turn to the importance of developing an indigenous perspective. Inspirational to this project is the work of Vine Deloria Jr., one of the greatest Native American authors and thinkers in recent memory. In the broadest strokes, I feel it is safe to say, that research, the academy, and anthropology and cultural studies in particular have been slowly opening to the perspectives that are not defined and controlled by the most domineering cultures and worldviews, nor the most powerful segments of the most domineering societies. Slowly, the academy is diversifying. I also feel that it is safe to say that not enough of this diversifying of thought, perspective, worldview or even population has happened yet. There is still much work to be done, to open further the academy in general and anthropology and cultural studies in particular to Native American and Indigenous American perspectives, thought, ideas, and worldviews.

Since Vine Deloria, Jr. published *Custer Died for your Sins* (1968) with its scathing indictment on American treatment of American Indian people, and the scathing indictment of anthropology and anthropologists, the voices of Native American people and Native American scholars are not as easily silenced as they had previously been. Moreover, as more Native American people enter the academy, it has become more possible to present, to affirm, and to promote the perspectives of Native American people, especially when voicing their own stories and their own worldviews. Since that time, some authors in anthropology have made concerted efforts to refocus the anthropological gaze to be more accommodating to Native American perspectives, voices, and ideally (in some places) to Native Americans themselves. This dissertation attempts to promote Native American perspectives by allowing native and indigenous

Americans to speak and to be heard. It also promotes indigenous perspective by privileging the thought of Native and indigenous scholar's voices and intellects in presentation and interpretation of the lives celebrated in this particular life story. Indigenous people are speaking and living here.

Deloria also tries to sound the depths of the perceptual rift between "Indian" and "American" on ideas of religion and the sacred in *God is Red*, first published in 1972 and then revised in 1994 in the double wake of the 1990 Supreme Court decision in *Employment Division v. Smith* which seriously curtailed the rights of Native Americans to practice in the Native American Church, and in the wake of the subsequent amendments in 1994 to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act reaffirming the right of Native American people, albeit only those duly enrolled in a federally recognized tribe, to participate in the Native American Church including the sacramental consumption of the sacred Peyote medicine. Many of the most central differences between "Indian" and "American" in *God is Red* arise from fundamental differences in "religious" and spiritual perceptions of the universe, of community, of land, and the relationships between Native people and their cosmos. As in the case of the cactus, peyote, practitioners of the Native American Church perceive this medicine as beneficial, healing, spiritual. Practitioners of NAC in personifying the medicine, maintain relationships with the medicine. These relationships, in the context of religious practice, and community are real. This illustrates one of the major perceptual rifts between the common American and Native American peoples, that is, difference between what constitutes a relationship and with what/whom a relationship can be maintained. Deloria

makes the case that Native Americans and Native American communities can live relationships with things and ideas and other beings that have no reality in the American or European cosmos. And Native Americans and Native American communities have such relationships in such a way, that most Americans and Europeans do not fully appreciate without some effort.

Over the years, Deloria became the most important Native American intellectual to define, to describe, and to determine the boundaries of identity between "Indian" and "non-Indian" people in America. So throughout cultural studies in Native America, Deloria's voice continues to echo, even within the mind of this present author.

Perhaps one of the most irksome *issues* dividing indigenous and anthropological perspectives is the perception that anthropology does not listen to the voices of Native American and indigenous people and communities beyond the scope of the researcher's pre-determined research paradigms and parameters, nor beyond the inherent biases in the researcher's perspective, both academically, and culturally, as most researchers in the history of Native American anthropology and the social sciences have not been Native American (Deloria 1969, 1994, 1997; L. Smith 1999). Research questions are generated outside the community of research. The research is created to further the career of the researcher, by allowing the researcher to write and to speak about the researched community to fellow researchers, usually not to the researched community. And the intellectual effects of the research reinforce and reaffirm the academic and cultural perspectives and worldviews of the researcher and his/her "academy" without any significant transformation of view resulting form the potentially

transformative interaction with researched peoples, despite the radically different cosmos and worldview the researched community may have; despite the apparently intimate interactions and life sharing committed by the researcher within an indigenous or Native American community (Deloria 1997:220-221). This is just one of the many messages Deloria expressed in *Custer*.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith not only echoes several of Deloria's ideas from *Custer* but also elaborates upon those ideas a generation after indigenous peoples in America and other places around the world, such as New Zealand, struggled to raise their voices to demand their rights to exist not simply as individuals, but as communities, as cultures. In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999) Smith presents not only the need for indigenous voices and perspectives and people to sound throughout the academy, and specifically within anthropology and cultural studies, but also for indigenous people to conduct culturally relevant research projects within their own communities that would serve the needs and agendas of their own communities.

Anthropology has history, especially in relationship with Native Americans and Native American communities. This history is fraught with injustice and ambivalence. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has eloquently exposed anthropology's complicity with and contribution to oppression in Maori history and communities. Anthropology, as well as other scientific research endeavors, has a long history of interface with indigenous cultures, communities, and individuals through the projects of research (Smith 1999). Over the years, much of these contacts and interactions have impacted negatively on indigenous people. Science and research as aspects of colonizing culture and power

structures have benefited from their privilege of being part of the "dominant" or rather "domineering" pressures of colonial and imperialistic people, governments, business, religions, and institutions, including academic ones.

On the other hand, many indigenous communities have adapted and survived as best they could have. Moreover, as consciousness of the issues of colonization and "de-colonization," of power, privilege and position, of human rights, and of physical and cultural genocide has risen, so too have indigenous voices of dissent, critique, and alternative vision arisen. As these voices have become louder, so too has dissent and critique grown stronger in the consciousness of more and more people both within and outside of indigenous communities, making more space for alternative vision. My project through this dissertation is an attempt to reorient into that space of alternative vision.

In a "worst case scenario" a hypothetical researcher or anthropologist may enter an indigenous community, ask questions that were created by non-indigenous paradigms, thus reflecting the inherent biases against indigenous personhood, knowledge and lifeways, leave the community, write their findings from the point of view of scientific objectivity, thus further reflecting the biases against indigenous worldview, and finally publish those findings without accountability to the community that was studied. I do not assume that all research proceeds in this model or fashion. Nor do I deny that some projects have also attempted to proceed from positions of respect for indigenous people and worldviews. However, I will not be so naïve as to think that all research has been "decolonized" just we cannot be so naïve as to think that all indigenous lands have been "decolonized". Research itself is a colonial endeavor. And the relationship between the

anthropologist and the "native" mirrors the relationship of the colonizer and the "colonized" (Smith 1999).

But as more and more indigenous people participate in the academy, as more and more people both indigenous and non-indigenous raise their voices in dissent, critique, and (re)creativity, indigenous perspectives are entering the academy and research projects. Linda Smith, a Maori academic living and working in Aotearoa among other Maori people and communities, adroitly presents and discusses many of these issues in *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Smith references many types of research but mainly focuses upon the research of anthropology as it has been the ken of anthropology, as a scientific, academic discipline to interface with the "other" including indigenous peoples.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith speaks about the possibility and the reality of Maori people conducting Maori research on Maori issues and projects. In short, indigenous researchers conducting research in indigenous communities using indigenous methods and methodologies and so called "Western" methodologies when appropriate. For Smith, the need for indigenous research arises from the history of research from the western perspective that has ignored or devalued indigenous cultures, peoples, values, social norms, perspectives and knowledge. Indigenous research will not devalue indigenous knowledge. Rather, indigenous research proceeds from indigenous communities using indigenous knowledge and worldviews.

Smith wrests control over the definition of research out of the hands of both the academy and the forces of colonization. Smith demystifies "research" to indigenous people as well as expands the definition of research in indigenous communities so as to

encompass the kinds of research projects that the communities would wish to see to solve their own problems and to preserve their own culture. Particularly helpful, Smith lists a descriptive list of twenty-five indigenous projects that she has witnessed, heard about from other indigenous communities, or in which she has participated. Smith does not claim to have invented these types of projects, but she has observed and reflected upon them and used (some of) them.

I too see aspects of these projects in my own attempt at research with my relatives, Thau, Thau's relatives, his girlfriend, friends, children, both by birth and by affectionate adoption. Some of these projects that I feel I am also engaging are namely *story telling, celebrating survival, remembering, indigenizing, reading (critically), writing,* and *reframing.* I will speak more of these ideas and how I see that my work relates to these ideas throughout the following chapters.

Bob Thomas and Peoplehood

Remembering one of L. Smith's projects to decolonize research and methodology, namely *indigenizing*, I turn my attention to a Cherokee cultural anthropologist who was one of the first to indigenize an intellectual model in social theory. Robert "Bob" K. Thomas, who passed on to our ancestors in 1991, studied under Edward Spicer at the University of Arizona and under Sol Tax at the University of Chicago. Thomas, unsatisfied with Spicer's basic trait list used to define a "people," revised it, indigenized the list, offering a model, mainly for thought and reflection that would represent, in his mind and in the minds of many Native Americans, a more accurate description of an

indigenous “people.” Also, according to Tom Holm, Thomas also used ideas from George Castile regarding communities as persistent peoples. Thomas certainly thought of Native American peoples, especially his own people, Cherokee, as communities that had continued to be a “people” through generations of various political and economic transformations.

I learned the Thomas’s “peoplehood model” as an American Indian Studies student in Tom Holm’s class AIS 502 “Dynamics of American Indian Society,” a class first innovated by Bob Thomas, which Holm taught after Bob’s passing. This model has become a useful tool to spark thought and discussion in this class and in other classes taught by Professor Holm. Moreover, Holm used this model combined with his own insights and the distilled insights accumulated over years of friendly conversations with Bob and Vine, both mentors to Holm. It is in this intellectual heritage I have also become a part. At this time, as there are but a few publications presenting and using Bob’s peoplehood model, it currently remains most alive as an (academic) oral tradition from Bob to his students and then to Holm and his students. Bob Thomas’s peoplehood model may be described as the dynamic interconnecting of four spheres of life that interrelate with each other in multiple ways. This model describes a “people” as distinct from another “people.” These four spheres in no particular order can be imagined as place, language, ritual/ceremonial cycle, and sacred history/origin stories. These four dynamics are embodied in the relationships that people create and maintain simultaneously as a group and as individuals to each dynamic and to all the dynamics together.

A “people” speaks their own language or languages, or if they no longer speak their aboriginal language, they may retain a sacred language used for ritual use and utterance, similar to Latin in pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic churches. This language is used in their songs, prayers, and ceremonies that create their lives and manifest in many ways including their ritual cycle. Usually, rituals must happen at sacred sites or in particular places. Where these places are located would be told in the sacred histories, which lay out a people’s obligations and relationships as a community to their place and to the other beings that share this place with the people. These stories in the sacred history are told in the people’s language. The sacred history will also describe how and why the people became a people in their particular place. The sacred history may tell of Creator or Creator’s messengers and how the people are supposed to fulfill their relationships with Creator, with their place and with the other beings in their place as well as with each other. The sacred histories, imagined very broadly, may also contain the types of knowledge that we might consider to be “healing” or “medicine” or “resource use and management.” If one meditates upon this simple explanation of this model, one may soon find that the implications of what this represents will ripple outward and reverberate throughout a re-imagining of “identity,” of “who” we are, not merely as “individuals” but also together as a people.

What is exciting about the peoplehood model is that it proceeds from assumptions of interconnection and interrelation in a living and dynamic fashion. This interconnection is not just how the four spheres are bound together, but also about how beings are participating in these relationships. It presumes that the interconnections are there for the

community, rather than a group of individuals reinventing their self-identities. A people may continue, maintain, and change relationships and interconnections, giving them a sense of continuity with all their ancestors and a sense of responsibility to all their relations and their future generations.

Bob Thomas intended this model to describe Native American communities and peoples. But Thomas also understood the broader implication that this model could actually describe indigenous groups and communities as peoples. Bob Thomas's peoplehood model arose from a need to describe not just individuals but mainly a group of people as a community and as a people. This could stand for a pueblo, a band, a tribe, even a nation. The model can talk about "who we are" at the level of the community, a broader scope than just focusing on how individuals "construct" their associations with each other or choosing their networks for socializing. But this model can have reverberations for thinking about how an individual can see their own relationships with their community and an individual's relationship to the four dynamics of the peoplehood model.

To expand upon this a bit more, in the case of Language, not all Native people speak their own language, however, there may be lexical items remaining in use by a speech community. Also, a speech community may retain ways of speaking that reflect ways of speaking from their own language. And a group of people may fluidly code switch in ways that reflect their particular speech community. As a great part of human communication functions through tropes, certain cultural metaphors may remain with a speech community even if the metaphor may be expressed with the "colonizer's

language." For example, English may be spoken between two people, but if those two people from a speech community express a trope or perception that reflects their own culture and worldview, not the colonizer's, then they are still using in some ways, their own language. They are continuing their own language as a people. They are continuing their relationship to their own language or languages as the case may be, in the manner of their own speech community. Other linguistic anthropologists have thought about the discursive construction of local linguistic communities and speech communities, albeit from a differing epistemological center, such as Michael Silverstein (1998), who takes a more constructivist perspective than the more essentialist interpretations of Bob Thomas.

Another aspect of the people's language is the use of sacred language or the sacred or religious register of their language. It may be that a particular people have religious and ceremonial experts or adepts that perform the proper ceremonial functions of the people on behalf of the whole community, sometimes on behalf of all creation. Not every individual need perform certain rituals. Not every individual need know the language necessarily to be one of the people. In that case, they are still a part of the people as they are related to others, their loved ones, family and friends. Also, the priest(s) or ceremonial leader(s), perform(s) the rituals on behalf of the whole people, the whole community. A ceremonial adept's relationship with the people and with the ceremony or songs or medicine places the adept in the particular gap that helps tie the relationship of the people to the ceremony, through the adept's relationships with both, the ceremony and the people.

Many indigenous traditions speak of where their sacred places are located. Sacred histories, as in Thomas's model, tell the people how they became a people and where they became a people, where they may have come from and where they are supposed to be. Here we see how the place sphere and the sacred history sphere of the peoplehood model interconnect. In the case that a people is displaced or they migrate to another area of occupation, the sacred history may change in such a way as to reinterpret the new landscape, to find/create new sacred places. This reflects part of how the model may be perceived as dynamic. Or, the community may create new relationships with their new area, creating place for themselves. They may innovate new ways to create these relationships or, they may reproduce previous patterns of relationships in their former place, or some hybrid or blend of both or others.

Moreover, both Bob Thomas and Holm have thought about this model and its relationship to individual identity, implying that as the model was intended to describe Native American community identity, it can also describe aspects of Native American individual identity to the extent that the Native individual is Native in relationship to their communities and Native relatives. Individual identity is an echo or a reverberation of community identity. As an individual Native can be a member or part of their Native community, an outsider, cannot reverberate with the identity that has already been constructed at the community level, at least not until that outsider has been fully integrated into the "people."

There are deeper implications and inspirations based upon Bob Thomas's peoplehood model. I will refer to them in later chapters of this essay. I wanted to

introduce this model and its related ideas soon into this project, as it is never far from the forefront of my thoughts and feelings about this project. I have found that thinking in the perspective of Thomas's model has enabled me to reorient my academic perspective paying more attention to indigenous worldviews and more attention to shared relationships.

Though my Thau is not living among his communities of birth, either Kiowa or Cheyenne, the echo and memory of these communities and their people and their relationships remain and reverberate in my Thau's life. Many of these reverberations live through the Native American Church, through his relationship with "these old ways," or "these Native American Church ways," or "these Peyote ways" through the relationships that he shares with his relatives, old and young, old or new, by birth by marriage or by adoption, and through his relationship to telling stories.

Moreover, through our connection and relationship, those echoes reverberate for me also. And I think that the dynamics of "Indian" society as described in Thomas's peoplehood model remain among many Native American people today, even if Native communities are fading, hurting, or dying, even as these communities change and transform. These echoes may sound in the minds and hearts of individual Native Americans even in separation from their home communities. One of the results of this echoing and reverberating, one of its manifestations arises in the bonding experienced between Native individuals and small groups, especially when away from home communities of origin. Another manifestation is the willingness of Native individuals to participate in community, on and off reservations, in and around cities and urban areas,

by creating and maintaining relationships with other Native people and non-Native people. What is echoing is not necessarily an "ethnic" or "racial" identity, as much as a willingness to continually return to dynamic relationships in a context of community.

Storied lives; Living stories

One of the most dynamic sites of human social interaction especially in community is story telling. Even the modern State tells stories to its citizens in order to help them know who they are, in relation to the State and to each other. Much of human verbal education often takes form in story and its telling. Story telling fits into the peoplehood model through language, and through the general ideas of interconnections. And the people's sacred histories live in the community in many ways including story telling. And story telling that is intimately tied to place makes further connections between people and their place (see also K. Basso 1996).

In defining the different spheres of the peoplehood model, it may sometimes be possible to loose sight of what makes the model so compelling for me and for others. The model flows out of an assumption of interconnectedness and interrelatedness. It should not be thought of as a collection of separate pieces that rub up against each other trying to fit. Rather, they are interconnected with each other, sharing energy with each other, influencing and vibrating together. Each perceived area can interact and relate with each, any, and all of the others. Each can be present together. In the myriad of different interconnections there are a few ways of interconnecting present and central to this project. One of the most important is telling and sharing stories. Relatively recently an

Native American scholar has explored the intimate and important dynamic that is story telling among Kiowa people and especially between Kiowa relatives, Gus Palmer, Jr.

It is a common idea that Native Americans, Indians, tell stories; that their culture is one filled with story and the oral tradition. Skip ahead a few decades from *Custer*, and we find a scholar like Gus Palmer, Jr. who not only is Kiowa, but is also a professor of anthropology. In *Telling Stories the Kiowa Way* (2003) Palmer reflects not only upon Kiowa stories and Kiowa storytelling, but also upon the familiar context of how stories and storytelling are shared between fellow Kiowa relatives. What is important even above the stories themselves is the relationship shared between the tellers, the time, the love, the mutual care and respect, the humor, the compassion, the "being" together. "Kiowas reinforce their relationships with other Kiowas when they tell stories. This reinforcement is especially apparent among the small groups of family members and close friends" (Palmer 2003:xxiii).

Palmer on Kiowa storytelling, "Participation made all the difference: to be both listener and participant makes Kiowa storytelling manifest and whole" (2003:30-31). Palmer points out that the boundaries between teller and listener are not really there. Whoever is listening to a story is also participating not only by listening to the story but also by adding comments, details, by reacting and by asking for clarification at times. The "listener" actually becomes part of the story. But I would add that without a listener, there is no story. A story lives to be heard and told. How many times does this happen to me when spending time with my Thau? In many ways my Thau embodies very much so the storytellers and story telling that Palmer describes. Palmer also notes that many other

Native American communities may participate in story and story telling similar to Kiowa people. The Kiowa may not be the only "Indians" that tell stories in this manner. Palmer writes about the Kiowa because he is of the Kiowa people and community. And in the case of my Thau, his relatives, his children, his wife, myself we all seem to share, in many ways, these same dynamics of story. This may come from the fact that we are sharing relationships in similar ways.

Many of the ideas that Palmer expresses in this book live all over the interactions between me and my Thau and my other relatives that make up the majority of this writing project. I find echoes of Palmer's ideas and writings in my memories of the shared interactions between me and my Thau and our relatives. Without Palmer's insights, what follows in this essay may have seemed practically unintelligible. One of the most important insights that Palmer shares with his readers is how Kiowa people live their relationships with their fellow relatives through telling stories, and by providing the space and time to share stories.

Problematizing further the notion of storytelling between a researcher who is related to the so called "research subject" we can also remember Greg Sarris's *Keeping Slug Woman Alive* (1993) some of the material for which arose from his Ph.D. dissertation "The Last Woman from Cache Creek: Conversations with Mabel McKay" (1989). Mabel McKay, Sarris's great-aunt took him in and raised him after he left his adoptive parents. Sarris grew up with Mabel and other Kashaya and Cache Creek Pomo and Coast Miwok relatives. Eventually Sarris went to college and graduate school, researching and writing about his own people and his place within his Native community

and his angst as an "Indian" academician. One of the many interesting things about Sarris and his writings about his relatives is the fact that Mabel, the last of the Cache Creek Pomo consciously participated in Sarris's research. Mabel had her own ideas about story telling and the nature of the academy. Mabel knows that Sarris is "researching" her to get his dissertation done, and then later to get his publishing done. This reminds me of Waldo Daukei, my "dad" as it was by my "dad's" request that I focus my dissertation research upon him in order to expedite my graduation from my own respective doctoral program.

Both Mabel McKay and Waldo Daukei deeply understand the intimacy and the power of storied lives. Both understand that one of the powers of stories is their ability to teach, to facilitate learning. As junior relatives, Sarris and I take the gift of our relatives' lives, time, and stories in order to facilitate our graduation from university, to further our respective careers. But beyond the academic context, we may be given something much more important. Our relatives give us a sense of who we are. They give us a greater understanding of ourselves, a greater sense of self, a self that does not end at our individual skins. Our relatives, through stories and life and time create us as human beings as relatives within our community. Both Mabel and Waldo, I think, understand that these stories are not separate from life, not something that is other-ed. And telling stories among relatives is the opposite of "othering." It is through story sharing that relatives are brought in closer (Palmer 2003).

SUMMARY

There are four chapters that continue not only the story that I am telling my readers, but also represent some of the stories that my relatives have told me, and the stories that we have shared over the years that include the researching and writing of this project. These chapters present this multifaceted telling of stories within the social and intellectual contexts that I mentioned above and upon which I will elaborate. The final chapter explores some of the directions I wish to follow in future research and writing about these topics. The final chapter also ties together many of the strands that flow through this story and the possible meanings that those strands show us.

The following chapter prepares the reader to understand some of our stories by describing and explaining some of the salient rituals, symbols, and ideas of the Native American Church (Stewart 1987, La Barre 1969, Brito 1989) and my Thau's relationship to the history and future of the Native American Church as he has lived it. Much of what my Thau considers to be religious is not limited to the Native American Church, as he has had contact with other forms of organized western religion and also other forms of indigenous ceremony, ritual practice and religion. This particular chapter will also include a bit about my relationship to the Church and to the medicine upon which the Church is founded. Some of the metaphors that my Thau and his relatives use would be incomprehensible without some description and explanation; so, I find that some explaining may be helpful.

After exploring some ideas about religion and ceremony, I will describe some of the relatives and relationships that are important in these stories. This chapter will also explore and present these relationships as the heart of what it means to be. Who we are is

intimately tied to whom we are related, and how we are related. Through the insights of Gus Palmer, Jr., I explore how being related is intimately tied to telling stories, sharing stories, and providing the space/time for sharing stories with relatives (2003). And for the reader's pleasure I offer up one of those stories that keep our family laughing.

I do not wish to ignore the dynamics of life, stories, and religion, without paying close attention to aspects of gender, and in particular masculinity. As gender not only shapes the lives of human beings as social actors, relatives, and as ritual participants, but also shapes how people perceive themselves and their places within their cosmos (Epple 1997), it is important to interrogate stories and relationships through a gendered lens (Medicine 2001). Even the lives of women, when being described by men, may reflect various aspects of masculine perspective, no matter how porous, fluid, or changeable such a perspective may be. And as much of this story retells the sharing of life between my Thau and myself, both men of sorts, there is an opening to interrogate what this particular masculine perspective may be, and a critique of that perspective as my own gender identity is not completely congruent with standard masculine stereotypes (Tafoya 1997, Limón 1994).

In keeping with my Thau's request to "tell the truth, to tell it like it is" I find myself needing to write about the presence of alcohol and other substance use in my Thau's life, and consequently in the lives of our relatives and my own. Alcohol has been ubiquitous in my Thau's life and stories in most of our time together. So, the penultimate chapter will explore some possible meanings of alcohol, as it relates to our family's

(dys)function (P. Spicer 1997), and substances like marijuana within the context of shared lives between relatives (Medicine 2001, Waddell 1980).

Several of the aforementioned thinkers, particularly Deloria, Thomas, Smith, Palmer, and Sarris, touch upon many issues that I have noticed in my own interactions with my own relatives for this project. Moreover, each author hints at the importance or directly highlights the relationships shared between the author and their respective communities of study to some degree or another. Certainly these are not the only scholars who have contributed directly and indirectly to my research and thought during this project. But I find that refocusing the intellectual gaze to the relationships themselves will be my contribution to our greater understanding not only of the identities of the people involved but also how important their interactions are with each other in creating those identities. In short, it is the process of sharing time, space, knowledge, and spirit with each other that makes us who we are.

With this in mind, I want to look at some of the importance of creating relationships in contemporary Native American identity. In particular, I will be looking at the life of Waldo Daukei, my "dad," and how he has included in the maintenance of his identity, the creation, the acceptance, and the maintenance of relationships with other people, both Native and non-Native Americans, in his life and through his participation in the Native American Church. I am a part of this also, not merely as an interested onlooker or even as simply an anthropological researcher. I am a part of this as a relative (Palmer 2003, Sarris 1997). As I am looking at the "identity" of "Waldo", I cannot help but look at the "identity" of me (Sarris 1993). Moreover, I wish explicitly to promote indigenous

perspectives and worldviews in my research and writing (Smith 1999). I wish to consciously reorient this project away from research dominated by European or mainstream American, (read also, colonial, imperialistic) paradigms and worldviews, and orient towards ideas and perspectives reflecting indigenous and/or Native American ideas, values, sentiments, and worldviews (Deloria 1972, 1994).

Together these chapters are reflecting a life story of my Thau, Waldo. The chapters reflect my memory of life together with my Thau and our relatives. As I write these words, I see, remember and feel this life. But as I write I realize that the reader is reading my story of this shared story. Though in many ways, I was trying to focus on the life of my Thau, what I am able to give the reader is a story of my shared life with my Thau, his significant other, Beverly, my Thau's other adopted-in-the-Indian-way son, DaveRay, and a few other relatives that live in many of the stories that Thau and DaveRay share with me. It is a story of life where the subject is not exclusively the life of an individual. The subject is living shared between relatives giving life to story as story breathes life.

ABOUT RITUAL AND SOME OF THE METAPHORS MAKING REALITY

"Writing with our whole selves is an act that can revision our world" Beth Brant (1999:97).

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I wish to orient the reader to some of the metaphors that give shape to the conversations in which our participants and I engage. Through this chapter I wish to impress upon the reader the reality of these metaphors and ritual forms in the perceptions of such believers like my Thau, Waldo. I also wish to introduce readers to several of the main activities that bring these religious beliefs to life and talk about how these beliefs interrelate with people, making them related to one another and to Creator and the rest of creation. Principal thinkers that I will use to frame this chapter include Vine Deloria, Jr., and Robert K. Thomas. Also I will keep in mind Smith's indigenous research projects of *indigenizing, story telling, celebrating survival,* and *remembering.*

In so many ways, telling stories is one of the most central, most important, and most vital interactions amongst indigenous peoples. L. Smith includes story telling as one of the many projects that indigenous people and indigenous communities can use to participate in culturally appropriate, community oriented, and community benefiting research. Over the time that I have known my Thau he has used story telling as one of the tools of instruction about the Native American Church. These stories are usually about

his own life, or the lives of other relatives within the context of the Native American Church, or their experiences in life around the Native American Church. At other times, Thau may just make didactic and declarative statements as instructional tools also. But I must point out that these didactic outbursts occur not infrequently during a story about going to a meeting one time. Telling stories, as formal or informal, provides a space, a time, and an opportunity for indigenous people to learn and to teach about who they are, about who they are together, about who they are to each other. Telling stories allows storytellers to remember their lives, their ancestor's lives, their relatives' lives, inviting their listeners to participate in the story by remembering the story, even if they are remembering the story for the very first time. Though L. Smith makes the project of *remembering* as a project to remember the pain and the bad circumstances that have led the people to this moment, I am taking the project of remembering to include both happy things and painful things. But I will place the painful *remembering* in a later chapter.

Moreover, I see the sharing of stories and lives, the sharing of religion and time, the sharing of food and humor to be intimately tied to *celebrating survival.* Smith tells us that "celebrating survival accentuates not so much our demise but the degree to which indigenous peoples and communities have successfully retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity" (1999:145). Telling stories in an indigenous context, including among indigenous peoples participates in remembering and in celebrating survival. As Native American people participate in the Native American Church, they continue to celebrate survival. Even though, the Native American Church is a modern cultural innovation among Native American people, as it is not an aboriginal ceremony, it still

arose out of indigenous contexts and still took inspiration from previously aboriginal cultural and ritual forms from other Native American groups. And it should not be forgotten that the Medicine itself and its use by aboriginal people are indigenous. In many ways, my Thau, our relatives and myself are celebrating survival continually as we spend time with each other, tell stories, remember our lives, and pray, sing and participate in Native American Church meetings. Beyond this I also want to point out that any Native American participating in Native rituals and ceremonies and religion can be interpreted as part of the broader idea of celebrating survival.

In this chapter, Thau tells me stories and talks to me in such a way that one can sometimes discern "stories" told in just one or two sentences. But Thau is not telling stories in the context of a stage and spotlight performance. Nor is my Thau telling stories in a lecture hall for a group of anthropologists. Thau is telling me stories, at home, over food, over watching television, over relaxing, or over working in the yard. This is personal and familiar story telling. Of course this is happening with memory, with *remembering* of both good memories and painful ones. Thau remembers his stories, experiences, prayers and songs. When he speaks of how he learned such things, and how he remembers such things, he reflects not only the knowledge, but also the image of the context through which the knowledge lived, moved, was transmitted, and by whom. All of this reflects not a scientific or American context, but a Native American/indigenous context.

As much of Deloria's writing is polemical, driven to expose the injustice visited upon Native Americans by America, and the ludicrous cultural logics that America has

used to rationalize and justify such oppression, murder, rape and theft, Deloria still challenges readers to observe the differences between American and Native American social forms, traditions, worldviews, and beliefs. For example, in exposing the legacy of hypocrisy in Christian missionary work among Native communities, Deloria observes ironically that Christian Indian Agents representing the American Christian government forbade Indian customs of sharing with the poor because it would undermine the Protestant (capitalistic) ethics of "thrift" all the while preaching the superiority of Christ's admonition to feed the poor (1969). And Deloria claims that one of the major differences between Americans and Natives is the relationship that Native peoples maintain with their land, or as Bob Thomas would say, their place, through Native ceremonies, stories, songs and prayers (1994 (1972)). While the Christian "holy land" is somewhere over there, the Native American holy land is right here.

Deloria also observes that Native religion and Native religious consciousness is still present in NAC despite its relative novelty in Native American religious history. Even if the ritual forms of worship in NAC is recent, the roots of the religious worldview, the roots of the people, the roots of the Medicine, indeed the soil that has nourished both Medicine and people are still indigenous American, encompassing this hemisphere, North and South America alike in distinction to Europe. Deloria also contextualizes the legal and religious challenges to NAC embodied in the United States' War on Drugs and Scalia's idiotic decision in *Employment Division v. Smith* to reflect the fundamental difference in perception of Native religion and the sacred "Medicine," peyote. Embedded in Deloria's critique of Scalia's decision is the radical difference in the perception of

what peyote is. For Scalia, and many other ignorant people, the peyote cactus is a plant that produces narcotic, hallucinogenic, and addictive substances that effects a person who consumes it, in short, a harmful drug. Many native peoples on the other hand, and certainly participants of the Native American Church perceive peyote as a living being in plant form, not merely a plant. And this plant when consumed, especially with prayer, has the power to heal, to help, and to guide Indian people in their lives, in short, a medicine not a drug crudely.

Deloria's outrage over the Supreme Court decision in this case may be explained through the radical difference in perception of what (or rather who) peyote is to many indigenous American peoples and communities and to practitioners of the Native American Church. We can also look to Thomas's peoplehood model to describe some of what is going on here in the Native American Church. For example, no matter what tribal affiliation a NAC participant may have, they may still learn a version of the peyote origin story which orients them to a type of sacred history. Other forms of sacred history that could be related to the NAC are stories that speak to why a particular religious practice is included in the ceremony. These types of stories may also explain why a particular aspect or symbol of the ritual is included. These stories may also talk about how the NAC came to a particular group of people. Language, from Thomas's peoplehood model, carries these stories but also carries the essential metaphors and meanings that make the ritual and the ritual world make sense to the people who are participating. For example, to say that a man "pokes fire" may not be significant to the average middle-class New Yorker. However, to "poke fire" in the ritual context of the NAC means that the participant in the

ritual role of the "fire chief" or "fire man" tends the ritual fire that burns throughout the ceremony. He is responsible for adding wood to the sacred fire, for managing the coals and ashes produced by the fire, and keeping the grounds within the tipi swept, clean, and tidy.

As to place, in the NAC, the tipi, altar and fireplace itself become the ritual center and meeting place of the people of the church who have come together to pray. Also the "place" where peyote grows has taken on special significance to practitioners of NAC. The Sacred Peyote Gardens are often a sight of a kind of pilgrimage, road trips taken by participants to south Texas in order to obtain peyote from licensed *peyoteros*, people who are licensed by the State of Texas to legally gather peyote from desert regions for the purpose of providing Native American people with peyote. Also, sometimes, participants will go into the gardens to gather their own medicine. We will discuss more of the implications of the peoplehood model in the conclusion of this chapter.

The ritual of the Native American Church has been studied by several anthropologist and ethnographers over the past several generations beginning with no less than James Moony working for the Bureau of American Ethnology. Though NAC is a relatively new religion in the history of human religious expression, it has received such ethnographic and anthropological attention because the tradition arose during an era (late 1800's) when professionals and dilettantes alike needed to find "ethnos" to "graph" or record through writing. Moreover, this time period saw major transformations in Native communities through reservation imprisonment, forced economic change through modern American forms of agriculture and animal husbandry, denial of religious freedom by the

government for Native American people, heavy missionary and Christian evangelical pressures, and many other processes that tried either to transform the "Indian" into an "American (Christian)" or simply remove the human obstacles to Manifest Destiny by any means necessary.

In keeping with L. Smith's project of *indigenizing*, I wish to present this material as best I can from an indigenous perspective, that is "privileg[ing] indigenous voices" (Smith 1999:147). This indigenous perspective covers both my Thau and myself as indigenous people, and it covers the presentation and forwarding of indigenous perspectives and reality about religious expression and its relationship to personhood and identity. Much of the ethnography published about NAC ritual has been from a classical "observer" perspective, implying and fostering a distance between the observer and the observed. In this project I must acknowledge that there is the privilege of very little distance between myself and my relatives including the times and spaces that ritual and religious expression are central.

This narrowing of distance makes my project a bit different from many of the previous ethnographic encounters written about the Native American Church, many of which were written with the tone of academic distance from the perspective of the observer/ethnographer. Certainly it is possible that the ethnographers themselves through their own relationships with Native practitioners may not have felt great distance with their so-called research subjects. However, the conventions of ethnography, for many years, have formed texts through the distancing lens of "observation" with the aspiration of composing social "science" with its myth of objectivity fully in tow. In speaking with

my Thau as a NAC roadman, I have as much or more access to information and certain types of knowledge as previous ethnographers such as Aberle (1966), Slotkin (1956), La Barre (1969), Marriot & Rachlin (1971), and Stewart (1987). What is different here is that I choose to write about this information without distancing myself from the so-called research subjects, my relatives, nor distancing myself from the rituals, symbols and metaphors of the NAC itself.

Another difference between the present project and several of the major ethnographies about NAC also stems from my relationships with my relatives and the Medicine. I am an indigenous person with my indigenous relatives participating in an indigenous form of religion. Many of the major previous NAC ethnographers were not indigenous people.

A very notable exception is Silvester John Brito, who is Comanche and Tarascan. He wrote his book *The Way of the Peyote Roadman* based upon his apprenticeship with two NAC roadmen, one Comanche the other Winnebago. He had begun learning about NAC after he went through an effective NAC meeting for healing among Navajo practitioners. Brito focuses on the "Kiowa-Comanche Ritual, also known as the standard Plains Peyote Ceremony or the Peyote Ritual of the Little Moon Ceremony" (1989:xiii). There are two major divisions in the peyote religion that developed in the late nineteenth century in Indian Territory, the Half Moon or Little Moon ceremony that represented the ritual developments of the Comanche and the Kiowa and then later spread to the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and many other tribes; and the Full Moon way represented by John Wilson, a Caddo/Delaware which became popular in eastern Indian Territory. My Thau

descends from Kiowa and Cheyenne peoples who practiced the Half Moon style of the new peyote religion.

Though Brito was not raised in the NAC, he still offers a valuable perspective about NAC ritual and roadmen, through his own indigenous perspective. Brito's primary research concern was to explore some of the changes in the NAC ritual that have taken place across a generation and across distinct tribal cultures, specifically Comanche (representative of Oklahoma/Southern Plains style NAC) and Winnebago (representing a northern group). Though Brito does not focus primarily on the relationships he develops with his teachers and their families *per se,* it appears, from my reading, that there are deep relationships formed in his learning. And thinking in the way of Thomas, Deloria and Holm, relationships are very important in Native American lives and in Native American learning.

These relationships, Brito's relationships with his teachers and fellow participants, and my relationship with my Thau and our relatives, follow indigenous ways. In a similar fashion, I see this project as *indigenizing* in two major ways. First, I privilege indigenous voices, my Thau, DaveRay, Beverly and myself. And second, I privilege a way of seeing (and therefore writing) as of central importance the relationships and interconnections of these people with their voices, which is a perspective much more resonant with indigenous worldviews and indigenous ways of being and living together, as I see it.

ALL NIGHT MEETING

Perhaps it would be tedious to rehearse in excruciating detail the full all night ceremony that is a typical NAC meeting. Several illustrious anthropologists and ethnographers have described the ritual of a Native American Church meeting in great detail over several decades including Mooney (1898), Marriot and Rachlin, (1971), Aberle (1966), La Barre (1969), Stewart (1987), and Brito (1989), just to mention a few. Instead this essay will describe aspects of particular parts of the ceremony, my Thau's interpretation of its relation to other parts of life, memory, spirit or creation, or even my own experience of that particular aspect. I will also try to present my interpretation of my Thau's relationship to the NAC and its ritual forms, its history and its future.

It may be helpful to paint in the broadest strokes the general shape of an NAC or peyote meeting for the sake of readers who have not attended such a ceremony. Some time after sunset, when it is time to begin the meeting, the roadman will line up all the participants in front of the east facing tipi. The fire has already been started by the man in charge of the fire, the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief "pokes fire", keeps it burning and acts as the doorkeeper if there is not a separate person engaged to be responsible for the door. Then the congregants enter the tipi single file in a clockwise manner and take their seats. The roadman may welcome everyone after he places the Chief Peyote in his seat upon the altar; usually the seat is made of sagebrush leaves. The roadman will welcome the Chief and throw down cedar for him. He will also throw down cedar for the meeting and all involved. Throwing cedar is taking a handful of small cedar leaves from a bag, sometimes a decorated or beaded bag of hide or heavy woolen material, and dropping the cedar leaves onto the coals and embers produced by the fire. The roadman passes around

a small stack of dried cornhusks that have been cut into small squares or rectangular shapes. The roadman will then inform everybody why the meeting is being held as tobacco is passed around for congregants to roll their own cornhusk cigarettes for the first formal prayer. A lighting stick, sometimes made of cottonwood is passed around so congregants can light their tobacco. Then prayers are offered up, and everybody smokes and prays.

After this is accomplished the roadman will send around a small handheld bundle of sage or sagebrush. Each participant takes the bundle and blesses himself or herself with the sage by smelling it and by lightly touching parts of their body with the bundle such as their hands, arms, head, torso, etc. The roadman sends around the first round of medicine, which each participant consumes according to his need or desire. And then the night's first round of singing begins. The drum moves clockwise around the tipi to accompany the worshiper who sings four songs. First the roadman will open the round of singing by singing an opening song and three other songs, to total four songs. Then each willing participant who wishes to sing will do so clockwise from the roadman. The drum travels clockwise also. Many times one person will carry drum for the night and accompany each singer. However, a singer may request that some other person present, a relative maybe, to accompany with the drum.

Ideally, Thau says, the drum should complete two full rounds before "midnight." At midnight, the roadman calls the drum back to its place beside him; the drum carrier will sit next to the roadman's right, usually. Then the roadman calls for "midnight water." The fire chief will bring in a bucket of water with a small cup, pray over the water with

tobacco, and send the bucket around so that participants can refresh themselves. After everyone has taken water, the fire chief will take the bucket out of the tipi. After this, the roadman will exit the tipi and pray to the four directions using an eagle bone whistle in each direction. The drum is sent around again. Ideally, the drum should make two more complete rounds before "morning water."

Morning water, according to Thau is the most holy of holy times in the all night ceremony. A woman, ideally the wife of the roadman, will carry in a bucket of water, pray over it with tobacco, offer water to the earth and fire, and then send the water around to refresh the congregants. After this is complete, the formal ceremony is essentially over. However, the final prayers and the ritual breakfast are brought in after the water has been taken out of the tipi, and the roadman has sung the closing song. My Thau usually likes to ask someone in the tipi to pray for the morning breakfast. Then the ritual breakfast, usually consisting of four items, is sent around in a clockwise direction, water, corn, fruit, and meat. It is at this time that people can freely express themselves, and usually many words of thanks and encouragement are spoken to the patient, the family of the patient, the roadman and his helpers and so forth.

When all of these things are complete, the roadman will dismiss everyone. People proceed to exit the tipi, ideally greeting the rising sun. After this there is a post-ceremonial breakfast, which is followed a few hours later by a noontime feast. This is an intensely happy and social time when people visit, tell stories, laugh and carry on, as well as discuss current issues or the happenings in their home communities or how well the meeting went this past night.

Much preparation can go into a meeting. It is proper for the sponsor of a meeting to feed the participants, who are free to bring food or other supplies if they wish. It is usually the sponsor's responsibility to also provide the wood for the ceremonial fire and the medicine itself for the meeting. In order to have the meeting, the grounds must be prepared, a tipi erected and an earthen altar made inside the tipi. It is proper to have the tipi and altar finished before sunset. There is a lot of work and preparation for a good meeting. And unlike a Christian church, the tipi must be taken down after a meeting as it is most improper to leave a peyote tipi up, if it is not actually being used for the ceremony, with the exception that the tipi will be used the immediately following night for another meeting.

Sitting in Meeting

Some participants of the Native American Church attend meetings on a weekly basis, very similar to Christians who believe that it is important to go to church every Sunday. Most NAC meetings are held on a Friday or a Saturday night in order to give more people the opportunity to attend. After sitting up all night praying in tipi, there is a small breakfast to refresh participants after the meeting is over. This breakfast is not to be confused with the ritual breakfast that ends a peyote meeting. That breakfast happens in the tipi and concludes the ceremony. Later on, there is the noonday feast. Usually, all participants leave the site of the meeting after the noonday feast. This gives participants plenty of time to socialize and catch up with friends and relatives or to make new friends.

It is advisable to have cushions to sit upon all night, maybe to bring along a bottle of water, though more "hard core" types would say that it is "soft" to bring water into a meeting. Remember that suffering and sacrificing for prayer is a central theme in many Native American religious expressions. A congregant may also bring their own personal ritual paraphernalia, if they have some. These include feather fans, most with intricate and colorful beadwork appliqué, gourd rattles many with beadwork on the handles, wooden drumsticks without beading but many times with decorative carving, and a box, usually made of cedar wood to carry it all. Some people will also keep their own supply of peyote and other ritual herbs or medicines with them in their cedar box. One can also bring in their own blankets to keep warm or to supplement their cushions. Many may want to bring in their best Pendleton blanket. With all these things together, a person will try to make themselves as comfortable as possible for the long night of prayer ahead of them.

Praying All Night

"You can't learn anything without sitting in there" Thau tells me, almost accusingly. I have heard this statement before, and other iterations similar in sentiment. Thau has said these words to other people in my presence also. "Bo, if you really want to learn something about this Native American Church or this Medicine, you have to sit up all night. You have to pray, ask this Medicine to help you. He can teach you things."

Sitting in meeting can be hard. Essentially, a typical NAC meeting is eight to twelve hours long. Thau says that in the old days, meeting would start just after sundown

and end just before sunrise. People wanted to finish the main ceremony before sunrise so that they could greet the rising sun, thereby participating in the very powerful blessings that come from greeting the sun in prayer as your first activity of the day. Needless to say, going to a church meeting that can be twelve hours long can be an intensely demanding sacrifice of one's time and one's comfort. A participant stays awake all night long, ideally praying and singing for the person for whom a particular meeting is being held.

I can attest to my own difficulty sitting up all night. Some meetings are tougher than others. No two meetings are exactly alike. Some nights everything seems to flow easily, and time slips by virtually unnoticed. Other nights are filled with aching knees and sore ankles, with stiff neck, with too much heat on your face from the fire, or too much cold from the wind carving into your back because there was no tipi skirt around the bottom of the tipi, because none was available or because there was not enough time to put one in place. Sometimes the fire burns your face while the wind freezes your back. Perhaps you did not bring enough cushions to sit upon, or you forgot an extra blanket. Sitting up all night can hurt and be very uncomfortable. "It's that sacrifice, you know. Maybe this Medicine or Creator will see your sacrifice; that you were willing to give up your own comfort and your sleep in your bed to pray for that person. Because, you want to see that person get well, or to get a good blessing. You're going to get a good blessing too, you know." Thau explains that pain and sacrifice can yield positive results. Sometimes, however, I am less than convinced.

I remember this one meeting, when we were somewhere on the Navajo Nation. A storm came through. It was rather cold. The howling winds turned into a blizzard. Small pieces of hail actually zinged through the smoke hole of the tipi. I could hear some of the pieces hit the glowing coals from the fire sizzling and hissing with little puffs of steam. The tipi shook. People who were sitting next to tipi poles reached up to hold on to the vibrating poles. A few pieces of hail hit me directly on the forehead. There comes a moment after midnight water when it is alright for people who need to go out of the tipi to relieve themselves, or have a smoke. I remember while shivering into the black night that what little I could see in front of me was snow flying horizontally. I eventually found the outhouse. That was a rough meeting, and not just because of the blizzard. We still tell stories about this particular meeting and the events that led up to it, and times immediately following it. Thau, DaveRay and I can still laugh about it.

At this particularly rough meeting, Thau was running the meeting in honor of one of his relatives, a young Navajo man with a wife and several kids. This man and his family had sponsored the meeting, as it was the man's birthday. Meetings for this purpose are called "birthday meetings." In general a birthday meeting should be light and happy in mood. It should not be all too serious. But, the mood overall was not too festive. As I recall, the meeting ended up as a bit of a "downer." The young man was requesting of my Thau his "fireplace." In other words, he was asking my Thau for the right to run a tipi meeting and this particular version of the ceremony, according to the way that my Thau runs meeting. My Thau calls his way of doing the ceremony his "Kiowa fireplace" or "his way" of the ceremony. My Thau did not feel that this man was ready to become a full-

fledged roadman, nor that the young man could "carry" Thau's "fireplace." I do not think that this young man was expecting an answer of "no" from my Thau. Thau tells me that he is very particular about who carries his "fireplace." So, at some level, this young man was probably a little disappointed.

Kinds of Meetings

The most serious meetings are of course healing meetings for a person who is so ill that all doctors have given up on the patient, a hopeless case. Thau told me on several occasions that this Native American Church started for the purpose of healing. He also told me that peyote meetings were supposed to be healing meetings only. Originally, peyote meetings, according to Thau, were only "put up" or sponsored by a patient's family so that the person could get healed through the God-given power of the Medicine.

These days, after several generations of NAC moving through various tribes, each tribe putting their own spin on the ritual, putting some of their own ideas, customs, or rituals within the greater ceremonial form, as the ceremony has been adjusted to fit into the various lives of various Native peoples, it has changed in various ways. For example, it is quite common for people to sponsor birthday meetings for their children or for other family members. It is not unheard of to see the mother of a young child bring a birthday cake, elaborately decorated from Basha's grocery store, into the tipi in the morning after the ceremony is complete, to pass the cake over the coals and the altar or even for the cake to be blessed by fanning it with cedar smoke. Modern NAC families seem to have meetings for almost any reason these days. This strikes Thau as rather silly:

> I've only been to a death meeting once, sonny boy, and that was enough. I think I was a teenager then. I was with my dad. I didn't know that that was the kind of meeting it was going to be. I went to this family's house. We all lined up to go into the tipi. I was young, just a teenager then. We went in and sat in our places. And then I see them bring that body in. Man, I wanted to just run out of that tipi, but we had already sat down. I was stuck. I told myself I would never go to a meeting like that again.

Thau, one day was also elaborating to me the other kinds of meetings there are. He told me that people have birthday meetings, meetings for people getting married. He had mentioned the death or funeral meeting. There was a bit of dissatisfaction in the tone of his voice. Thau continues:

> It's not supposed to be like that. When I was growing up, it was still more like it used to be. Meetings were for sick people. Meetings were so people could come together with a good thought for that person, for that patient, so he could get well. Now-a-days, people have meetings for any stupid reason. They have meeting for somebody's birthday or graduation or someone gets a new truck; people being silly.

The question that I asked Thau that started this particular topic was, "what meeting is going on tonight, Thau?"

"They're having a meeting to bless the Medicine that they just brought back from the gardens."

"You mean, that trip they took to Texas last weekend? The Medicine they collected?"

"Yep, the meeting tonight is to bless that Medicine"

"Why do they have to bless it? Isn't it already blessed?" I asked, "I mean, it's the Medicine, it blesses us, right?

"Yes, Bo, I don't understand people sometimes. I guess it's their own lack of faith. If you really had faith in this Medicine, you wouldn't need to pray over it." Both Thau and I start laughing about this particular silliness and about how we both agreed with the idea that such a meeting was unnecessary or rather redundant.

"I'm not going to sit in on this one, Thau. Is that ok?" I asked Thau. He replied, "That's ok, Bo." As good as it may be to pray and to sit in meeting, I really did not see the point of missing a night's sleep to bless the Medicine that is believed to be so powerful as to heal patients that have been hopelessly discarded by medical science. As was mentioned before, it can be hard, or at the very least uncomfortable to sit on the ground in front of the fire and pray all night. I certainly do not feel compelled to do it unless I am asked to go into to pray for the health or blessing of a person, or relative and even then, the blessing or healing of a relative.

To remember a few examples, I have eagerly sat in meetings for the healing of various relatives when they have specifically asked me to sit in that tipi and pray for them. For one of my Navajo granddaughters, I sat in a meeting to pray for her vision and eye problems. I sat to pray for her schooling, that she get her degree. I have sat in meeting for a Navajo aunt to pray for her leukemia when she was in hospital for

chemotherapy. And I have sat in a meeting that was for Thau to be helped with fighting alcoholism. I have sat in on other non-healing centered meetings as well. But I always feel best about the healing ones. Probably because I remember that these modern peyote ways, in this ceremonial form, were meant to be a healing ceremony, and because my Thau reminds me how important it is to use this Medicine for healing both inside and outside of a tipi meeting.

Having Good Thoughts

Thau also has repeated over and over the importance of faith, the importance of wanting to help people, the importance of prayer and the importance of having good thoughts while sitting in meeting. “If you’re going to sit in there, son, you have to pray, you have to have faith, you have to go in there with a good thought for that person, so they can get well, so they can have a good life. And you’ll get a blessing too.”

Sometimes people do not sit in meeting with good thoughts. Thau tells stories sometimes of people who are not sitting in meeting for the right reasons. The most common wrong reason to sit in a peyote meeting is to “show off.” There are many ways to show off, of course. If somebody thinks that they are a great singer, that they know many beautiful peyote songs that they can sing with skill, then they will show off by singing in a very fancy way. But if they are not singing with the proper spirit, then, they are not truly praying. Thau says that these people are not helping; they are just taking up space from somebody else that would pray better, or pray with that patient in mind. Another way to show off would be to take into the meeting all of your pretty fans, your

gourds, or nice Pendleton blankets. I mention this as a nod to material culture. It is nice to have these things. It is even nice to use them in meeting. But to use them in order to show off is not necessarily proper. And with the wrong attitude, these nice things can become distractions according to Thau.

Peyote ritual paraphernalia can be quite beautiful and skillfully made. Thau himself is known for his very skilful beadwork on the handles of peyote feather fans, gourd rattles, and other single stand alone feathers; usually these are large eagle feathers. Thau tells me that some people go in tipi, all proud of their fans and gourds. They make sure to take them out and fan themselves with their fans, just so other people can see them. Thau says, "Sometimes, I don't even take out some of my fans because I don't want other people to see them. I don't want them to get jealous and have a bad thought about them. Or maybe they like it a lot and they want to get it from me." I have seen a couple of Thau's fans, and I certainly would not want to part with them if they were mine. However, generosity is supposed to be a major virtue among many Native American peoples. Several anthropologists have fallen victim to this by admiring some possession in a Native's home only to find themselves the instantly new owner of a clay pot, a blanket, a fan or a piece of silver jewelry. Thankfully, this has not happened to me.

Other people show off by thinking that they are a very good drummer. Thau says that he can tell who is being serious in a meeting and who is just showing off. Moreover, with the influence of the spirit or power of the peyote, such senses are heightened, more keen, more acute. In the case of a show off drummer, Thau can tell because "you won't hear that music, that tune. The drummer won't be able to bring out that tune from the

drum that makes you feel good, that makes you feel alright, better, that makes you want to sing those worship songs."

Showing off means that a person is not being serious; that he or she is not sitting in there with a good thought. Sometimes, people can be showing off by praying out loud for a long time. I have been in meetings when a roadman or a participant who has been given the floor, or who has rolled a smoke to pray, will pray about everything that comes into their mind at that time. I have watched people pray for up to three hours in this manner without stopping. Sometimes they are being sincere. Other times, Thau tells me, they are just showing off. "If you were really keeping your mind on that person, on that patient, you know, you would not be praying about everything in *your* life, *your* wife, *your* kids, *your* job, *your* truck. Let's pray about that patient, so they can get well." Here the italics are mine, but they reflect that Thau emphasized these words with raised volume and pitch.

Thau continues, "There are lots of guys out there who go from meeting to meeting just to show off their singing or their drumming or whatever. Or they just want to eat Medicine (peyote). But they're not there to pray." It seems to me that Thau is constantly wanting to make sure that I understand what "real" meetings are supposed to be, and the importance of prayer in real meetings. Of course, a real meeting is a prayerful meeting. Having good thoughts means that a participant will put somebody else's needs above somebody's own. It means not having negative thoughts. It means that when one goes into that tipi that one leaves behind all of his or her own problems for the sake of the person that is having that meeting.

Thau also explained to me that a sick person is weak and vulnerable and out of balance. If somebody brings in bad thoughts or negative thoughts into tipi with them, they might put the patient in danger. They may add to the patient's sickness instead of helping that person get better. Good thoughts will help the patient, the patient's family, and the people praying in the meeting to be in tune with peyote and with Creator. Good thoughts also allow the people praying to go through the meeting with less pain or discomfort. Having good thoughts will help the patient heal.

It is also important to keep good thoughts not only in meeting but also in dealing with anything that has anything to do with the religious or the spiritual, and with anything associated with peyote meetings. For example, one Sunday afternoon a week or two before a planned peyote meeting, several of us were sitting around the kitchen table. Beverly, Thau's wife brought out a big tin of dried peyote buttons. It was time to "clean Medicine." Cleaning Medicine is a tedious but important process to remove the small tufts of gray or white hair or fuzz that grows on the tops of the peyote plant. This hair contributes to the perception of peyote as an old man, a grandfather. But these "hairs" are quite unpleasant to consume. They can get stuck in your throat and be uncomfortable. So, it is a common practice to grab a small implement like a knife and gently pull off these fibers. It is part of preparing the Medicine for consumption. It is critically important to keep good thoughts while you are doing this. This Medicine will be used to help people pray to Creator, to pray for somebody else so that person can have a good life. It would not do to have negative thoughts or feelings about anybody, as it would be disrespectful to Grandfather Medicine and potentially dangerous to the patient and other participants.

And any conscientious maker of religious paraphernalia would do well to keep good thoughts while assembling, beading, working on, and even obtaining the supplies to make fans, gourd rattles, blankets or boxes, remembering that people are going to use these items for prayer.

To have good thoughts is a metaphor that sees a lot of use in much of Indian Country. It is one of these recurring phrases deployed to encourage pious behavior, feelings and thoughts in Native Americans. A few other common phrases include "following that good red road," "do things in a right way," "do things in a proper way," "travel a good road," "walk the path of life," just to mention a few. This metaphor operates in such a way as to bring somebody in line with what is considered to be proper religious or ethical behavior, or sometimes to manipulate the feelings and actions of a Native person through invoking an distinctively, albeit stereotypical, Native American image of what it means to be "spiritual" as a Native American, as opposed to a European American. European Americans and any other group of people can be "spiritual" and pray, but Native Americans walk the "good red road." Other kinds of Americans are simply walking a different road.

THIS MEDICINE

Sometimes people can take for granted the metaphors they use to describe, to circumscribe, to name, and therefore, to create their reality. Learning how to communicate with and through these metaphors is to participate in a particular group or

community. Learning these metaphors and other tropes is part of the ways we as human beings are created as persons within a particular group or community.

In the case of the Native American Church, both Native and non-Native participants will learn and be taught central metaphors in order to create their participation in an ordered reality. Perhaps first among these metaphors is addressing the peyote as "Grandfather." Calling this Medicine "grandfather" is not merely a formality nor a fantasy nor an hallucination. It reflects a reality. We can look at it thus, that this Medicine is our grandfather already, and we address him as such. Just as when we are born, we are taught to call our father's father and our mother's father, grandfather. He was there before we were.

Grandfather Peyote

Immediately, any person addressing this little cactus as "Grandfather" invokes an image of a relationship and participates in a relationship. This particular relationship reflects the invocation of self-identifying as a "grandchild," as a descendant. Moreover, what is being invoked is a shared intimacy of safety, of home, of education, of joy, and of comfort. In an ideal world, what grandfather is not overjoyed at the sight of a favorite grandchild asking grandpa for candy, or for a piggyback ride, or for a story? What grandfather would not want to teach a grandchild the secret of a card trick, or the way to keep a spoon handy to scoop out the pieces of doughnuts that break off in the milk? In Indian Country, the way Thau describes it to me, back in Oklahoma, it was his grandpas that taught him the ways of this Peyote Church. Thau's father and uncles taught him a

great deal too. Moreover, making an invocation to the memories of the grandfathers is stretching the metaphor into its function of certification. “I know these ways because my grandpas taught them to me.” The word “grandpas” can mean older male relatives, not just the father of your mother and the father of your father. To say “my grandpas taught me” can mean all the old men of my tribe, my people, or my NAC, and the grandpa Medicine taught me these ways.

All these images of protection, of wisdom, of learning and teaching, of familiarity are by no means the sole treasure of the Native American Church. Jesus from Nazareth made a revolutionary contribution to religious society in his time and place by addressing the Creator, the One God as “abba,” which we can translate as “daddy.” To this day Christianity clings to the metaphor of “Our Father” to describe their deity. In the case of the Native American Church, Grandfather Peyote helps his grandchildren because Creator made him that way. Creator, according to Thau, gave this medicine power to help human beings, to heal us, to guide us, to give us wisdom and encouragement, to give us blessings to have a good life.

Relationships are very important. Relationships are the most important aspect to being human. If “no man is an island,” then it is truly our connections to each other, our relationships that bind us to the social fabric of our universes. For NAC, this social fabric and religious fabric include an intimate and familiar relationship with peyote. One of the first instructions I was ever given at my very first NAC meeting, years before I met Waldo Daukei, my adopted-in-“that-Indian-way”-father, was that peyote, this Grandfather Medicine was in me now. I was told by the roadman, that if I had any

questions about this religion or about life, that I could ask this Medicine that was in me now, because he was there to help me now.

Certainly there are other metaphors or titles to address and to describe this Medicine. One of these is "Chief." I have heard Thau use this title many times in meetings that he has led. Thau addresses him as Peyote Chief, as Chief of this meeting. This is important for at least two reasons; first, it removes the authority and responsibilities from the roadman and places it in the far more capable hands of Grandfather Peyote. Second, it makes it explicit that the meeting will proceed according to the plans and needs that peyote, the Medicine, lays out for the duration of the ceremony. Peyote as Chief will lead his people in such a way that they will live good lives. This word "Chief" is quite loaded with meanings in a Native American context. It also is loaded with images and meanings outside of Indian Country. America uses the word Chief around Native Americans on quite a frequent basis.

In the ceremony, at the beginning of the night, the roadman will usually place a large perfect peyote button on the apex and center of the altar. This peyote is called the "Chief Peyote" because he will sit on the altar and watch over the meeting, the patient and all the participants throughout the night until all ceremonies and prayers are complete, and the roadman respectfully removes him from the altar and replaces Chief Peyote in the roadman's cedar box. Thau addresses Chief Peyote at the beginning of a meeting and admonishes him to take over the meeting, run the meeting and watch over everybody and everything. That is his job, after all.

Another particularly beautiful way to address Grandfather Peyote is another Kiowa word "senkyahi." I have heard Thau say this word many times. Moreover, Thau uses this word in his most formal address to Creator and to the Medicine. Thau says that "Senkyahi" means "beautiful flower." According to Thau, this term "beautiful flower" refers to the small pinkish, white or purplish white flower that blooms in the top center of the peyote cactus. The whole peyote button and peyote plant is therefore this "beautiful flower." But it is beautiful not just because it is "pretty" but because it helps us pray and to be in harmony with Creator and his Creation. It is beautiful because it has God-given power to help and to heal.

This Medicine Takes Care of Us

"This Medicine has taken care of me all my life. I'm alive because of this Medicine." Thau has told me these things more than once. It is his way of acknowledging his own humility and his own history of relationship with peyote and the cult that has grown up around its sacramental and healing use. Grandfathers and chiefs are supposed to look after their grandchildren and their people respectively.

But what activates such a blessing? Thau tells me that it is faith. Thau says that a person has to believe that peyote has the power, the God-given power to look after that person, to help that person, to heal that person. For Thau and many other members, this is not limited to just our time in the tipi, but to the rest of our lives also. For example, years ago, one of my Navajo aunts talked to me about how when she is very confused or distressed, she will get some Medicine and make up some peyote tea, drink it, then think

or pray about her problem until she feels that she has received an answer from the Medicine. Beverly has also told me that she does this sometime as she handed me a washed out glass pickle jar full of peyote tea before I returned to my apartment one ceremonial weekend.

Having such faith in this Medicine that begins to live inside of us after we partake of it in a church meeting, can only have significance or effectiveness if it is predicated upon the central and immediate relationships of that between a Grandfather and a grandchild, or a chief and his people. The metaphor orders the reality; then it reinforces that reality the more a person invokes the metaphor, prays with that metaphor and lives with that metaphor.

"I know how to take care of myself," I head Thau say once after a particularly bad episode with drinking that landed Thau in the hospital with dehydration and alcohol poisoning. "I know how to take my cedar box and use my feathers and that Medicine and work on my problems, or get over a sickness." Thau continues, "My dad and my uncles and my grandpas taught me how to pray. I know how to pray." Of course, at that time, Thau was talking about how peyote has healed him and taken care of him when he has asked for help, when he prayed with peyote. "I know how to get my feathers out and fan myself off and pray for myself. You don't always need to have a meeting. Just pray." Thau really believes in the Medicine and in prayer, or at least says that he does.

This miraculous healing power of the Medicine is recounted in other ethnographies of the Native American Church as well. But in the particular of this Medicine looking after Thau, even DaveRay is convinced of peyote's power, peyote's

gift, but also of Thau's skills as a ritual adept to use the Medicine to heal himself. "Man, Thau keeps patching himself up." DaveRay told me this after I asked about Thau's health. We were all concerned over Thau. He went for some tests, all of which were inconclusive. DaveRay attributes this medical difficulty with ascertaining the source of a particular malady to Thau's ability to fix himself when he is ailing badly. "Those doctors can't find anything because Thau keeps fixing himself." I am skeptical, but DaveRay remains convinced. "This Medicine is powerful, and my dad is a powerful medicine man. He's not just a roadman. Anybody can be a roadman. But my Thau is a medicine man, a doctor like my grandpa." DaveRay means Waldo's father, Horace Daukei, who is still remembered among the Kiowa and throughout Indian Country as a powerful doctor and medicine man. Peyote looked after grandpa too.

Thau talks about some tough times that he has had in his life. Sometimes he will add to the story that he believes that he got through it because peyote was watching over him. Or he may mention that things could have been worse if it had not been for the blessings of peyote or for the intervention of Grandfather Medicine. Thau once told me:

> I've never been homeless, except for one night. I have only had to spend one night on the street. I was in Phoenix and my wife threw me out. There I was with no place to go, and I slept in an ally behind the 7 Eleven with a couple other winos. Then the next day I helped a couple of lesbians with their truck. I got it started for them. And they asked me if I needed a place to stay, so, for a few weeks I slept on their couch. We would have pork chops every Friday night for

dinner. I know that it's the blessings of this Medicine that I was only homeless for that one night.

Even though these Good Samaritan lesbians were not peyote people, Thau interprets their good-natured generosity and his good fortune to meet them as God's providence, Creator's providence through the blessings of faith in the Medicine. Well, that is, faith, and it is the willingness of peyote to look after us.

"I know that this Medicine looks after me. I pray that he will look after my grandkids too. He can look after you too, sonny boy, if you ask him, and have faith." This Medicine's central role is to take care of people. This religion that has grown up around peyote started from peyote helping a woman in great need and distress. Thau told me the story one Sunday afternoon. I recount the story as I remember it.

She was lost, hungry and thirsty, some say pregnant and near death. Some say that she had a small child, or her small children were with her. Some say that she had been lost by her people as they fled an attacking enemy. They fled to the hills, but she could not keep up. Despairing of her life, she crouched under a bush and readied herself to die. Then she heard a voice. When she looked down she saw this beautiful little cactus, and it was speaking to her and singing to her in her mind. She ate the Medicine as the Medicine had instructed her. She was no longer thirsty, nor tired, nor hungry. The peyote sang to her, and helped her. He guided her back to her amazed and relieved people who thought that she had died. She called together the spiritual leaders of her people. She showed them the Medicine that she had gathered up quickly before setting out for home. She told them of the Medicine, and how he guided her and helped her and instructed her to take

the Medicine back to her people so that they could make ceremonies for the Medicine. This is what they did. She taught them the first peyote songs, which were the songs that the Medicine sang to her in her time of great need.

Praying and Singing

These are important activities, praying and singing. They are the central modes of religious expression in the Native American Church. In fact they can be synonyms for each other. Singing is praying, and prayers are often sung. They are interchangeable. Of course, depending on the time and place or procession of the main ceremony, one particular mode of praying or singing will be more appropriate than the other.

Songs are important. They are prayers themselves whether they are songs with words or songs without words. Songs without words are made up of melody and vocables. Even though a song may be only vocables, it is still prayer. This is true not only in Native American Church meetings but also in many other Native American contexts and certainly with many of the songs sung at modern powwows. Indeed there are many ways to pray in the Native American cosmos. Dancing is prayer. Preparing food for people is prayer. Sweeping and cleaning is prayer. Planting corn is prayer. Smoking tobacco is prayer. An elder Mescalero Apache grandmother once impressed upon me the importance of crying, an importance that she had been taught by her great grandmother, that “even tears are prayers.”

Inside the Tipi

One of the words my Thau uses for peyote meeting or NAC is “sempi.” The syllable “pi” is the same “pi” of the word “tipi.” “Pi” in this sense is “home, house” or “place” or “lodge.” Of course the word tipi is a Dakota word, not Kiowa in origin. This may be an example of the borrowing, assimilating, and modifying of a lexical Dakota lexical item into the Kiowa lexicon. The syllable “sem” refers to this Medicine. So “sempi” means “medicine house” or “medicine place” or more loosely “the place where one prayers with peyote Medicine.” When talking with Thau, it has become clear that “sempi” is not just a place, but it is also a time. So when someone utters the phrase “in sempi,” it is clear that they are speaking of a peyote meeting or a NAC meeting, during a peyote meeting, and inside of a tipi or house where a peyote meeting was happening. Thau has also used the word “sempi” to refer to this Medicine. But when using this particular word, I interpret it to mean that the Medicine and the whole ceremony are implied.

The tipi is the place for prayer. And having attended several peyote meetings, I can attest that most all of the time spent in meeting is spent in prayer, whether it is the whole congregation or just one or two people at any particular moment. The whole night is prayer. But of course, there are so many activities that count as prayer. Or rather, it can be stated that there are so many forms of prayer used in sempi. The ritual has infused every gesture with potent meaning. In NAC, there can be discerned four major activities that count as prayer. First, verbal prayer, either spoken aloud, sub-vocalized quietly or softly, or just uttered mentally in complete silence, is prayer. Singing a peyote song in a peyote meeting is prayer. Smoking tobacco, accompanied with verbal prayer or not, is

prayer. Eating the sacred Medicine, peyote is prayer. Perhaps the most potent prayer is the sacramental consumption of the Medicine, peyote.

When peyote is eaten in a peyote meeting, a person takes the Medicine into himself or herself fully. There is no aspect of the person that is not touched by the Medicine according to faith in the NAC, including their relatives, loved ones and relationships. It is believed that the Medicine will affect a person physically and spiritually. Immediately, peyote is believed to help a person pray to Creator, for themselves and for others, whether silently or aloud, singing or thinking. Peyote will help a person pray with peyote. If a supplicant feels that they do not know how to pray, that supplicant may be encouraged by someone to ask the peyote to give the blessing of the ability to pray. Another person can ask peyote to bless with the ability to sing the worship songs of the peyote church. The expected result of such a prayer is the ability to learn peyote songs quickly and easily and to be able to compose new worship songs, and to sing them in such a way as that other congregants will feel the blessings of the Medicine in a meeting.

If somebody feels that they will not be able to stay awake all night and pray, then that person will be encouraged to eat more Medicine, because the Medicine itself will strengthen the person so that person can stay awake all night, and so that person can remained focused on praying. Many people, after a good meeting will claim to feel quite invigorated and not tired at all. I personally have never felt this. I just feel like I stayed up all night praying and not sleeping. I have not felt particularly strengthened by the effects of the Medicine. Maybe I do not have the proper amount of faith. And my Thau has

recommended to me and to others to eat more Medicine if they are feeling tired and fatigued in the meeting or if they are not able to remain focused on prayer.

The Medicine is power. The Medicine can give power. Perhaps one of the main functions of a roadman is to manage the power that the Medicine is bringing to the meeting. During a meeting the roadman is responsible for running and directing the meeting. He is also responsible for the patient and for everybody else in the meeting. Thau has said to me that when he runs meeting, he tries to keep a close eye on everybody in there. He has to make sure that nothing goes wrong. Also, if somebody in tipi starts to "freak out" or if something goes wrong, it is ideally up to the roadman to take care of the situation. A roadman can accomplish this by eating more Medicine than any particular individual in the meeting. I suppose this keeps a majority of the power with the roadman and not some congregant who likes to "pig-out" on the Medicine for no good reason.

On the other hand there is also the important recurring theme of faith. Thau says, "You have to have faith."

> Faith is the most important thing. If you have good faith, all you need to do is just have a pinch, a drop of that Medicine and you're going to get a blessing. You don't need to eat lots of Medicine in there. Just a tiny bit is all you need, if you have faith.

According to Thau, it is not about the quantity of Medicine consumed. It is about a person's faith and sincerity and prayers. "This Medicine has God-given power to help us and bless us. So, just remember that," Thau repeats this rather often. I do not eat much Medicine in tipi meetings. I try to have faith in my Grandfather Peyote.

Plus, peyote does not taste good. Eating the Medicine is not the most pleasant of experiences. It amuses me when I hear accusations from ignorant Americans that my interest in the Native American Church, and anybody else's interest in NAC is simply a quest to get high and to hallucinate. At those moments I wonder if they have ever tasted peyote? I feel, who in their right taste buds would willingly and recreationally eat this stuff? I cannot stand the taste. Though, I must admit, the best way to eat this Medicine is in the form of fresh "buttons." Buttons are the cut-off tops of the peyote cactus. They are not as bitter as dried peyote buttons. Plus, some people know how to make peyote tea from dried buttons, in such a way as to make it a little less bitter. Of course any preparation of the Medicine has to be done with a good thought and with a good heart.

Thau has also told me that:

> This Medicine is the Chief; he's running the show. I'm just there to pray; I don't do nothing. I can pray that this Medicine uses me. And I want to have a good thought for this person who's hurting and for their family. I can have empathy and sympathy, especially since; I know what it is like to hurt real bad. I've had children and grandchildren. I've seen life.

Thau feels that because he has led, in his eyes, such a "wicked life" and has sometimes suffered some of the consequences of such, he can identify more with a hurting patient that is asking this Medicine for help. Because of this, Thau says that he knows how to pray for that person.

This combined truth of humility and honesty is probably what motivates Thau to make his confession of his own alcohol use and his own imperfection when he is leading

a meeting for somebody else. It may also alleviate the conscious of the man to lay all the true responsibility of the meeting on the Medicine. Thau will talk about how unworthy he is to sit behind this altar and pray for somebody. But he is asking this Medicine to help us all pray to Creator on behalf of this person, out of the goodness of the Medicine, not out of the merit of the roadman. Indeed, it is almost as if the more pathetic a supplicant is, the more the Medicine will want to help. All that the patient needs is faith. The stronger their faith, the more powerful the Medicine and his effects for healing for that person. Again and again, Thau emphasizes the importance of faith in sempi.

Peyote songs are very important. The original peyote songs were heard by the woman who first found the Medicine and who took some back to her people. The peyote sang to her, and helped her. She taught the religious leaders of her people the first peyote songs. Since that time, other worshipers have made new peyote songs under the inspiration of the Medicine. From the religious perspective, it can be said that many of the songs were composed by the Medicine himself through the people who sang the songs. I am not qualified to speak too extensively about peyote songs, being such a novice to the songs myself. So, I may only mention a few things about the songs that I have been told by people. Thau has composed many peyote songs, many of which have been sung by other people who heard and liked the songs. Thau also sings songs that are considered “old and traditional” peyote songs. Thau remembers many old Kiowa and Cheyenne peyote songs, but he also knows Comanche songs and songs from other tribes that he has visited or spent time with, especially Navajo peyote songs.

Songs are very important. They can help people feel better. Songs can become a tread that binds worshipers together. Certain songs that were composed and sung in families can be a marker of family ties. Some songs can "belong" to somebody and should not be sung without permission from the owner. If you chose to sing a song that is "owned" by somebody else, you had better sing it correctly and well. Moreover, a song may be a song that was composed specifically for a family member for a particular reason or for a particular purpose. In such a case, it is not merely a song that can be sung absentmindedly. In such a case, the song has a specific meaning, not just a pretty tune or a nice sound. For example, if a song was composed by a roadman to pray for a beloved granddaughter to have a good life and many children, it would be less than appropriate to sing that song for a male patient suffering from leukemia or drug addiction. It is like that. If a song has meaning and is already a prayer, then, a song should be sung appropriately in a tipi meeting.

A worshipper should always sing with a good heart. Too many people, according to my Thau:

> They just go into tipi meeting to show off how good they can sing. That ain't right. You're supposed to be in there to think about that person and their family. You're supposed to pray for them. I can tell when somebody is showing off or when they're really serious in there. I can see it.

I trust Thau's judgment on such matters. "Too many people forget that the reason we're in there is to pray; to help somebody who's hurting or sick."

Outside the Tipi

Prayers are powerful. I am learning a lot from Thau about the nature of prayer. Prayer is powerful. Prayers live. Prayers can even live on beyond us. Each generation is the product of the prayers of their parents, their grandparents and their ancestors. Our lives are not our own. We owe our lives to the prayers that were said for us. "How many people have prayed for you? How do you know that the blessings in your life are not from somebody's sincere prayers for you?" These are very important questions that my Thau has asked me that I will remember for a very long time.

Thau knows that he is the product of prayer. In particular, he knows that his grandpa Waldo prayed for him before he was even born. Waldo the First, prayed that he would have a grandson that would follow after him and be a leader in this NAC and would follow these Kiowa peyote ways and these Kiowa doctoring ways. These prayers were also supported by the prayers of other elder men, friends and relatives of Waldo the First that agreed with Waldo's prayers. Waldo did not know that this grandson in particular would be my Thau, Waldo, his namesake. But he prayed just the same. Waldo the Second, my Thau, knows that he is the product of these prayers and many others.

Thau has said on a couple of occasions that many really horrible things could have happened to him over the years, as crazy as he has been sometimes, in as many dangerous situations he has found himself and that he has created. But he knows that people care about him, think about him, and pray for him. His proof is that he is still alive, with a roof over his head, food in his mouth, a beer in his hand, and a joint between

his lips. He prays for people too. And he knows that Creator blesses him because he prays for people; that he prays for people sincerely, from his heart, with a good thought.

Thau does not need a peyote meeting to pray for somebody. To make a crude analogy, there is a difference between somebody who may just need an aspirin and a person who may need a full course of chemotherapy. Even so, a person may just need to be "fanned off," or a person just needs somebody to "drop" or "lay down" or "throw down some cedar" for them and not need a full, all-night tipi meeting. I have seen Thau pray in this manner for others and for myself. Fanning somebody off can happen inside or outside of a tipi meeting. Basically, some fragrant herb is burned, like cedar leaves, sweetgrass, or sage. Then the person offering prayers waves the fragrant smoke through a feather fan or a single large feather, and then waves the fan or feather over and around the person/patient. This can be done silently or with an oral prayer, or even a song. While being fanned off, the patient should keep a good thought in their heart, should be reverent and respectful, should pray to God in their heart, and should breath deeply to take in the fragrant smoke that carries the prayers to God. In tipi, cedar leaves would be thrown on the smoldering coals that are neatly kept between the living fire and the earthen crescent altar. The fragrant smoke rises and is gathered into a fan and then waved over and around the patient.

I have also seen Thau and Beverly put cedar leaves on the coals of the small barbecue pit in the yard. One Sunday morning as Bev was roasting some meat on the grill, we all ate a little bit of the meat. After that, the coals were still hot, so Thau dropped some cedar into the pit grabbed his scissortail fan and sent the cedar smoke with prayer

for blessings to his grandchildren. Sometimes it is not convenient to make a fire and wait for coals to burn down into embers. Well, Indians have a solution for that too. On the stove in Bev's kitchen there is a metal pie plate. When need arises, Bev or Thau will turn the stove on, heat up the pie plate and drop some cedar on the heated surface of the pie plate. The fragrant smoke fills the house. Bev says that she likes the way it smells. Most nights she will drop some cedar just before she goes to bed. Other times, I've seen my Thau grab his fan, drop some cedar in the kitchen and fan off and pray for a person that has asked for prayers.

What if a supplicant does not have any feathers, nor cedar, nor sweetgrass, not even any tobacco? How can one pray then? Thau told me about his youngest son who was incarcerated at that time. Thau told me that he had taught his son how to pray if he was alone and did not have any sacred herbs or articles. My Thau told me:

> You don't need all these things to pray. All you need is your faith. If you have faith, you can just get yourself a small cup of water. Pray that way. Water is life. You can pray to God or Creator or whatever. Or just go outside. Stand on this Mother Earth and pray to Creator. He'll hear you.

Thau again emphasizes faith. But he also uses words like "sincerity" and "from your heart" to also point to the need for faith. Sometimes he also uses the word "confidence." But this word he also uses in different ways and in different contexts, not just referring to spirituality.

Thau also talks about how he prays for himself. One Sunday afternoon, when several of us were around the kitchen table cleaning Medicine, a EuroAmerican

acquaintance of Thau was asking Thau about the small leather pouch that Thau wears around his neck. Thau, in a very convoluted and interrupted manner told his friend about the pouch, its contents in a very general way, and the purpose of the pouch. The pouch contains various items that Thau considers to be sacred, and that also symbolize aspects of the created world. The pouch contains peyote, feathers, and other elements like earth. Thau then described how he likes to wake up early in the morning, go outside, face east and the rising sun, kiss the pouch and raise it upwards, address the Creator and say thank you for another day of life. Thau may also offer prayers for others at this time especially for his grandchildren. The simplest thing to do is to just lift up the pouch and kiss it. That gesture itself is sacred prayer and gratitude.

Thau has sacrificed his time, knowledge and effort to pray for people in and out of tipi. He has prayed and doctored people in and out of meeting. In today's commercial, materialistic, and consumerist American society, from which even Native Americans who call themselves "traditionalists" are not immune, Thau reminds me that it is not right to charge for medicine, power, prayer, healing. People should give what they can give out of the goodness of their own hearts. It is traditional to give to the practitioner that helps. However, it is not right to require or worse, to demand payment.

But my Thau has asked of certain people something in return. He has asked for prayers, either for him or for his family members, especially his grandchildren, even the grandchildren he has not even met due to the separation imposed by his alcohol use. In Thau's mind, he is asking for the most important and potent force in the world that a

human being can possibly offer, not wealth, not possessions, not even food, but simply, prayer.

FEATHERS

It is no small task to speak about feathers and their significance as tools for prayer and for healing. I will only mention a few of these ideas and uses that have come up during my conversations with my Thau. This is certainly not comprehensive or exhaustive. I mention these only to further illustrate the fact that feathers are a part of Thau's religious life, his identity, and also a part of his relationships to other people and to the rest of his ordered cosmos, Creation.

On the Meaning of Particular Feathers

"What are the best feathers to pray for someone when they're sick? What feathers do you use to help a sick person?" I asked this question on the fly and over the phone after several weeks without contact between my Thau and myself. So, what appears below is a paraphrase of part of that conversation.

> Well, all feathers have some kind of power. You can pray for someone and fan them off. Pray for them. But eagle feathers are good. Flicker feathers and yellowhammers are good. That bird, that woodpecker, you know how it just keeps digging and digging at that wood to get at its food. It symbolized how he's going to fight for us. How he's going to keep going and going until it's done. That's why we use those feathers to pray for a sick person.

In the case of the Native American Church, feathers are prevalent. The roadman will have a fan for ritual use. The roadman, depending on the type of "fireplace" will need to use the fan to fan off the patient. Fanning off a person is another way to pray for someone. And in most of the NAC meetings I have attended, it is a very important way to pray for someone. The roadman may put some cedar on the hot coals from the fireplace. The cedar burns making a pleasant, fragrant aroma. Using his fan he gathers cedar smoke into his fan and then fans the patient while the patient breathes in very deeply as he or she is being fanned by the roadman.

Other worshipers in a tipi meeting may have one or more of their own feather fans. It is appropriate to bring your personal fan out to hold and to pray with, after midnight. Before midnight, the only fan in use is the one being used by the roadman. It is common at midnight, which is not an arbitrary notation on a clock, but a moment in the ritual process of the overnight ceremony, for the roadman to invite the participants to bring out their own fans if they have them. These fans are particularly useful if the flames are feeling hot on your face. You can raise your fan to shadow your face from the heat of the flames. The first few meetings I attended, I had no fan, nor was any fan loaned to me. These meetings became quite uncomfortable after a while. After I was given a fan, I noticed a night and day difference. Fans can be necessary paraphernalia for Church members.

One beautiful Sunday morning, while we were outside under the ramada in the backyard, Beverly was using a small barbecue pit to roast some deer meat. Thau asked DaveRay to retrieve his cedar box from the bedroom.

> Every feather, different birds, they mean something. For instance, magpie feathers, a lot of my Cheyenne relatives like to use magpie feathers. But what they mean is that you won't go hungry. If a man takes out magpie feathers in that tipi meeting, and he prays with them, his family will always have food. They won't starve. You know how those magpies; they'll eat anything, right? And they always find food. That's how it is. Your family will never be hungry; they'll always have food. And that's why those magpie feathers are so valuable. It's good to have a fan made of those feathers.

A cedar box is a box often made from cedar wood, with a hinged lid and a handle on top. This box carries a person's own ritual paraphernalia such as fans, gourd rattles, loose feathers, maybe some medicine or even a peyote chief. Thau also has in his box pictures of his children and his grandchildren, his biological children anyway. A person brings this box in with them when they go into a meeting.

Thau pulled out one of his fans. It was a beautiful scatter fan made of many pinkish scissortail feathers. These feathers are long and slender, pinkish white with black tips.

> These scissortail feathers are really valuable. They are hard to come by because they are the state bird of Oklahoma. So, it's very hard for my Kiowa people to come by these feathers, even though they were ours before Oklahoma existed. Ha-ha. A man carries these feathers for the women in his life. They belong to the women, especially to a man's granddaughters. So, I pray for my granddaughters and my nieces with these feathers. I know when I use these feathers that they are

> going to get a good blessing. I know that they are going to be blessed in some way. Like, they are going to have good day, and have a good life. And maybe they will have a good thought for me and remember their grandpa.

This is not the only fan in my Thau's cedar box. Thau also has two fans comprised of flicker feathers and yellowhammer feathers. The northern flicker woodpecker has two main varieties, the red-shafted flicker and the yellow-shafted flicker. The underside of the wing and tail feathers will be a reddish-orange with black tips or a bright yellow with black tips. The red-shafted feathers are called "flicker" feathers and the yellow-shafted feathers are commonly known in Indian country as "yellowhammers."

"Flickers and yellowhammers, that is a whole different ballgame, sonny boy," Thau once said. I do not know enough about these feathers. I am still learning. My Thau tells me that these feathers are very powerful. In fact my Khön, my Thau's thau likened these feathers to a loaded gun. "You don't mess around with these feathers. You have to know what you are doing. You don't just wave them around or hold them absentmindedly. They are very powerful." Thau continued to elaborate:

> These yellowhammers, they're like a loaded gun. You have to know how to handle them or else damage and harm can result. You never want to use a yellowhammer against somebody. If you do, you have to be absolutely sure that the other person has caused you great harm and intends to cause further harm.

And of course there are stories about how powerful these feathers can be. One day, not the same morning that Bev was roasting deer meat, Thau asked me, "hey, sonny

boy, do you know how Quanah Parker really died?" I responded, "Well, I think that I remembered that he died of tuberculosis or some sickness, something like that." Thau in possibly mock disdain replied:

> You college boys don't know shit. You learned that from a history book, right? Well, the history books are all wrong. That's white man's history; they don't know shit, what really happened. You're not going to find the real history or our history, the Kiowa people in history books, because it's never been told; not the real way. Because, you know, our history is oral. Families tell what really happened; not those books. A lot of Indian history is like that.

Somewhat amused by my Thau's dig on college education, I defensively added, "I thought Quanah Parker died because he did not listen to the Medicine? Didn't he die because he tried to charge a sick person for healing? And he refused to help that person because he couldn't pay him enough?" Thau has a half smile and responds:

> Was that in the book too? Well, I don't know about that. But this Medicine [peyote] is real. And it comes from the earth. It is here to help people, to help all Indian people. Medicine, and power, they aren't yours. No one can own it. It comes from God, from Creator. That's why you're not supposed to charge people, it's not right. It isn't your power that makes a person well; it's God. Are you greater than God? What makes your think you can ask for payment. If that Medicine is going to use you, you have to be open. It's the Medicine, that power, that wants to heal that person, and their faith.

> Quanah Parker was a powerful medicine man and chief. He brought that Medicine from down south, from where you're from, sonny boy, from your people. He was the one who started these ways of this Native American Church. He got this medicine from a *curandera* from down in Texas or Mexico. He was sick and it healed him. And he wanted to learn more, so he went down into Mexico with those Indians and learned from them. And they gave him the Medicine and told him to take it back to his people. They told him to make his own way to worship with the Medicine, to make a way that was for his own people. So, that's what he did. He became a powerful medicine man and chief, and he had ten wives and a big house and lots of land. He was rich too. But he let that all go to his head, I guess. He didn't stay humble.
>
> You know, it was different in the old days, you had to be careful in those meetings, you didn't want to get hit with power. You know, those old medicine men, they would shoot power at people in meetings and see who could handle it. They were trying to see who was the strongest, the most powerful medicine man. Sometimes, they might still do that. You have to watch out.

I protest, "I'm not a medicine man, how am I supposed to defend myself in there." Thau chuckles:

> No, you're fine, it's them old medicine men, powerful men. They're just testing each other, trying to see who's got the strongest medicine. They would shoot it at somebody, and if his medicine was stronger, he could shoot it back to the person

> who sent it first. If not, then he'd get sick, and maybe have to get up, leave and throw up or something.

"Sounds rough. Why bother, aren't we in meeting to pray for people?" Thau continues:

> Yeah we are. But sometimes, if there is a really sick person, if someone is going to die, if the white doctors give up on them, then who's going to help that person? Well, the medicine men would know, "well, hey, we know who the strongest one here is; we've tested him. You need to go see that one over there because he's got the strongest medicine."

The light finally goes on in my head. These strong man competitions within the context of the community actually could effect a purpose. The community's spiritual leaders, in "friendly" sparring competitions would know and be able to agree who the strongest medicine person in the community was. Therefore, they could refer hard cases to the right person. Thau continues:

> So, there was this meeting out in Oklahoma, way back. Quanah went to this meeting and there were other powerful men there too. One of my ancestors was there; he was Kiowa. Well Quanah shot medicine into him. And he didn't send it back to Quanah; he didn't know that he had been shot; he was busy running the meeting. After the meeting was all done, my grandpa went home, right. And he wasn't feeling good; he was real sick. And he told his wife, and his wife took care of him and helped him a little. Well, my grandpa thought, well, maybe this is a power thing, you know, maybe I'm sick because somebody shot something to me. Now, you know, when the meeting is done, you're supposed to call all your

medicine back. It's just for fun or for testing people. You're not supposed to let people leave the tipi with something in them like that. So, you're supposed to bring it all back in and not let it stay with somebody. Well, Quanah didn't do that, you see. He left that in my grandpa, and it made him real sick.

So, my grandpa thought, well, maybe this is something that somebody shot at me in that meeting. Maybe they left it in me. Maybe they really wanted something bad to happen to me. I don't know. So, my grandpa took out a yellowhammer, that feather, and he used it, and shot that medicine back to wherever it came from. Well, after that my grandpa, he felt better. And he got better too.

But Quanah, you see, he got really sick, you know. He got sick really fast, and he died. And you know, his wife took him to the kitchen table and laid him out, that's how they did it back then. And they started washing him and cleaning him up, you know. And his wife she was feeling Quanah on his side, like right here, (Thau's hand is on his torso over the lower ribs and abdomen), and she felt something, like a tiny little bump. So, she felt again and she pulled at it, you know, and a baby yellowhammer, that little feather came out.

I sit amazed as Thau goes on with the story,

You know, my grandpa used that yellowhammer to shot that power back where it came from and Quanah died that day. You know, Bo, that it must have been a really bad thing, you know. See, my grandpa shot back whatever Quanah put in him. And Quanah died.

I begin to catch a glimmer of understanding, as my own bowels feel tight and clenched in horror and anticipation of a truth I did not want to hear.

> Quanah must have put death into my grandpa. Well, how else would he have died? My grandpa must have been strong because he did not die, he was just real sick. But when he shot it back to Quanah, he died. You get back what you put out, so, Quanah must have shot out death. I don't know why. I'm sure he didn't think it would come back to him, but it did. Those yellowhammers, they're powerful.

I sit there, a bit stunned, committing the story to memory. I would think about this story for a while, a new appreciation of power and the forms it can take.

Thau has two flicker/yellowhammer fans of which I know. One is a typical scatter fan with white deerskin and intricate tiny glass beadwork, and buckskin fringe. Thau makes his own fans and has been making fans for others, for sale or as gifts for more than twenty years. The other fan is also a scatter fan, but it is very plain, with white buckskin, fringe but no beadwork on the handle. These fans are both flicker/yellowhammer fans, but they have different purposes. The decorated fan is a peyote fan that can be used in meetings, for blessing people, for holding while singing or praying. The other fan, the plain one, is a doctoring fan. Thau really does not let too many people see or touch that one. Thau has even told me that sometimes he does not even take those fans out in a peyote meeting so that people will not see what he has and get jealous or admire it, or ask for it. He told me, "The one with the beaded handle, that's for praying for other people or just to bless yourself with. The plain one is a doctoring fan. Only doctors can hold this fan or use it."

In meeting, Thau places a yellowhammer feather in the earthen altar right in front of the Chief Peyote that is placed on a bed of sage at the apex center of the crescent shaped altar. This yellowhammer will protect all participants in the tipi from any and all negativity or evil that might try to come into the tipi. The yellowhammer feather will deflect and reflect such bad thoughts that somebody may purposely aim and "shoot" at any body else in the meeting. The yellowhammer will protect the patient and the roadman responsible for everyone in the meeting. Thau learned this from his father, Horace, my Khön. Horace learned it from his thau, Waldo. This practice was handed down from the ancestor who fought off Quanah Parker's assassination attempt with a yellowhammer feather.

Who Holds the Feathers and the Implied Relationships

Thau had also said on a different occasion that flicker feathers and yellowhammer feathers are not specifically Kiowa feathers, though he gets them from his father's side of the family. Many tribes, according to my Thau know of these feathers and may even use them. However, they are particularly important to my Thau and his father's line, his father's side of the family. The use, the prayers, the songs that go along with using these feather, especially for doctoring people all have come down from his father, from his father before him, and his father before him. It is almost as if the medicine and knowledge of these feathers is truly my Thau's paternal heritage.

I once wondered out-loud in the presence of DaveRay, my Thau's adopted son, adopted years before I had met Thau, if it was even appropriate for me to touch or handle

yellowhammer or flicker feathers let alone to posses them. His response was, “of course; it’s family.” This statement solidified to the researcher side of my brain just how real so-called “fictive kinship” relationships can be. These relationships actually reflect a reality of association that carries ritual, ceremonial, and spiritual significance. Of course it is fine for me to handle and even to own flicker feathers and yellowhammer feathers. It is now my heritage. It is emblematic of my family.

My Khön, Horace Daukei, Waldo’s father, was known throughout Indian Country as “Yellowhammer.” My Khön used yellowhammer feathers especially. He could use both, flickers and yellowhammers, but the special efficacy of yellowhammers was his. My Khön ran meetings all over Indian country, meeting lots of people, helping people, doctoring people. There are people even today that still remember and tell stories about Yellowhammer. My buddy, DaveRay, my “pavi (fabi)” in the Kiowa way, my Thau’s son, gave me two flicker feathers and one yellowhammer one day. He told me to put the yellowhammer over the door of my apartment, just as I have seen yellowhammer feathers over the front doorways of my Thau’s residence and over the front door the apartment of DaveRay’s sister, whom my Thau calls “daughter.” He also told me to keep one of the flicker feathers in my car for protection. This too I had seen in any vehicle in which my Thau rides.

WHERE WE LOCATE MEANING

Meaning is found within all the interconnections and interrelationships between each person, each object, each prayer. Even if something, some gesture or phrase appears

to be without meaning, I have found that the meaning simply has not yet been revealed to me. This chapter has covered many topics and themes, some of which can seem to be quite disconnected and disparate. However, many of these disconnections simply reflect the ethnographer's incomplete understanding and incomplete information, something that may be overcome with time.

Beyond this, however, are many connections and relationships that need highlighting before proceeding to the next chapter. First, it is taken for granted that the people spoken of in this chapter are related to each other in some way or another. It will be the task of the following chapter to elaborate and explore these relationships and their meanings. Deloria reminds us "In the religious world of most tribes, birds, animals, and plants comprise the 'other people' of creation" (1994:274). So, it is possible that humans and other non-human people can establish, maintain, modify, and celebrate relationships with each other, sometimes at the initiative of the non-human person (Deloria 2006:107-108).

In the case of the woman who first found the Medicine and took it back to her people, it was indeed the Medicine that initiated the relationship with the human being and subsequent human beings (see also Brito 1989:3-6). Second, there are connections and relationships between objects and people as well as between people and people. Things like feathers, songs, prayers, herbs, medicine, and knowledge interact with people in non-random ways and for non-random reasons. For example, Waldo Daukei uses yellowhammer feathers in ritual and ceremonies because his father used them. Waldo Daukei uses yellowhammer feathers and flicker feathers, because he and his family share

a relationship with the spirit of the yellowhammer woodpecker and the northern flicker woodpecker. This is not to be confused with “new-age” affiliation-by-affection/attraction to using the feathers of these birds. Nor is it an affectation assumed to impress other people. It is the continuation of a relationship established before Waldo Daukei, my Thau was born, and inherited by my Thau when he was old enough to choose to accept the responsibilities of this relationship.

Within the NAC there are certain ritual procedures that must be learned and, according to my Thau, understood. A roadman should know why he is doing something in that tipi, why he is singing a particular song and what that song means. This is not just a collection of knowledge. Rather, this is knowledge that exists within the relationship that a roadman or ritual practitioner has with his community of faith and with the many relatives, human and non-human that have contributed to and benefited from this knowledge. Inherited with this knowledge is the responsibility to maintain these relationships with the songs, Medicine, Creator, and the other spirits in creation such as the flicker. And, my Thau also inherited the responsibility of praying for people.

Praying for people is a responsibility of relationship. Waldo prays for other people in and out of sempi not only because he wants to do so, but also because his father, his uncles, his grandpas, his relatives pray for other people and taught him to do the same. In this chapter I tried to give the reader a glimpse into small facets of the ritual world that Waldo, my Thau, inhabits. It is a world he shares with Creator, Peyote, religion, songs, prayers, feathers, the past, the future, and other relatives who sometimes pray and who sometimes need prayers. What it means to be human is to pray and to need

prayer. Being related means that you will pray for somebody, and that somebody will pray for you when that time comes.

And, my Thau also prays to express and maintain his relationship to Creator, which in Kiowa is "Dauki." My family is a Kiowa medicine family, whose family name is from the word for Creator. In many ways, it is Thau's recognition of his God-given life to pray, to express thanks and gratitude to Creator or God, for his life. And my Thau was taught by my Khön that praying for others is an honor and a responsibility. Plus, if Thau has both the inclination and the capacity to pray for other people, then he must pray for other people. It is a part of who he is, who he says and believes he is, and who other people expect and believe he is. So it was for his father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather.

And through this chapter I would further like to emphasize that my Thau has lived in the context of his relatives and the Native American Church very deeply. This context covers many generations, as his ancestors on both sides have been participants and leaders in the Native American Church and in Peyote Way. The relationships that my Thau has with Creator and with the Medicine are both personal/individual and communal/social. One does not exclude the other. Moreover, I am a part of these relationships and consequently the context that forms my Thau's life, and vice versa. I have my own relationship with Creator and with the Medicine. And Thau and I share these relationships with each other and our other relatives. We can talk about them. We can share stories about them. We can express ourselves using language and metaphors

that reflect the ideas of the Native American Church and that reflect Native American expressions of religion, worldview, and life.

Beyond this, I would like the reader to see the ritual and religious information and knowledge presented in this chapter as not an end in and itself necessarily. It is not the focus of this project to reveal ritual arcana and analyze it for its own sake. But rather, I have described the ritual of the NAC and some aspects of its religious understanding in order to bring the reader closer into an understanding of who my Thau is as a person, the world he inhabits, and the relationship that I share with him, and the relationships that we share with other relatives. Because these relatives and their relationships exist in and among and through the social and religious contexts of family, Native American identity, and the Native American Church, it is valuable to understand what these relatives are talking about when someone says that they need to "put up a meeting," or that a roadman needs "to doctor" in a particular meeting, or when someone addresses a little piece of a spineless desert cactus as "grandfather."

Returning to L. Smith's projects, I would like to offer this chapter as an example of *celebrating survival*. Not only has my Thau survived as one of the many indigenous people in this hemisphere, but he is also striving to maintain his indigenous perspective. Moreover, it has become obvious to me that he maintains his indigenous relationship to his community, namely, as a religious leader, through the Native American Church, as a roadman, a singer, a healer, a counselor, and as a father, grandfather, brother, nephew, son and grandson. This reflects not merely the survival of a particular individual. As other members of my Thau's community continue to survive, so do the relationships

between the community members. It is not enough for an individual to survive. We must survive together to survive as a people.

ABOUT SOME FAMILY AND OTHER RELATIVES

INHERITED RELATIONSHIPS

In the broadest scope, "relatives" very simply means the interconnections of the entire world, all its living beings, all its life, and all the connections shared between all of them. With the near infinite potential of the implications of this definition, we can imagine that defining or limiting this concept with precision and accuracy may be quite difficult, perhaps, even undesirable. It may be more beneficial and interesting to explore not "what" relatives are, but rather "how" relatives are, and "when" relatives are. Remembering Bob Thomas's peoplehood model, the idea of relationships is central to the model. Culturally, many Native American people and communities continue to keep relationships as important, as significant, and as a central reality of worldview.

For Thau, the term relatives can very loosely mean something like all the people (and spirits) that I like, love or care about, and all the people and spirits that like, love, or care about me. I mention that not all relatives are human beings because many Native American people like my Thau will refer to certain "people" that are spirits or natural forces or other living species that can be counted among his relatives. This type of reference can be made in or out of a tipi meeting, with or without formal prayer. Nonetheless, it reflects an aspect of reality that can be communicated with other relatives with the mood of mutual understanding. In other words, other relatives recognize the

relationships shared between people and groups of people. This chapter will explore some of the ideas invoked by the term "relative."

Parents, Grandparents, and Other Relatives

Waldo Daukei was born in Oklahoma in 1957. His biological father was Horace Daukei. And his mother was Erma White Eagle Turtle. Horace was Kiowa, and Erma was Cheyenne. Waldo has an older brother and a couple of younger brothers and a couple of sisters. According to Thau, all of his brothers were taught about the ways of the Native American Church by their father and by other uncles and grandfathers of blood relation and other uncles and grandfathers related by affection, tribe, or religious affiliation, meaning through the Native American Church. Thau's mother's family members were also "peyote people." And like most Native communities in Oklahoma, most people have a working knowledge of Christianity or "Jesus Way" either through personal experience or through the stories and experiences related to them by other people.

In the previous chapter, both Waldo's father (Horace) and Waldo's father's father (Waldo) were mentioned. Both are remembered for being powerful roadmen and powerful "doctors." A "doctor" in this sense is a "medicine" person or powerful person who affects the healing or spiritual transformation of another person through prayer, ritual, song, and/or the administration of medicine. Doctoring ways were already a part of Kiowa religious culture before the advent of the Native American Church. Some of these ways and some of the knowledge remains and has been passed down through the years. In this case, Waldo passed down his doctoring ways to Horace who in turn passed his

ways to his sons, including my Thau. According to my Thau, it is the birthright of the eldest son, to carry on the doctoring ways of his father and his grandfather.

I once asked my Thau about doctoring. Thau told me that he can doctor, but he does not because it is his older brother's right to doctor after the passing of their father. If Waldo's older brother were to give up the right to carry on the doctoring ways, then my Thau (Waldo) would have the right to "doctor" people using those particular ways. Thau already does help people and pray for people. And Thau says that he has doctored people on occasion. However, I believe that those occasions in the past were only under Horace's supervision. "I could doctor when my father was alive. Now that he's gone, I can't do that anymore." Now that my Khön ("grandfather/ grandchild" depending on context, in this case "grandfather", i.e. Horace) is no longer with us, the rights to doctoring fell to my Thau's older brother, not to my Thau, Waldo. My Thau's brother would be my "segi" (uncle), and I would be his "segi" (nephew). It is the same word, like "Khön," it is the "relationship" shared between that is signified not the "role" one plays for the other. One would not have two actors playing Hamlet at the same time on the same stage.

Thau did hint at the knowledge that this kind of "doctoring" uses flicker feathers and yellowhammer feathers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Thau has two fans made of flicker feathers and yellowhammer feathers, one beaded, for prayer and ceremony; the other, not beaded, used for doctoring. Though the functional boundaries are not very clear in my mind as to the difference between simple prayer and blessing and the fullness of doctoring, it appears that Thau has a very clear and functional distinction

between the two. It is not my intention to uncover this boundary, as it is clearly not my right to have any such knowledge about such doctoring. As of yet, Thau has not passed along his doctoring knowledge to anybody that I know. Thau and DaveRay have hinted and said that various people have asked Thau about doctoring knowledge and have even been so bold as to ask Thau to teach them doctoring. Thau has declined.

Thau has five children by his former wife who is Diné, two girls and three boys. The eldest is a daughter, then two boys, then another girl, and the youngest is a boy. At the time of data collection for this project, the youngest was 19 years old. Thau's daughters also live in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Thau's eldest son was slain through gang violence in Phoenix. Thau's next younger son is incarcerated for retributive gang violence following the death of the eldest son. Thau's youngest son is incarcerated also. One of Thau's sons has a baby girl from a now estranged former girl friend. And that family keeps a wide distance from Thau and his relatives. Thau's youngest daughter has four children. These four grandchildren are the focus of much of Thau's prayers and his thoughts, both happy and sad. Thau has even asked me to pray for his grandchildren, who would all be my nieces and nephews.

Thau has various other cousins who are mentioned in stories from time to time. I have yet only met one of Thau's biological brothers, Louis, and one of Thau's maternal cousins, Alex. Alex Turtle's father Nelson Turtle, a Cheyenne, is Erma's (Waldo's mother's) brother. So Thau and Alex are first cousins. They call each other "pavi". Gus Palmer uses Parker McKenzie's orthography for Kiowa. In McKenzie's orthography the term for "brother" is "fabi". Kiowa has no word for "cousin;" so, cousins are siblings

(Palmer 2003). To my ears the initial consonant of this word is not a hard "P" sound but a soft one. However it is not so soft as to be heard as an "F" to my ears. I have also heard this word "brother" used with very dear male friends, much like the common American custom of males calling their closest male friends "brother." Alex's mother is Diné. She too has been present at several of the tipi meetings that I have attended.

Alex is also a roadman, and I have sat in meeting with Alex leading. I like his meetings. Alex carries a "Cheyenne fireplace" that he received from his father who had received it from his father. Alex's father also offered his fireplace to my Thau Waldo, however, Thau tells me that he did not accept this fireplace because he intended to carry his own father's and grandfather's (Horace's and Waldo's respectively) fireplace, which is a "Kiowa" fireplace. There are differences between the ways these rituals are run, but overall, they are the similar structures of the all night tipi meeting with songs and prayers and the sacramental ingestion of the holy medicine, peyote. Moreover, having a fireplace can be a reflection of family ties biological/affective and religious/spiritual depending on the context. The persons involved constitute the context and construction of these family ties. We will return to a discussion of fireplaces later.

Non-Human Relatives

The most important relationship that Thau inherited from his family on both sides is the one he has with the medicine, peyote. I have heard Thau refer or address peyote as "grandfather," as "father," and as "Chief" especially in the context of the all night tipi meeting. But Thau has also used the so-called non-relative terms like sempi, "this

medicine", or as senkyahi, "this beautiful flower." But, as alluded in the previous chapter, the idea of "grandfather medicine" appears to be implicit when referring to or addressing peyote. Vine Deloria, Jr. states that, "Stories abound in which certain plants talk to people or appear in dreams to inform humans of their uses" (2006:125). In the case of the medicine peyote, it was the medicine that instigated the relationships between himself and human beings. Over many generations, across many different cultural groups, this peyote plant has been used as a medicine. Many modern NAC practitioners, including my Thau, emphasize the ongoing human/peyote relationship as that of "grandfather" or even as "chief." But what I perceive as continuous is the notion that human beings, as people and as individuals, can maintain and live in relationship with peyote.

Other relatives include the northern flicker woodpecker and the yellowhammer woodpecker, also mentioned in the previous chapter. I have heard Thau rarely refer to these birds as "pavi." This bird is important in my Thau's life. For Thau, these birds represent family medicine, knowledge and power that have been passed down to him from his father and paternal grandfather. Along with this transmission through the generations come the relationships that my Thau has with these feathers, these birds, with the spirit of these particular species. Thau's father, who is still remembered by Kiowas and other Native people alike, as a powerful Indian doctor was known as "Yellowhammer." He used yellowhammers especially in the peyote meetings and for doctoring people.

"The spirit of this bird helps us," Thau tells me. "If somebody is sick, then it's good to pray for them with these flicker and yellowhammer feathers." I had asked Thau

about which feathers would be good to pray for people, especially sick people. "You know how those woodpeckers have to peck and peck to get at their food, right? Well, it's like that. If there is a sickness inside a person, that bird, that spirit will keep on at it until he's done. That's why these feathers are good." My Thau did not instigate this relationship with the spirit, the power of these flicker woodpeckers and yellowhammer woodpeckers. I do not yet know the full story of how and when the relationship began with my Thau's ancestors and these particular birds. Deloria has pointed out that in many Native American stories about the lives of medicine people and about how certain medicines and treatments were learned by Native people that, "Often in dreams, a bird, animal, or stone would speak to them (human beings), offer its friendship and advice, or reveal the future, information they could not possibly derive from the most intense observation of the physical world" (ibid:xxv).

It may have been in a dream or a vision that one of my Thau's ancestors accepted an invitation from a yellowhammer and/or a flicker woodpecker to begin a relationship that would involve the learning of knowledge or the transmission of power. It is also possible that this original relationship could have begun before the advent of the peyote religion to nineteenth century Indian Territory. This medicine or knowledge relationship may have started in the Kiowa religious complex before reservation times and before the United States, as policy, attempted to wipe out indigenous languages, religious practices, and cultures when it was unable to completely wipe out indigenous people.

No one person in any Native American community held the sum total of all the religious, spiritual and medicinal knowledge of the people. If we take Deloria's

perspective about particular people within a community maintaining relationships with particular species/beings/spirits/powers/knowledges then no one person need hold all the knowledge just as one person does not hold all the possible relationships of a community or a people. Moreover, various powerful beings or spirits or species may create and maintain relationships with more than one person or even more than one medicine person in a particular community. This leaves open the possibility of Medicine Societies that occur in some Native American groups. Also, Deloria says, "Some animals, such as the bear, seem to appear in almost every tribal heritage as healers or providers of medicine. It should not be surprising, therefore, to find that the helpful animal spirit appears in many roles in the history of many tribes" (2006:xxiv). So, the bear, for example can make relationships with not only more than one person but with more that one tribe or group or people. This being said, I must point out that many other Native groups have used flicker and yellowhammer feathers. But my Thau is continuing these relationships in his life, his prayers, and with his human relatives.

Then there is Dauki, the Creator. My Thau calls Creator "Dauki". Thau tells me that Dauki is the Koigu word for Creator. In conversations with my Thau, it seems that he perceives that Dauki is not exactly equivalent to the Christian notion of God. Yet, we cannot say that Dauki is separate or other than what Christians may call God. Often Thau will refer to Dauki as "God" or "Creator God" and sometimes as "him." But one afternoon while sitting on the couch in the living room, Thau told me that, "well, we say 'him' but that's just to be easy. We don't know for sure what Creator is. Maybe a man or a woman or something, I don't know." So, when I listen to my Thau, I interpret that there

is still some mystery about the nature of Creator, Dauki, and creation. But I also interpret that there is some presumption for people to claim to know Dauki and who exactly Dauki is or is not. What seems clear in my Thau's conversations with me is that people can acknowledge Dauki, show gratitude to Dauki, ask help from Dauki, think about and even pray to Dauki. In short, people can have a relationship with Dauki.

Sometimes Thau may be praying and refer to Creator as "Father God" similar to the Christian utterance. Unlike Christians, however, occasionally Thau will say that earth or the Earth is our mother, or sometimes, he will say our grandmother. And in regard to this medicine, peyote, my Thau teaches me that one of the powers of this medicine is to help us pray to Dauki. I further interpret this to mean that this medicine helps and encourages us to maintain better relationships with Dauki and all of Dauki's creation, of which we are a part. The medicine, peyote, as a living being can share a relationship with human beings, and can help human beings improve their relationship with Creator. To me, this emphasizes the multiple interconnecting relationships that live in the Native American Church, its practitioners, and even by extension, other Native American people. And I also remember that my Thau has told me on several occasions that, "this medicine is not God. But he has God-given power to help us. We don't pray to that medicine. We pray to God with the help of that medicine."

CREATING RELATIONSHIPS

There are other relatives in Thau's life that are not "blood" relatives. I myself am one of them. To him, I am a son. His eldest daughter and myself are near the same age. It

seems that for Thau, and for many other Native American people that I have met in my life, that it is important to establish good relationships with people. Beyond this, it is also difficult for significant relationships to exist with other people outside of the context of kinship and relationships structures that are based upon kinship. Without kinship, or rather, without a relationship that is at least loosely based upon a "real" relationship, in other words a relationship based upon, family by blood or marriage, it is difficult to know how to act and behave with somebody. If someone is not related by marriage or by genetic family relationships, (and in some Native American cultures, blood ties include the clan) then many times, a close friend will be brought into the family through using family relationship terms, thereby establishing a more "real" relationship between people; a relationship that can follow patterns not only familiar within Native Americans, in this case Kiowa and Cheyenne models, but also can invoke expectations and responsibilities of reciprocity according to the particular relationship established.

With Non-Native Americans

Of all of my Thau's relatives that I have met, one in particular stands out among them all; my segi "mobein." Mobein is a Kiowa word that my Thau tells me can mean "crazy" or "stupid." Mobein is the nickname that Thau and Thau's other adopted son use to refer to David. Uncle David is a "white guy" from Chicago, who was raised Roman Catholic. Uncle David comes from an upper middle class, relatively wealthy family, according to my "pavi" and friend DaveRay. David went to college and earned a BFA. He worked for a time using his art degree, rather unsuccessfully, yet he turned his back

on the money that his family offered him. I do not know fully my Uncle David's story. Only small bits and pieces have filtered to me through Thau and my buddy DaveRay and a few from Uncle David himself. As David lives in southern Colorado, I do not see him very often. On the few occasions that I have seen him, we have been sitting up in tipi, praying.

Uncle David started searching for himself after years of trying various religions different sects of Christianity, and maybe some Buddhist and some New Age practices. He held a few jobs that did not work out well. When working in construction, Segi David injured his lower back; thus beginning a deserved workman's compensation suit that lasted several years. The medical bills bankrupted my Thau's brother. And for a time, at Uncle David's lowest point, he even spent a few months on the street. Uncle David met Waldo's younger brother Louis while on the street. They both spent time with each other, watched out for each other. Something that people who live on the street may need to do. Segi Louis brought David to Waldo one day and said, "Here's your new brother." My Thau replied, "Shit, he's not my brother." Over time though, they became friends; shared experiences, shared stories with each other. They became friends, and then brothers.

Somehow they made a friendship. I do not know if David had begun participating in NAC before meeting Thau, or if he started going to meeting as a result of meeting my Thau or Thau's younger brother. But when I met David, he was present at a tipi meeting that my Thau was leading somewhere on the Navajo reservation for some Navajo NAC relatives. David had been participating in NAC meetings long enough by this time to sing songs rather well when the drum came around to him. And at this meeting, the first time I

met Uncle David, my Thau already had been calling him “pavi” for some time. And David called my Thau “pavi” also. My buddy DaveRay called David “uncle” or “my dad’s bro” or even the proper Kiowa term “segi”. At that time I just thought, “who the hell is this white dude, and what the hell is he doing here?” I would quickly drop the bad attitude due to observing the reality and sincerity of Waldo and David’s relationship.

“Mobein” can mean “stupid” or “crazy”, but at that first meeting, I did not get the impression that my Thau and my buddy meant it in a completely negative way. The tone in which they used the name seemed to be one of affection, camaraderie, and humor. Also, I did not hear or see Mobein protest his appellation. On the other hand, these days he is known as “Kiowa Dave.” So, I suppose maybe that at some point he protested. But one time I spent a little time with Uncle David, after a meeting that was run by my Thau’s pavi, my segi Alex, occasionally I heard Thau, or Segi Alex or Pavi DaveRay call Kiowa Dave, “Mobein.” I think that Segi David is okay with “Mobein,” but only from a few certain people.

What is said in tipi meeting carries great significance. “If you say something in there (in tipi meeting) you have to live it out here. Be careful what you say in there,” Thau tells me. Besides being a ritual, a ceremony, a holy time and place, a gathering of like-minded (or like-hearted) people for the purpose of prayer and healing, “sempi” is also mutual participation with the holy medicine and with Creator. Thau has told me on several occasions that, “if you say something in sempi (in tipi meeting) you have to mean it.” And Thau has told me that, “if you make relatives in there, you have to act like it out here too.” It was at that first meeting on the Navajo reservation when I met David that I

first heard my Thau called David “pavi” in front of all these other Navajo people, in front of the Grandpa Fire, this Holy Medicine and Creator. It certainly was not the first time they called each other “pavi”. But knowing at that time, even partially, the significance of tipi meeting, I took my Thau’s words to heart. This “crazy white guy” was my Thau’s brother.

Over the months, Thau will let me know how Segi David is doing. Occasionally Thau will go up to Colorado to visit with David. Sometimes I hear stories about the fun times that Segi David and Thau have shared, the money they’ve squandered, the drugs and alcohol they’ve consumed, the women they’ve flirted with successfully or unsuccessfully, and the hunting, fishing, camping, or road trips that they have shared. Road trips are necessary to get to peyote meetings that are being sponsored by far away relatives.

I have met one other important non-Native relative of my Thau. I do not even know his proper name, but he is known as Ben Eagle. Ben is a “white man” of Italian descent, who got involved in the NAC many years ago. Ben Eagle received his fireplace from Ralph Turtle who received it from his father, John Turtle. John Turtle was my Thau’s grandfather on the Cheyenne side; hence Ben carries a Cheyenne fireplace. Ben kept going to meetings and learning songs, learning how to pray, learning about this medicine. One day, my Thau wanted to put up a meeting for his newborn, firstborn daughter, to bless her. Thau approached Ben Eagle to help with this meeting. Ben was Fire Chief, he poked fire, and Ralph Turtle, my Thau’s uncle, ran the meeting. Thau told me about the first meeting that Ben Eagle ran. Ben had not run meeting before. It was his

first meeting as roadman. Ben's wife had cancer, so Ben wanted to run a meeting for her healing. According to my Thau, it was Ben's intention to run meeting just this one time, because he was very concerned for his wife.

It was a very good meeting, I am told. She recovered. Ben's Cheyenne mentors and relatives by Indian adoption continued to encourage Ben to run meetings on account of Ben's true sincerity of devotion as evidenced in the healing of his first patient. Years ago, not too long after Ben's first meeting, my Khön, Thau's dad, asked Ben to run a meeting for himself, my Khön. This was a very important thing. Thau always says that to be asked to pray for someone is a great honor. Moreover, this great Kiowa medicine man, doctor, and roadman, Yellowhammer, my Khön, asked Ben to pray for him. So, Ben ran meeting for my Khön. That was also a good meeting, my Thau tells me. Thau continues, in his story that one time Ben told my Thau how much he loves and cares about Thau's family on both sides, the Kiowa and the Cheyenne. The Cheyenne side gave their teachings and knowledge to Ben. And Khön gave Ben his "start" as a roadman. After people saw that someone as powerful as my Khön asked Ben to run a meeting for him, people asked Ben to run meetings for them. So, Ben holds my Khön in high esteem too. And my Khön took Ben as his pavi. My Thau calls Ben Eagle "segi."

With this in mind Thau asked his segi, Ben, to help with the meeting for Thau's firstborn daughter. Ben poked fire. She, to this day, has had a very blessed life, in Thau's opinion. She is married with children. She lives with her husband and her mother in her own house. She speaks Navajo and can cook some traditional Navajo food. When Thau's former wife was diagnosed with cancer for the second time in her life, when she came

down to Tucson from Phoenix to take a two-week course of chemotherapy at University Medical Center, Thau asked Ben to run a meeting so that she could recover and have a good life. Ben agreed.

I met Ben for the first time at that meeting that Waldo put up for his former wife. Mary, not her real name, was battling cancer for the second time in the oncology ward of University Medical Center in Tucson. I had been visiting Mary in the hospital regularly during her stay there for chemotherapy. All Mary's hair fell out, and her skin turned a very dark orange/brown. I was very concerned for Mary. Because I cared about her, I prayed for her. I also attended the meeting that Waldo put up for her. Thau chose Ben to run the meeting because Ben had already prayed for his own wife when she was suffering from cancer. She recovered.

Ben ran a very good meeting that night. Everybody felt that the meeting went well, and that their prayers were heard. I was sitting very near to Thau. In the circle the roadman was Ben. To the roadman's left (clockwise) was a young man, a relative of Thau's, then myself, then Thau's cousin Alex Turtle, whom I have mentioned before, then Thau, then another of Thau's Cheyenne cousins. All through the night Thau and his cousins made fun and cracked jokes. Even I made jokes with them and laughed at the jokes that I understood. Of course, we were all very serious at the moments in the ritual that require that. Ben's wife carried water for him. She is also Euro American. Mary did get better; she recovered. Then she divorced Thau. Maybe that was a part of her recovery?

With Native Americans

Though Thau and his current wife are not officially married, they have been together long enough that they might be considered "married." Thau sometimes refers to her as "my woman" or as my "mahyi." Thau has taken her relatives for his. He calls her nieces, his nieces. He calls her brother, brother. And he calls her father, "dad" or "grandpa" if Thau is talking to his nieces, because they are grandchildren to their grandpa. In this case we clearly see the practice of using kinship terms for relatives-in-law. Beyond this I would point out that Thau prays for his wife's family and refers to them according to the proper kinship terms in his prayers. As serious as Thau takes his prayers, it is clear to me that this kinship is not just an affectation but reflective of his reality.

Then there is my friend DaveRay. I call him this because when I met him, as a student at the University of Arizona, he was David. However, at around that time, he was recovering from a horrible bout of identity theft. Somehow, someone took his name and social security number. After a while, my friend's name and social security number were wanted in three states. Needless to say, this caused my innocent, relatively law-abiding, community-volunteer working friend some inconvenience, frustration, and failed commercial credit. During this time, David continued to talk about his school, his sister, his mom, and his dad. "You'd like my dad. He's a real trip." So, one summer day, "Hey, my dad is running a meeting out in Rough Rock." "Is that near Many Farms; Rough Rock you mean" I asked. "Yeah, you wanna go? My dad's a real roadman, real powerful. He's got good stories too." "Sure, I'll go," was my reply. Already, my friend was telling me

about his dad, how cool he was, about some of the adventures they had seen, about all the stories he likes to tell. My friend talked about his other relatives, his uncles, and his grandpa, who was also a roadman and a powerful Indian doctor.

I was confused about parts of my friend's story, every now and then. He told me that he was Yoeme, Huichol, Kiowa and Cheyenne. "Four tribes is a lot to keep up with" I joked with him. He replied, "Yeah!" In an attempt to keep a long story short, I will cut to the quick. My friend by birth is Yoeme from his father and Huichol from his mother. When my friend was still very young, his father died as a victim of medical malpractice, which may have been racially motivated. At some point, my friend met Waldo. They became close somehow and took each other as relatives. The relationship that they built was that of father and son. They took each other that way.

When my friend was clearing things up with the IRS, the State of Arizona, Pima County, the BIA, and with credit agencies, he needed to have a new social security number and a new name. He chose Raymond. Also, since my friend and Waldo had mutually adopted one another, David took his Thau's last name, Daukei. So, lots of people call my buddy Raymond. And legally, he is Raymond. I could never really get in the habit of calling him "Raymond" so, I still call him "Dave" or "David", but seldom do people know about whom I speak. For fun, I call him "DaveRay." Only my mother, my sister and myself know him as "DaveRay". And only his mother, his sister and myself, still call him "David" or "Dave." My Thau and my friend were already father and son when I met them. Neither of them has ever told me the story of how they met or how they

took each other as relatives. But as far as I can tell, it all has to do with this medicine, and with this Native American Church.

Over the past year or so, all the peyote meetings that I have had contact with at Thau's wife's house, where most of my fieldwork has taken place, each meeting has included the participation of Thau's "bros" Joe Yazzie and Bernie Begay. (I am using pseudonyms for these relatives). Thau calls both of these men "my bro/s" or "my brother/s." I have heard Thau call either Joe or Bernie "brother" both inside and outside of the tipi meeting. I have not yet heard their stories, how they became friends with my Thau. Joe and Bernie are both Diné. Both have wives and children who attend the meetings according to their convenience, desire and schedules. Joe is also a roadman. He carries a Cheyenne Fireplace, given to him by Ralph Turtle, my Thau's segi. In fact, I believe that Joe Yazzie and Alex Turtle carry the same fireplace that comes down from John Turtle. Beyond this, Alex's mother is also Diné. So, Alex and Joe are related in the Diné way by clan or by blood. I am not completely sure at the moment. My Thau claims that his thau, my Khön, did not give out his fireplace to very many people over the years, even though many people requested it. My Thau knows any person that carries Khön's fireplace and would consider that person a relative.

Joe is a relative in several ways. First and most importantly, he and my Thau have been friends for many years, and both have respect and affection for one another. They are also related through their ritual participation in Native American Church. Even during a meeting, they will call each other "brother" in front of this medicine, this holy fire, and in front of other family members and relatives who are witness to their respective

declarations. They are also relatives through the "fireplace" that Joe carries. Though my Thau, when he is running a meeting, uses his fireplace, the one he inherited from his father, a Kiowa fireplace, my Thau's Cheyenne relatives use their Cheyenne fireplace. Joe was given his fireplace, his right to perform this ritual as he learned it from Thau's Cheyenne relatives, by Thau's maternal uncles and grandpa. Beyond this is the sentiment of relationship that many Native American people share with one another, that is, a feeling of connection with other indigenous people of North America and other people who are "American Indian."

Bernie Begay is also committed to Native American Church. Like Joe Yazzie, Bernie also lives in the greater metropolitan Phoenix area. Each meeting at my Thau's home that I have attended this past year and a half; Joe has been "fire chief." The fire chief as mentioned in the previous chapter is responsible for bringing wood into the tipi and feeding the wood to the fire. He also watches the door, keeping a buffer between the ritual participants and the outside world. Thau has told me once or twice that the fire chief is the second of the roadman. As the Roadman has primary responsibility for the patient and the medicine, it can be said, depending on the particular ceremony, that the fire chief is responsible for every other participant in the meeting that is not the patient. This can be interpreted as a form of respect for the patient/medicine/roadman dynamic. If the fire chief takes over the care of the congregants, then the roadman can focus his energy and attention on the needs of the patient and taking care of the holy medicine.

Bernie always appears very happy to tend the fire and to sweep during the meeting, another of the fire man's duties. To my knowledge, at the time of writing this

chapter, he has not yet run a meeting. But as with many long time NAC male participants, the thought of one day leading a meeting is not uncommon. Depending on the circumstances, Bernie is also glad to help set up the tipi for a meeting, especially if Joe or my Thau is running the meeting. Thau has told me that because Joe and Bernie are so often willing to help set up and take down the tipi, bring firewood or even help Thau run a meeting, that he calls them brothers. Friends that are just buddies, just people that you might hang out with or drink with may not be willing to actually help you in a time of need. Since Joe and Bernie help out, they retain Thau's respect.

This is not to say that Joe and Bernie are pious peyote saints. They are just regular "joes," so to speak. They have their jobs, their families, and their own outlook on the importance and the power of the medicine, and of these medicine ways of the Native American Church. And they may not always agree with Thau's ideas of beliefs.

I do not wish to over idealize the relationships between my Thau and his NAC brothers, Joe and Bernie. If this particular relationship was "perfectly ideal" then, it may be assumed that they would accept their brother's (my Thau's) perspective upon their brother's own relationships. This has not always been the case. The greatest tension over this issue occurred over the period of six to eight weeks and included two peyote meetings on the property. During this period of time, both Joe and Bernie made odd, off-handed remarks in my general direction. These remarks made me feel a bit uncomfortable. Moreover, these particular meetings, I did not feel compelled to participate for what ever reasons, one of which was a weekend when I came down with the flu. After one of the meetings, with a very caustic tone, Bernie asked me, "Did you

rest well?" I mentioned my discomfort to my Pavi DaveRay, Thau's other previously adopted son. DaveRay's response was, that Bernie and Joe had been saying bad things about me behind my back for several weeks now. I, for one, was shocked.

Beyond this, DaveRay informed me that they made disparaging remarks about my presence in the tipi and my not being a real "Indian." He also told me that they believed that Thau should not teach me anything about peyote as peyote belongs to the "Indians" and not to someone like me of "Aztec" descent, a.k.a. Chicano or Mexican-American, or Tejano. And since I am not a "masculine" male, they believed that I should be treated like a daughter, and that my place is with the women in the home and in the kitchen during meetings, not with the men. This perplexed me as they themselves have heard Waldo refer to me as "son" or "sonny boy" or even as "bo," the Kiowa word for "son," which are all markers of masculine gender and close family ties. And this perplexed me as I have personally sat up in meeting with his wife and daughters.

At a very important meeting, one where Thau wanted us to pray for him so that he could put away beer and alcohol for his physical and spiritual health, Thau again publicly called me "son" in front of this holy medicine and this holy grandfather fire. Joe was running this meeting, as Thau was the patient. Bernie was poking fire. As Thau was the patient, he can express his pain, his concerns, his hopes, and his intentions for the meeting. Many times, a patient, if they are able, will "confess" their shortcomings, their wrongs. They may even ask for forgiveness from Creator and from their family and relatives present at the meeting. At this meeting, during one of the roadman's expositions, Joe acknowledged Thau's relatives and friends who came to pray for him. When Joe

faced me, he addressed Thau, not me, and referred to me "your nephew" when he spoke to Thau. I must admit; this disturbed me. From my point of view, Joe had simultaneously insulted Thau and myself. Joe insulted me by not recognizing the shared relationship between Thau and me, specifically that of thau/bo, (father/son). And he insulted Thau by not recognizing the proper family relationship in a healing meeting specifically for Thau. Had Joe called me "nephew" in regards to himself, there would have been no insult, as this would be fairly accurate, as Joe is my Thau's pavi. Unfortunately, this was not the case. I did not confront Joe about this *faux pas,* as it would not have been proper. However, several weeks later, Joe went out of his way to exchange greetings with me. It seems that perhaps, he was no longer ignoring me. Perhaps, Thau pointed out to him that I was his "sonny boy" not his "nephew." Several weeks later, DaveRay told me, "Yeah, Thau didn't like that. He was kinda pissed about that." So, apparently, Thau noticed the slip. He too was not pleased.

Over time I believe these breaches healed. Rather recently in this story, Bernie requested my Thau's fireplace. Thau agreed to Bernie's request. Very recently Bernie has now run a couple of tipi meetings. My Thau has attended to offer advice or procedural guidance in the ceremony. Most people will still need a little assistance and guidance from a more experienced roadman while the novice roadman is still refining his knowledge and practice of running a meeting. I have not been able to sit in on a meeting that Bernie has led. But the ties that bind my Thau to his brother Bernie are now deeper, since Bernie carries my Thau's "Kiowa fireplace."

In my experiences with NAC practitioners, it is good to have knowledge about fireplaces. There is no formal seminary or institution of higher education that trains roadmen, or fire chiefs or water women. People learn these ways through personal instruction and frequent attendance, observation, and ritual participation. As such, it appears to me, that understanding how and where a person learned the ways of the Native American Church are very important ideas to practitioners. After listening to my Thau speak about NAC teachings and about how people learn these ways, I became attuned to these ideas. "Carrying a fireplace" reflects multiple meanings that include ritual knowledge, training, ritual style (i.e. Kiowa versus Cheyenne), and relationships. As someone does not become a roadman by attending Union Theological Seminary or Harvard Divinity School, to know where one's fireplace comes from, and how one came to carry that particular fireplace, reflects a type of credential as it were. As this knowledge is passed on personally, it must be transmitted through lines of intimate relationships and contacts.

In my Thau's case, he received his fireplace from his father, who received it from his father. In the cases of Ben Eagle, Joe Yazzie, and Bernie Begay, they did not receive their fireplace from their fathers or from blood relatives. Instead, they received their fireplaces from roadmen after they had established deep relationships with their respective NAC communities and roadmen. This is not to say that all of a roadman's knowledge comes from just one mentoring roadman alone. Teaching and learning can occur in multiple contexts with multiple practitioners. But if a roadman is asked, "what kind of fireplace do you carry?" Or if he is asked, "who gave you your fireplace?" Then

he can say something like, “I carry a Kiowa fireplace.” Or he may respond, “My fireplace comes from my grandpa,” or even, “Ralph Turtle gave me his fireplace.” There is a relationship explicitly referenced, to a people (i.e. Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne), or to a specific roadman of some reputation. It is another way of understanding who a person is in their community and in relationship to a person’s religious teachings and their teacher’s relationships to their communities. It is another way of understanding who a person is, mediated through a communal context.

Making “Relatives” a “Problem”

I do not wish to paint an overly rosy picture of the life and lives I have seen around my Thau and my NAC relatives. Nor do I want to give a picture of idyllic quality about Native American reservation life and Native American families. Beatrice Medicine rightly points out in some of her earlier work, that there is no such thing as the American Indian family, as this category would erase so much cultural diversity (2001:254-265), as there is far too much cultural diversity between Native American groups and communities, and because there is such a great variety of diversity even within a Native American group due to various degrees of acculturation, of out migration from reservations, and differences in perception of proper family roles due to generational differences (2001:239-260). Medicine calls for more research but about tribal specific family patterns and by looking at specific families and their varying dynamics and not a monolithic “Indian family.” Moreover, the monolithic “family” used in many studies of

the "American Indian family" is the middle-class, Euro-American, nuclear family, which, Medicine points out is a cultural imposition (2001:255).

In one of Medicine's articles, based upon field research in the late 1950's and early 1960's Medicine notes that younger generations of Dakota people were not using specific Dakota kinship terminology, in favor of English words like "aunt" and "uncle," also without distinction for maternal or paternal "aunt" or "uncle" (2001:251). For Medicine this signals a change in how Dakota youth are relating to other Dakota family members. "Aunt" and "Uncle" were becoming at that time "generalizing" kinships terms that do not distinguish between maternal and paternal kin, as was part of traditional Dakota kinship terms. At that time, Medicine perceived a bleak future for Dakota kinship and family structure. But Medicine also observed that these changing pattern reflected acculturation and changing economic patterns on Dakota reservations due to lack of economic, educational, and spiritual opportunities. After the 1950's more and more Native Americans began to relocate and to live in large urban areas. This certainly would offer more opportunities for individuals to assimilate into mainstream American culture, albeit as second-class citizens.

To the extent that Native American individuals and small family units assimilate into mainstream culture, to the extent that such dislocated peoples continue to return to home communities to visit family, participate in ceremony or ritual, is a matter for research at the level of individuals and their small immediate families. In the case of my Thau, he left his home communities of Kiowa peoples and Cheyenne peoples in Oklahoma to reside with his father for a time while his father was living on the Navajo

Nation. Later, my Thau would return to Oklahoma for a brief time, later settling in Phoenix, Arizona. What I wish to point out here, is that even though my Thau was separated geographically from his Oklahoma relatives and communities, he continued and continues to use Kiowa kinship terms when speaking to and speaking about his relatives and in creating new kinship relationships. My Thau also uses near English approximations of Kiowa kinship terms in conversation, in storytelling, and in tipi. I think that I can say that his new kinship relationships, at some level, continue to be founded upon his perspectives of kinship as they were practiced in his youth by Kiowa people and by Cheyenne people in Oklahoma. I also mention my Thau's use of Kiowa kinship terms as another example of celebrating cultural survival. Not only does my Thau use these terms, but his new relatives, such as DaveRay, Beverly, and myself also use Kiowa kinships terms in communicating with Thau and telling stories. At times even DaveRay and myself use these Kiowa kinship terms in reference to our other relatives in order to understand and communicate how they are related to our Thau and consequently to ourselves. Due to my geographic and temporal limitations I am not conducting fieldwork in Oklahoma among a predominantly Kiowa community. So, I cannot comment upon the prevalence of use of Kiowa kinship terms. But it is worth a note or two that Kiowa kinship terms are used and functioning around my Thau and his relatives.

I have thought about why my Thau has made relatives in life in general and also in the Native American Church. These are some of my reflections based upon my time with him and Beverly, and DaveRay. Thau lost one of his sons. And his other sons are incarcerated. Sadly, one of them specifically requested of Thau and his other immediate

family and friends not to write to him in the penitentiary. My Thau tells me this is because the son feels that hearing from relatives would just make him hurt more for his life outside of the prison. My Thau wishes in some way to have his sons near him. And as making relatives and calling them sons, as he does with DaveRay and myself, helps Thau to feel connected and interconnected. I do not suggest that we replace the sons; we cannot do that. But acknowledging each other in a parent/child or father/son relationship is still a good thing for Thau. Also, my Thau was raised in a cultural context where family, relatives and extended relatives were many and contact with them was frequent. I think my Thau is used to having many relatives and therefore, desires to have many relatives around him. He always tells me that he is always happy for me to visit him and spend time with him, and that otherwise, he gets lonely. In this regard, having, and making relatives becomes the context through which a person lives. To have no relatives, to be truly orphaned, is to be impoverished and bereft to the darkest of depths. And Thau also needs someone to whom he can leave his knowledge. His youngest biological son was and in many ways still is my Thau's first choice to receive this knowledge and so carry it on into the future. DaveRay and I both learn quite a bit from our Thau. But at this point in our respective lives, neither of us can take on the mantle as it were of our Thau's ritual knowledge and subsequent social responsibilities.

Kiowa people as well as other Native groups used to take captives from other communities, peoples, and settlements. In warfare some captives were killed, others were incorporated into the group. Specific families adopted captives were adopted in order to augment the family or to replace a family member. Perhaps Native people and maybe

some Kiowa people continue to adopt but without the need for warfare or capture. Certainly these are also just reflections in the context of our little group of relatives. Another limitation in my stories is that I have not been able to make an extensive study of "fictive kinship" among a large community of mostly Kiowa people. What I have noticed, is that Native people have the opportunity to create so-called "fictive kinship" and create new "kin" for many reasons. And it certainly would be a very fruitful future research project to study new and contemporary "fictive kin" patterns among urban Native American people. But one of the important contexts, one of the spaces for Native American people to interact and have the opportunity to meet and make new relatives is the contemporary Native American Church.

TELLING STORIES

Authors like Gus Palmer, Jr., Vine Deloria, Jr., Greg Sarris, and Keith Basso, among many others, point out how important story telling is among Native American peoples. And important authors like N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Silko, Joy Harjo, and others, tell stories reflecting their own Native communities, people and visions of their respective worlds. Telling stories may be used for many different social purposes depending on who tells the stories, who listens, what the situation is, the purpose, even the kind of story. Basso (1996) focuses on how stories are used by Western Apaches to instruct people on such things as proper, expected behavior, to instruct people on the dangers of improper behavior, to pass along important information and cultural mores. Gus Palmer, Jr. focuses on how telling stories can reflect the bonds of kinship, how story

telling creates the ties that bind. Palmer says, "To be sure, contemporary Kiowa storytelling seems to occur when small, intimate groups of relatives and close fiends come together" (2003: xxiii). Palmer also reflects upon the intimacy of connection and relationships that encourage story telling, and how intimacy and interconnection, relatedness, is actually augmented, expanded, and deepened through telling stories. Consider the following from Palmer:

> … Kiowas tell stories among people who know each other, because it is easier for a storyteller to talk and to frame a story with people he or she knows. Second, Kiowas reinforce their relationships with other Kiowas when they tell stories. This reinforcement is especially apparent among the small groups of family members and close friends (ibid).

Sharing stories is sharing of one's self, especially if the stories are about personal experiences, desires, attitudes and dreams. This sharing can also reinforce close ties by recalling to memory shared experiences of the tellers and listeners or by bringing to memory the experiences of relatives who have told stories to the teller who in turn shares them with other listeners who may be related to the original teller or the current re-teller. In other words, family members share stories with each other. Something that happened to me that I tell one family member, like my dad for example, may turn into a story that my dad tells about me to other family members, especially if I am present and participating. According to Palmer, this happens because, "Many of the stories concern family members, and most tend to be informative and entertaining. Joking and teasing are chief features in Kiowa storytelling" (ibid).

Stories Being Told, Relationships Being Shared

Thau is an excellent storyteller. He has had many years of practice telling stories about himself, his life and his experiences. Thau likes to entertain as much as he likes to be entertained, perhaps more. The way Thau has told me stories does not appear to have changed much to me between the time I knew him before this project and during the project. To my ears it seems that what has changed in Thau's stories is how much of himself he reveals in the stories. This it seems has nothing to do with the ethnographic project, as much as it has to do with the deepening learning and sharing that we have with each other. The storytelling has not been one sided. Though Thau speaks most on the recorded interviews, he has not been the only one telling stories. He listens to my stories too.

As Palmer explains, many stories in Kiowa sociality take place within normal conversation, rather that they comprise much of normal interactive conversation. It is as if conversation and human interaction exist in order to provide a vehicle for story telling. If people did not have stories to tell, our verbal interactions would consist of "hello" and "goodbye." There would not be much else to say. But Palmer also observes that, "Although it is not easy to delineate storytelling or categorize Kiowa storytellers, it is even more difficult to explain how storytelling happens" (Palmer 2003: xxiii). It seems that with Thau, storytelling happens perpetually, or rather that the potential for storytelling to emerge is never absent within the familiar context of spending time with each other.

Some of the story sharing has occurred over the kitchen table, some in front of the television; it does not matter if the television is on or off. Sometimes, stories happened while roasting meat or chilies on the little fire pit grill that sometimes sits on the back porch of the house, or under the ramada in the yard. Some stories have been told between just Thau and myself. Some other stories loudly proclaimed in front of the whole little family. Some, just between us "guys," Thau, DaveRay and me. Some stories were stopped in mid-breath as Thau remembered that his mahyi or his niece was within earshot.

In some ways, I can see how some of the context of a few of the recorded stories is a bit artificial. In other words, sometimes, the tape recorder got turned on because Thau wanted to talk into the machine and "say something." Or Thau would say, "hey sonny boy, turn that thing on. I got something to say." Even if a particular session of storytelling began with the desire to be "ethnographically" interviewed, the rhythms, the patterns and even themes of Thau's "normal" conversation and storytelling seemed to persist.

Something that both Vine Deloria and Gus Palmer have written about concerning "Indian" storytelling is how stories may change in their details depending upon the context in which the story is given. The story may become progressively more embellished upon subsequent tellings. Also, if multiple characters in a particular "personal experience" story are present at a (re)telling of a story, multiple storytellers may embellish or revise the details in order to make the story more compelling or more humorous or both.

Several years ago, DaveRay told Thau, "hey, Thau, tell him when Jesus went to tipi meeting." Thau responded with a chuckle, and said:

> Oh yeah, that's a good one. My dad ran lots of meetings all over the place. One time my dad was driving to a meeting with a couple of my relatives. And he picked up a hitchhiker. He was a white guy dressed in a robe, with long hair and a beard. So, he kind of looked like Maheo (Cheyenne name used for Jesus). They got to the meeting late so when they asked the door man if there was room for more. The fire chief sees my dad, and he sees Jesus. He's all surprised. The fire chief goes back in and asked the roadman if a few more could come into the tipi. The roadman says, ok. The fire chief tells the roadman, yeah but you won't believe who's here. Well, who is it. The fire chief says, "it's Maheo!" One of the guys in there says, "wait, wait, give me five minutes. I gotta get right first." And everybody laughs. (Circa July 2002)

We were all laughing very hard at this one. One of the reasons why this story is so funny is the reaction by the NAC member to not allow "Jesus" into the meeting until the member was "ready" to be in the presence of Jesus. In his case, he had to "get right" with Jesus, meaning that he had to confess his sins and ask God for forgiveness so that he could sit in the presence of a being of the like of Jesus. It is also funny from the perspective that an NAC practitioner should be mindful of his sins and willing to confess them and atone for them in some way. Moreover, being in the presence of the holy medicine, peyote is as similarly powerful as being in the presence of Jesus. So, if this person had not mentally and emotionally prepared himself to be in the presence of

peyote, then he surely needed to "get himself right" to be in the presence of peyote and Maheo. Moreover, there is humor in the situation of an NAC member, believing that Jesus has truly come to the meeting just because some Caucasian hippy hitchhiker happened to be picked up by another roadman on his way to a meeting. A brief word about "Maheo"; Fr. Peter Powell states that Maheo is the "All Father" of the Cheyenne. He also states that Maheo could mean that which is mysterious and sacred generally (Powell 1969). Many contemporary Cheyenne use the word Maheo as the Cheyenne name for Jesus of Nazareth.

One lazy afternoon, again sitting around the dinner table in the kitchen, the "Jesus at Tipi Meeting" story miraculously re-appeared. This time, the story "grew" a few more details and embellishments, since the first time that I had heard the story. This time the mood was a bit more festive and a lot less sober, at least on the part of the principal storyteller, Thau. Thau, DaveRay and I were just talking, laughing and joking, and enjoying the day. This time, the tape recorder picked up this story along with the usual ramblings of family enjoying the company of one another. In this short simple transcription we have our usual interlocutors, Thau, (T), Beverly (B), DaveRay (D), and myself (C). In the transcription, speakers will alternate, but in the case that a speaker interrupts with an aside comment or humorous comment, I will mark the interruption in brackets showing the particular interlocutor [C: like this] for example. I use a majuscule L in parenthesis "(L)" for "laughter by all". I use a miniscule l "(l)" in parenthesis to denote laughter or chuckling by the speaker or one other interlocutor but not all speakers

together. I use text in braces {like this} to explain to the reader information and/or context that the reader should know, but could not know since the reader was not present.

C: My favorite story is when Khön picked up Jesus and took him to a peyote meeting. That's my story; I don't have that on tape. Last time Thau told me that story was like in, 2002, that was a long time ago.

T: that was a true story though.

B: what happened?

….

(very short time lapse, inaudible speaking)

….

T: (belch) I still got it in me, [C: well take it out, you might feel better] (L) 24/7 nasty lite {a cheap beer labeled "Natural Lite"}.
It dwells in me, it grows. … you know what? I've been thinking a lot this last, I think. If Beverly didn't buy that half a gallon for me, I'd still be jacked up, I wouldn't know what I know now. I'd be a lot worse, really I would, [C: because you wouldn't have gone in? {to the hospital}] Yeah, this is like a wake up call.

B: Well Raymond {a.k.a. David, Dave, DaveRay} was going to pick you up, right, Raymond?

T: Well, see if I was going to go down there {to Tucson} with Raymond, it would have got worse. [C: yeah you probably would have gone to a bar and gotten a whole gallon {of vodka}] [B: that's why I bought that half-gallon because, it was so much stuff] [D: he was getting violent, that's why I was going to grab his ass] I would have gone crazy in Tucson, because I would have said, take me to the Kontiki {a bar/lounge on East Broadway}. (L) [C: that's horrible] that's where all the crack whores are at (L).

B: "Just don't let them touch my peyote box" {Beverly quoting and mocking Thau} (L)

T: hey now. … they start grabbing my …..

…. Use it on me.

I always do crazy stuff when I'm drunk (l).

….. {short time lapse}

D: … when you and Khön picked up Jesus? [C: Maheo]

T: Yeah. He was just a hitchhiker, you know. [D: walking through the country, though] yeah, he had a quest like some kind of Christianity quest. [C: was this in

Oklahoma?] Yeah, and he was walking from New York to California, and he only had a little bag, that he carried with water and maybe a biscuit or something in there.

And he had a robe on like them monks and everything. He had a robe and a hood and that rope that ties around. He had sandals and a long beard, and he had long hair. He looked like Jesus, and that was his whole deal. So, I guess that he was walking outside of Kingfisher. I guess my dad, seen him. He was hitchhiking you know. Well he didn't go like this {Thau hold up his thumb}, but my dad seen he was walking. So, he pulled over because he'd seen that it was getting evening time, and he said, "Hey, My Friend, need a ride?" And he goes, "Yeah, sure where you going?" He {Khön} said, "I'm going to church." And he goes, "How far is that?" And he goes, "Oh about 20 miles." {hitchhiker who looks like Jesus} "Ok, yeah I'll take a lift."

So they started talking. Next thing you know, he goes, "Yeah I wanna go to your church." He {Khön} goes, "Well I don't know if you can handle it. You gotta sit up all night, and you gotta eat this peyote, and it tastes, you know, rank and everything." (L). So that guy says, "Yeah I'll go," you know.

So, man I guess they got over there. So, when they got over there, this was at Jonny Black's you know, this Arapaho guy. And this man was running a meeting,

and they got there late, and so, they said, “Jonny.” He says, “What?” Got two more of us to come in, but you’ll never believe who’s here. He {J. Black} said, “Who’s that?” He {presumably the fire chief} says, “Your son-in-law.” See, that’s who my mom’s aunt was, that’s who he was married to that Jonny Black, so they would call my dad, ‘son-in-law’. That’s how, Indian way, you know. “So, you’ll never believe who’s here.” “Who is it?” “It’s Maheo {Cheyenne name used sometimes for Jesus of Nazareth} and the Devil {My Khön}. (L) He {J. Black} said, “What?!” “Yeah it is.”

Somebody said, “Open that door, and let me see who’s standing there.” And they opened that door, and damn, they opened that flap you know. And they, and when that man looked out you know, Jonny Black, he seen that guy who looked like Jesus, “Ah, give me five minutes” (L). Boy he started confessing. (L)

Then they {Khön and Maheo} came in, and man they {the meeting participants} looked behind him {Maheo} and they said, “Damn it’s the devil!” (L) My dad. So, when they came in, those old Cheyennes they said, and they looked up, damn, “Maheo!” Boy! And he was walking by, boy, they were (L) {Thau motions to touching the ground} them footprints, you know. Then around morning, boy, Maheo got ‘peyoted up’ you know. That white guy, he got peyoted up, and he sat up like this, you know. I guess he put his legs up like this, and that robe kinda rose up [C: uh oh] those guys were looking across, “Damn! Maheo’s hung.” (L)

> "He's got a big one." (L) Damn, no wonder we're blessed. (L) Well that was true, but they kinda added on, (L) about that one [C: every time, he gets bigger] (L) next thing we know, He was 'Alabama snake' (L).
>
> C: Oh man.
>
> T: Man we used to hear all kinds of crazy stories like this (l), you know after peyote meetings. People would start joking about things. …. (l) Just like this one story, turn this thing {the tape recorder} off, because this one's nasty.

Though the story is virtually the same, some of the details and particulars of the story emerged that were not told the first time I heard this story. This iteration of the story was more elaborate due to the greater number of interlocutors this time, and due to the fact that there is a greater degree of intimacy and familiarity between this set of interlocutors. Due to the limitations of the written text, I cannot fully convey the exuberance of the story telling and story listening. But suffice it to say that at that moment, everybody was having a very good time.

Let us consider some of the elaborations of this telling compared to the very simple version of the story that I had heard years ago. First, the time it took to tell this more recent version was greater. The first time Thau told me this story, it was a short version reminding me of a curio that one may admire in a cabinet; small, almost delicate, yet capable of conjuring memory, hinting at greater significance below the surface. The

context, as I recall, the first time I heard the story was on the road from Phoenix to a tipi meeting on the Navajo Nation, near Rough Rock. We were all on the road, Thau, DaveRay, and myself in a borrowed truck. Thau was plastered, and in usual form, Thau was entertaining with story. DaveRay had already heard this story many times, but did not object to the telling. I on the other hand was amazed, amused, and left with a desire to hear many more crazy stories.

At that time, I did not know Thau all that well; then, he was my friend's dad. So, not a whole lot of trust and *confianza,* as Limón (1994:135) might say, had yet been established. So, it is conceivable to me that I got the "guests and almost strangers" version of the story rather than the "down home" version. But the story transcribed above happened around the dinner table. Years had passed; time had passed. Adventures had been passed among and between the speakers and hearers of the story, since the time on the road when I was told this story the first time.

Now, a more comfortable feeling left the story open not only to interruptions but also embellishments that might make the story funnier and more entertaining. Palmer notes that, "With Indians, at least with the Kiowas, listeners are almost always being invited to participate in the storytelling itself, to add to, to comment, to interpret, and to keep the story going" (2003: 96). For example, toward the end of the story, Thau remarks how the hitchhiker that looks like Jesus got "peyoted up." Being peyoted up means that somebody has ingested enough medicine to make him or her act funny or a little crazy or to have their judgment slightly impaired. It is doubtful that the real Jesus might get peyoted up at a meeting. He may be powerful enough to not get peyoted up. However,

the thought of Jesus acting like one of us implies a gentle humor that touches the heart as well as tickles the funny bone of a member of NAC.

And throughout the story telling, family could jump in with ideas or remarks. In this way all the listeners participate in the story and make it their own. By further extension, this "true" story happened to Khön. He or some other relative must have told my Thau this story. And in a very real way, Thau tells the story to his children, thus reinforcing the relationships with one another, as Palmer points out with Kiowas. Another important aspect of Kiowa storytelling that Palmer talks about is that sometimes, stories remain "open," to continue upon the next meeting (2003:32) or open to interpretation or open to retelling (2003: 42). When speaking of his Segi Oscar, who is also segi with my Thau, "I think he just provided a way for us to be closer as Kiowa kinsmen, whether I understood or not" (43). Telling stories becomes a context where kinsmen can be together, and become closer, where "kinship bonding occurred." Which was for Palmer, who "felt more and more Kiowa each time I met with one of my consultants, and we all developed a very close relationship during those months" (ibid.). Gus Palmer, someone I think my Thau calls "fabi," learned a great deal by studying and participating in Kiowa storytelling. Palmer "learned once and for all what John Tofpi (a Kiowa relative) wanted most to do was establish our roles as kinsmen. Simple as that. That was his Kiowa obligation" (45).

What I would like to add to Palmer's thoughts, what I would like to add to make this story my own, is that not only is it possible for Kiowas to reinforce their relationships with one another through telling stories, but also to create new relatives. I think that this

particular Kiowa, my Thau, and the rest of us, Beverly, DaveRay and myself, who were not born Kiowa, are made relatives of this particular Kiowa through the same storytelling that will reinforce those relationships once a relationship has been established, shared, fostered, and nurtured. Thau uses stories to create and to reinforce the relationships in his life. Conversely, our participation in these stories with my Thau creates and reinforces the relationships that we each share with Thau and each other. Spending time is a part of this process. And in that spending of time, stories are shared, one of the many things that relatives share.

I would also like to modify one of Palmer's observations ever so slightly. Thomas's peoplehood model proceeds from the viewpoint that relationships and interrelationships are central in Native American worldviews. Not only do the four spheres of ritual/ceremonial cycle, language, place, and sacred history interconnect with each other, but also, the people themselves both individually and collectively exist within multiple interconnected relationships. This includes kinship, knowledge, stories, lives, the past, the future. Relationships are not made. Relationships make "us." Palmer shows us that it is easier for the storyteller to frame a story "among people who know each other" (2003: xxiii). I think that this ease of framing and telling arises from the context of relationships that are shared between relatives. The stories live among and between these relatives. It is as if the storytelling frame is already there. Relatives are born into this context of story and storytelling. It is not created new each generation, but renewed each generation. In the case that new relatives are made, married, adopted, initiated, these new

relatives learn how to live with and participate in the intricate web of interconnected relationships and the intricate webs of stories, in the listening and telling.

ABOUT ISSUES IN THE KEY OF GENDER

This chapter will explore some ideas about gender, gender identity, and gendered relationships that came up in conversations and interactions mainly with my Thau, but also with Beverly, and my Thau's other adopted son, whom I call DaveRay, within the context of the household environment and the environment of the Native American Church. I will describe and recount observations and utterances that relate to the topics of gender and gendered identity. I will also try to make sense of these observations and statements within the context of my Thau's life and his interactions with me, and my own life. Because I am "male" I do not have full access to a woman's perspective on the rituals of the Native American Church. Hence, I can only offer a partial and sometimes vague approximation. But, women, men and others, together intertwine lives, relationships, and identities as relatives, loved ones, friends and strangers together. The lives of gendered individuals interrelate. They are not completely separate universes of gendered reality. Gendered individuals speak about themselves and their relatives be they the same gender or another. The life of my Thau offers a perspective, as does my own life, not the (only) "male" perspective, not the "heterosexual" perspective, nor the (only) "indigenous" perspective. Rather perspectives can emerge from and reflect a context where many other perspectives meet and interact, just as people interact.

In this chapter I am inspired by two major motivations that are not completely separate from each other. One of these motivations is to look at and to write about

women in the Native American Church. Beatrice Medicine pointed out that much of the ethnography of Native American culture, religion, and worldview has been penned by male authors who mainly learned from and spoke to other male Native Americans about their lives, activities, beliefs and concerns. Beatrice Medicine calls this androcentrism, "that feminine roles and behaviors in traditional societies are often blurred or nonexistent in ethnographies" (2001: 192). Second, I wish to make my work less androcentric. Recognizing that most of the central characters involved in this particular research project are men, my Thau, my bro DaveRay, and myself, I wish to point out my limitations in speaking of Native American women in the context of the Native American Church. However, the central men and the central woman of this story, Beverly, are relatives to each other, sharing lives, stories, and pain with each other as well as participation with the practices of the Native American Church. So, although I cannot offer "the woman's perspective" on the Native American Church, I can speak about my interactions and conversations with Beverly, as well as my observations of other women who have come to Beverly's home for Native American Church meetings.

Moreover, I can speak about the lives of women in relationship to my Thau, how he is related to and how he speaks about the women relatives in his life, and their participation in the Native American Church. As this joint voice reflects mainly my voice and my Thau's voice, and as we are both male, and one of us is more closely male, this voice can be critiqued as still tending towards androcentrism. However, I still wish to modify this in some way. Thus, my contribution in this chapter, then, is to use the androcentric voice of my Thau's stories and my own, opening it to the critique of

androcentrism, in order to bring out a perspective about women and issues of identity around gender, thus modifying it.

This modification also arises from another source which partially dislocates and de-centers a hegemonic androcentric gaze, as a purely masculine and therefore as a strictly masculine centered perception. In some ways, my researching and writing about my relationships with my relatives and my participation and research about the Native American Church constitutes a kind of "queering" of these topics through this project. As my own identity can be read as queer in the realm of dominant American society, so too is my identity among my relatives in this story a refraction of a kind of queerness in the broadest sense of the word. I am using the term "queer" here not only to describe "difference from" but also in the particular direction of the immediate disavowal of the assumed linkages of male=masculine=heterosexual and female=feminine=heterosexual. In other words as I am a "gay" male in dominant American society, and I am still a gay man to my relatives and friends, my particular male perspective is not congruent with my Thau's male perspective, nor my bro's (heterosexual) male perspective. As we cannot assume that all Native American people and communities relate to identity markers of "gay", "straight", "lesbian", "queer" or even so-called "two-spirit" in the same ways (Jacobs, Thomas, Lang, eds. 1997; Brown, ed. 1997), we also cannot assume that my Thau's perspective on maleness and femaleness or gendered "otherness" is the same as my own and vice versa. The same holds true for other relatives.

As a queer person of color, of indigenous heritage, I cannot and will not research, write, or even perceive as an American normative masculine male, nor from a

heterosexist perspective. To the best of my knowledge, there has not been an ethnography of the Native American Church or a Native American Church roadman written from a perspective that challenges the hegemony of the heteronormative/heterosexist androcentric perspective. This may be the first. Alice Marriot is a woman writing about the Native American Church and peyote in her day. And as previously mentioned, J. S. Brito, as a Native American ethnographer, dislocates the hegemony of EuroAmerican, middle and upper class normativity through his writing on the Native American Church. Neither author presents a gender queer perspective, however.

My Thau has not taught me much about what it means to be gay or queer or lesbian and such from either the Kiowa or Cheyenne perspective. Nor has he even taught me various words in either language to describe such diversity. What he has said explicitly is that my gayness is not a problem for him, or a cause for concern in the Native American Church as he sees it and knows it. And that it is not a problem for peyote, or even Creator. That so far is most of what I know about my Thau's perspective on this aspect of gender and sexual identity.

L. Smith reminds us that:

> Colonization is recognized as having had a destructive effect on indigenous gender relations which reached out across all spheres of indigenous society. … Indigenous women would argue that their traditional roles included full participation in many aspects of political decision making and marked gender separations which were complementary in order to maintain harmony and stability (1999:151-152).

Because of this, another one of Smith's indigenous research projects is gendering. Though it is clear from the context of Smith's research project that gendering mainly focuses on indigenous women, upon how indigenous women and men relate with each other within indigenous communities and worldviews, and how indigenous women cannot separate feminist critique from colonial critique, I wish to further expand on Smith's project of gendering. I would like to add to this the possibility of interrogating gender beyond the confines of heteronormativity and heterosexism, in order to explore the possibilities of indigenous gender systems and interrelations that may not conform to a strictly dualistic system such as EuroAmerican systems where male and female appear to be our only options.

In my interactions with my Thau and my other relatives, ideas of gender and sexuality have been mentioned, however; I cannot claim that we have interrogated our concepts and categories systematically. It may prove a fruitful area for future research. But my presence with my relatives and my presence here in these pages, brings us into the beginning steps of interrogating gender and gender identity in the context of the Native American Church, albeit among a small group of relatives and friends.

Beyond this, I also, recognize that there are moments when I perceive myself as an insider and other moments when I feel like an outsider. For me this comes from my own political position as a relative and as a "researcher;" from positions away from my relatives in "college" and all the positionings I hold in mainstream American society (such as "ethnic" or "queer") that become irrelevant with my relatives depending on the situation, context and/or story. Mary C. Churchill asserts, "As feminist scholarship has

shown, all of us exist as both "insiders" and "outsiders" of a variety of contexts that influence our perception, and both locations have the potential to be valuable" (2005:265).

MASCULINITY

One of the most important contributions of feminist theory is the interrogation of the categories, ideologies, and construction of gender. Interrogating gender has been taken up as a project that also includes interrogating the concept, construction and categories of men, masculinity, manhood, (Cornell 1995, Gutmann 1997, Kuypers 1999) as well as the social constructions of persons that create men, women, non-men, and non-women. Thus, I too wish to open up the topic of gender in the interactive presence between my Thau and myself, as well as between my Thau and his relatives (including myself) and loved ones.

So, in this section I move toward opening up gender in looking at my Thau's life as a "man" and as a "masculine" person, (which also has implications upon my identity and gender in relation to his). As Matthew C. Gutmann points out, anthropology is a long history of "men talking to men about men," but it is fairly recent that "the 'study of man' had truly examined men *as men*" (1997: 385). This development has been one of the many contributions of feminist theory, to interrogate the very categories and structures that create, define and maintain "gender" and associated power structures. "It is the new examinations of men as engendered and engendering subjects that comprise the anthropology of masculinity today" (ibid). I will take Gutmann's dictum to examine

"men *as men*" as one strategy to remedy just a part of Medicine's critique of androcentrism. Though I am a man writing, though not exclusively, about my relationship with my father, I am aware of my own social displacement from hegemonic American masculinity, and my Thau's displacement. This displacement reflects fault lines in "masculinity" writ large, along the lines of ethnicity and class, as well as gender identity.

Of course just as feminists "of color" challenge, critique, and re-vision the feminist movement to include women of color and their perspectives (hooks 1984, Anzaldúa 1987, Hill-Collins 1991, Harjo and Bird, eds, 1997), so too will the study of masculinity need to remain ever mindful not only of the construction and analysis of "hegemonic masculinities," but also that other "masculinities" will arise from various cultural contexts that may or may not be locally or globally hegemonic. Also, I support the idea that different cultural contexts contain and elaborate gender systems, structures, interactions and identities that are not congruous with other cultural contexts necessarily, even if another context (and its particular worldview of gender and identity) are hegemonic. In other words, one cannot assume that the "masculinity" of Abraham Lincoln is the same as the contemporary "masculinity" of Walt Whitman or Fredrick Douglas let alone the "masculinity" of Sequoia or of Quanah Parker.

When my Thau speaks, he occasionally makes declarative statements defining himself such as, "I am a man" or "I'm just a man" or "I am (a) Kiowa" or "I'm Cheyenne" or "I'm Cheyenne too" or even "I'm a con-man" or "I'm not an alcoholic; I'm just a drunk". I think that all of these statements are gendered inseparably from other

potential markers of identity. In my Thau's case, he cannot speak of himself as "Kiowa" in a gender neutral way. He cannot ignore that he is a man as well as being Kiowa. For my Thau, he is Kiowa just as he is a man. He is not simultaneously belonging to "two" categories, namely "Kiowa" and "man." But rather, the categories "Kiowa" and "man" have meanings, relationships, as well as histories and futures, and those categories can be used to describe vantage points about my Thau's life, his relationships and his being. In other words, "Kiowa" can fully describe many aspects of my Thau and his life. "Man" can describe fully many aspects of my Thau and his life. But neither can fully and completely describe the human being that is my Thau. Nor can either reflect all of the relationships that my Thau, or any human being, lives and shares. Devon Mihesua reminds us that, "gender is inexorably tied to … race and tribe" (2003:162) as she speaks of Native American women. However, the same can be said for Native American men. Yet, "Kiowa man" together describes more fully my Thau than either "label" alone. Together, these words are invoking broader, more intricate, relationships that my Thau may be living with other beings and with his relatives.

Through these declarations, I assume that my Thau is fairly conscious of his identity as a Kiowa and Cheyenne man. I am also fairly confident that my Thau knows who he is in relation to his relatives and loved ones. But perhaps I should revise these assumptions to reflect how my Thau perceives his relationships or how he wishes they should be. For example, he is a grandfather, yet he does not see his grandchildren or spend time with them, as he is currently estranged from his daughters whose children are Thau's grandchildren. This estrangement has a basis in both alcohol use and in religious

differences. But in my Thau's life, this current estrangement does not sever the ties he feels with his grandchildren.

"I pray for my grandkids everyday, sonny boy. That's what you do. It's a blessing to live to see your grandchildren. That's what a man wants; to have his grandkids around him, to enjoy having them around." This is what Thau has told me on a couple of occasions. And this statement illustrates that a true "man" prays for his children and grandchildren; that it is a part of being a man. It is part of being a man to become a father and then a grandfather. A father takes care of his family and children, among other things. And a grandfather prays for his grandkids, plays with them, shows them affection, and teaches them things about life and spirit, among other things.

Years ago my Khön composed a song that is now one of my favorite peyote songs. It is called a "Grandfather Song" meaning that in a peyote meeting, only a man who has grandchildren has the right to sing it. I do not know the Kiowa language so, I am not able to transcribe or translate this song. However on an old recording, my Khön translates the song himself. It means, "I like it in here/ it's good to be here [in the tipi meeting]/ I'm glad to be here with my grandchildren/ it is good/ I'm happy." Because of the words and context of this song, in the proper Kiowa way, this song can only be sung by a grandfather. It would be improper for a man without grandchildren to sing this song. Furthermore, as the early history of the development of the Native American Church reflects an all night ritual attended by men, most songs sung and composed in this tradition reflect or assume that the singer is male. It would be improper for a woman to sing this song, even if she did have grandchildren.

I like this song because it is a very declarative statement of happiness and affection for and about grandchildren. Though I do not have biological children or grandchildren, I am a grandchild. That side of the relationship I have experienced. In a tipi meeting, I would not be able to sing this song. However, as it is my Khön's song, I could sing the melody of this song with peyote song vocables, meaning without the actual Kiowa language. As mentioned in the chapter about relatives, songs and feathers are only some of the things that are a part of relationships between people, and in particular between myself and my Thau, and my Thau's other relatives, as they are now, also my relatives. As my Thau is a grandfather, he does have a right to sing this song. As my Thau is the son of the composer, my Thau does have the right to sing this particular song.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, my Thau has a beautiful peyote fan in his peyote box that is comprised of many scissortail feathers. These feathers are a mild shade of pink with black tips. Thau told me that these feathers belong to his first granddaughter, but that he "holds" them for her. "These feathers belong to a woman. I hold them for my granddaughter. Maybe I'll be able to spend time with her. Maybe one day I'll give her these feathers. If I want to pray or when I pray with these feathers, I send her a blessing, and my other grandkids too. She'll get a blessing whenever I use these feathers to pray for somebody."

Even though my Thau is separated from his grandchildren and their mothers, his daughters, Thau takes care of his progeny in the only way currently available to him, through prayer. My Thau also taught me that he was taught by his Cheyenne relatives that if a man uses magpie feathers for prayer in a tipi meeting, he and his family would not

starve. Those magpie feathers are important because the power of magpies is to find food and to be able to eat, always, even under hard conditions. So too will a man and his family always have food if that man prays with magpie feathers in a tipi meeting. This is another example of the importance of prayer, but also of the possibility of the very gender proscribed understanding of prayer as the responsibility of a man/father/grandfather in the Native American Church.

Continuing with this theme, and reiterating some of the information written in a previous chapter, a man should know how to pray. A man should pray for his family when he is in the tipi. This also has much to do with a general division of labor between men and women, according to my Thau. Women are in charge of the home and taking care of children and the family especially though food, material needs. Men are responsible for the spiritual needs of the family, and are especially responsible for prayer for his family. This reflects somewhat a notion of gender complimentarity. Laura Jane Moore speaks of this also when reflecting upon historic Western Apache lifeways, "sexual division of labor did not put women in a subordinate position to men, but instead led to complimentary roles for women and men" (2001:94).

Thau has emphatically told me that our purpose in a prayer meeting is, of course, to pray for the patient. But there is plenty of time to pray for one's self and one's family and loved ones. When listening to Thau talk about the all night prayer meeting, I feel that there is enough time to pray for the whole world.

My Thau also tells me, "This medicine is an old man, that's why he has white hairs." Thau refers to the little tufts of white fibers that grow on top of the peyote plant in

a circle around the center point where the peyote flower grows. And this medicine is believed to be an old grandfather. Taking care of his grandchildren is his job, so to speak. A grandfather prays for his grandchildren. Though Thau has not told me literally, I infer that Grandpa Medicine prays to Creator for us, for our needs and desires. "Talk to that medicine, sonny boy, when you're in there [the tipi]. He has God-given power to help us. You can talk to him like that, 'hey, I need your help. Please help me, please help us.' You can talk to him that way, he's supposed to take care of us."

Thau believes in this medicine. His father, his uncles, his grandpas, they all taught him about this medicine and these ways. I wish to point out that these are men, relatives who are men teaching a younger relative who is a man, who in turn is teaching another male relative about these ways. My Thau is teaching me about his life, his relations, and his religion, all at once. They are not separate from each other but all together. Moreover, this is what men do in my Thau's life regarding these Native American Church ways; men teach their junior male relatives about this medicine and these ways. So, in my Thau's interactions with me, he is remembering and re-making both the knowledge being taught, but also the gendered relationships through which this religious knowledge is remembered and recreated. Knowledge and relationships are inseparable. Inés Talamantez tells us that, "The belief that the traditions of others may be appropriated to serve the needs of self is a peculiarly Western notion that relies on a belief that knowledge is disembodied rather than embedded in relationships, intimately tied to place, and entails responsibilities to others and a commitment and discipline in learning"

(2005:221). My learning about the Native American Church is embedded in the relationship I share with my Thau. This relationship is also gendered.

As stated in a previous chapter, I believe that learning about the NAC and about Waldo's life would not have been possible without a true relationship shared between Waldo and me. In our case, we are Thau/Bo, father/son. It is this relationship that enables the cultural learning between us. But on the other hand, it was my learning of cultural context with Waldo that enabled me to call him "thau" and enabled him to call me "bo." Moreover, we mutually accepted each other in this relationship within our shared understandings of what that relationship means. Understanding what that relationship means is ambiguous. The sharing of that relationship is also ambiguous. Neither of us can know if the other fully understands what it means. So, we both continue to interact to our best understanding of the meanings shared between us, as a dynamic process. Relationships are dynamic processes. I think it is our mutual acceptance of each other and of each other's ambiguities that opens up space for both the relationship and the learning to continue. But as the relationship and learning continue, I am ever more learning as a gendered and engendering subject. I am learning as a son. Thau is teaching me the masculine side of his life and the masculine side of the Native American Church.

"Violent" Masculinity

Some aspects of masculinity resonate with me, such as the responsibility to pass on ritual knowledge, the responsibility to pray for one's sake and for the sake of relatives, the responsibility to provide for one's family. Other aspects of my Thau's masculine

behavior, and the corresponding behaviors of my adopted brother and uncles are uncomfortable for me at best and disturbing at worst. In the broadest descriptive strokes, when my male relatives speak about partying, drug use, bar brawls, ass-kickings, yelling at each other, and how much fun it all is, I get a bit uncomfortable. My adopted brother does not drink, nor use drugs, nor does he party. But on the occasion that somebody may "pick a fight" or "start shit" with him or Thau or any of our Segi, he appears to revel in the joy of "kicking their ass(es)" and emerging victorious from a physical fight. He tells me sometimes, "I'm not even angry or nothing. I'm just good at fighting. It's easy. It's fun."

My Thau also reminisces about fighting in his past, how he used to be a good and strong brawler, that he was not afraid to fight or to "kick ass." Also, when my Thau, my Pavi, and myself are all together, sometimes they trade stories about their adventures before I met them, or when I have not been with them. Many of these stories involve driving around Phoenix or Tucson or the rest of Arizona or New Mexico, sometimes in Colorado or Utah. Many of these stories begin with, "Hey Thau, remember that one time we were in that bar in Gallup/ off of Van Buren (in Phoenix)/ that 'Indian' bar in Tucson." And Thau responds to DaveRay with a chuckle and "Oh, Yeah!" They have great fun and use great humor to describe the fights they have been in or the high-jinks they have witnessed, or some of the questionable behavior that they may have been involved with, even if tangentially.

I am perplexed by these stories because I cannot participate in them, or at least quite minimally. As I cannot participate in the stories by telling like stories from my own

experience, not only does my inclusion in the group at that moment become untenable, but also, my own masculinity becomes suspect (Limón 1994, Kuypers 1999, Kimmel 1999). My relatives also describe behavior that I have not experienced such as brawling, or partying with drugs and what I may call "temporary" girlfriends. But most of all, I am made uncomfortable by the images of masculinity that these stories describe and project, by the expectations of masculinity implied by these stories and the behavior of recounting these stories, and by exclusion of my own "masculinity" by my inability to participate in these stories other than as a complete observer.

Philippe Bourgois also notes discomfort when listening to his cultural teachers, crack sellers in Harlem, describing scenes of violence and sexual assault. Though my relatives have not described scenes of sexual violence or assault, scenes of brawling, drinking, and drug use are present. Similarly, Bourgois's gender identity and sexual identity were suspect and hence questioned within his community of study, as he also could not relate similar stories to his cultural teachers. And, Bourgois's speech, dress, demeanor and other "tells" were sufficiently different from the "masculinity" of the barrio he studied, that he was "read" as queer, or homosexual or even as perverted (1995:43-44). As Bourgois did not know how to be, to act, to look masculine within the community of his ethnography, his gender identity and his sexual identity became suspect until he was better known in the neighborhood (ibid), rather, I would say, until Bourgois had fully established relationships with the people in his community of study. And certainly, these relationships established with his community of study were masculine relationships.

On the issues of strength and aggression, my Thau, my Pavi, my segi-s, and their stories about fighting reflect the physical strength to fight and to win against one, two or even three other men who "start some shit." Corresponding with strength or perhaps stemming from it, I perceive a readiness and a willingness to "kick ass" when others "start shit." I infer from this that "men" are supposed to be ready to fight and capable of winning physical fights by inflicting pain on the opponent. I have never participated in such activities. And over the course of this fieldwork, I had no desire to participate in this activity. So, for this image of masculinity, I do not fit. Also, as part of the very masculine group behavior of my relatives, they tell stories about such violence. I cannot tell such stories either. Therefore I am excluded from participating with my male relatives in this kind of story telling. One day my Thau was talking about all of his sons. He mentioned that they could all fight, and fight well. He said he was proud of them all for that reason. Fighting is something that I do not enjoy. Also, I dislike pain. So, I do not fit into this particular description of Thau's sons. And at that moment, I could not help but feel excluded in some way from my Thau's pride, and from his view of who his sons were. Again, I was left out.

But back to witnessing so many stories about drinking, brawling, and partying, I also think that since I did not express any discomfort to my Thau or my Pavi or my Segi at those moments, it is possible that they did not perceive any of my discomfort. It is also possible that they did not divine that their conversation discomforted me or disturbed me or implicated me as not fitting into their image of masculinity at that moment. Maybe they were just having a good time.

Sometimes when my Thau and his bro's are around, they like to sit in the ramada in the yard and talk, joke, visit, and drink. This is very similar to scenes I recall from my own childhood in Texas with my dad, grandpas, and uncles. Though as I was a young child at the time, the conversation did not include partying with girls or drugs. It is possible that in my youth, my relatives censored their conversations when I was near. I also recall that barbecue was involved, roasting meat over mesquite wood in a large smoke pit. This recalls José Limón's description of working class *batos* cooking meat and drinking and joking around with each other at a *carne asada* (1994:124). I recognize similarities between Limón's ethnography, my childhood memories and my time with my Thau and his brothers. Limón weaves together Bhaktinian (138) and Foucauldian (124-125) theoretical inspiration around ideas of camaraderie, humor, performance, symbolic resistance to insurmountable power structures with ideas of masculinity and identity among working class Mexican-American men in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, incidentally, my own homeland and home-people.

Limón's ethnography reflects the ribald humor of these working class Tejano men. This humor, this joking, both verbal and physical, however, as Laura Cummings (1991) points out, sometimes turns upon the degradation of women and the feminine, rejects physical and emotional weakness, and elides weakness, the feminine, and the effeminate in a fete of misogyny and homophobia, something Limón seems to overlook. Limón's ethnography reminds me not only of my Thau and his bro's and how they laugh and joke about sex and drugs while they sit around and drink really cheap beer, but also of the apparent "bonding" and "sharing" of feeling and experience that seems to be taking

place. Limón also reminds me, not only of similar scenes, which I have witnessed both in South Texas and on the reservation, but also reminds me of the sense of exclusion that I feel in both similar situations, in South Texas and on the reservation. There is exclusion not only of women and the feminine, but also of the non-masculine (Cummings 1991). Granted, theoretically what may be considered "non-masculine" may differ in various cultural contexts. What is the same is the exclusion of "non-us" through the same mechanisms that enable "bonding" and "sharing." These processes that make certain ties, also deflect others.

However, when I am in South Texas with male relatives or on the reservation with other relatives, because they are my relatives, I am not completely excluded. The fact that I am there certainly accounts for my inclusion in various ways. But, my full inclusion, if based on participation in the banter, the joking, the camaraderie, either takes place when the topics change, or I joke in a similar fashion yet change the gendered identity of the joking subjects/objects to consciously reflect homoeroticism, or change the tone of the joking to support homoeroticism rather than deflect or denigrate it, and conversely on occasion to denigrate heterosexuality. With Limón's Bhaktinian batos, this may not be an option. Among my relatives, to the extent that I am allowed to do so, free of verbal censure or verbal abuse by the other participants reflects their inclusion and acceptance of my participation as a masculine "challenged/challenging" presence.

Indeed, over the time I have spent with my Thau and my bro, Thau's other adopted son, I have been teased in many ways including the type of gendered teasing of a challenged masculinity. The good thing is, that I have not felt the teasing to be malicious

or mean spirited. To that extent, Limón's reflections on the "carnivalesque" can certainly apply to some of the joking situations in which we, my male relatives and I, find ourselves, and in which we play. Plus, Thau has explicitly told me that my being queer does not change that that I am his "bo." In this case, individual embodiment of masculine ideology and performance does not take precedence over the family relationship. Thau continues to treat me as his "son."

WOMEN IN NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH MEETINGS

It may be safe to assume that at least half of Native American Church practitioners/believers are women. It bears mentioning that there are no "road women" running meetings at present to my knowledge, which is admittedly limited by geography and the relatives that teach me about NAC. Nor have I read an account of a "road woman." However, I have been told of an exception.

My Thau's younger brother and my Thau's adopted son, my bro, my pavi have told me about a Cheyenne woman who was related by marriage to my Thau on his Cheyenne side. Dog Woman was the second wife of the widower John Turtle. My segi, my uncle, my Thau's next youngest brother, told me that Dog Woman ran a tipi meeting once when her husband John Turtle, my Thau's grandfather, was not able to fulfill a commitment to run a meeting at the last minute. Dog Woman ran this meeting, according to my segi, because she was honoring her husband's commitment to the ritual, and also because she was capable, she had the knowledge to run the meeting as her husband would have run the meeting. In other words, she ran the meeting in his style. Clearly more

research can be done regarding women in the Native American Church including research conducted by women. For example in the case of Dog Woman, my segi tells me that in some memory and stories about her that are told by some of his Cheyenne relatives, Dog Woman was a "roadwoman" who ran many meetings. However, my segi tells me that she only ran the one meeting under extenuating circumstances. Perhaps if allowed, I may pursue this line of research about Dog Woman Turtle and other women who may have run meetings either once or more than one time. As Beatrice Medicine pointed out, more research about Native women should be done (2001:108-110).

The NAC, similar to many of the gender structures of many Native American cultures, reserves certain ritual practices to men. As Beatrice Medicine points out, androcentrism in ethnography has obscured Native and indigenous women's ceremonies and ritual roles and activities. Therefore, readers of Native American ethnography know much more about the "religious" lives of Native American men. However in the case of the NAC, the ritual positions of roadman and fire chief remain virtually exclusively male positions. Moreover, the carrier of the Morning Water must be a woman except in the very rare instance that there are no women present at a particular meeting. And at this time, the only exception in gender in the leadership of a meeting of which I am currently aware is the aforementioned relative, Dog Woman.

Roles in the Ritual

Thau has made it clear on more than one occasion that in the "old days" when Thau was growing up, and the old timers were still around, that women never sat in

peyote meetings. If a woman was a patient, then she would sit in the meeting receiving comfort and treatment and prayer. However, it is not required that a patient even be present in the actual tipi meeting no matter their gender. It bears repeating that in the morning time, when the roadman calls for the "morning water," it is necessary for a woman, usually the roadman's wife, to bring in that sacred water, pray over that water, the patient, and the participants. Thau explains that from women comes life. A meeting would not be complete, full, or proper if a woman did not bring in the sacred morning water. Moreover, Thau points out the natural complementarity of male and female in human procreation, drawing a parallel between reproduction and the ceremony through the metaphor of creating life.

When speaking about the woman who brings in water in the morning, Thau said, "She has to pray to make the ceremony complete. She's supposed to come in (the tipi) and look around, to see if everything is good." Brito hears something quite similar from his NAC mentor Marcelus, who states that, "—as we believe today – no meeting is ever complete without that woman bringing in the water of life at morning time and blessing it" (1989: 108). Marcelus also mentions that the participation of the water woman is "kind of new" (ibid), but at this point, I do not know when this ritual innovation entered the standard all-night ceremony. The water woman presumably has been in the house during the night. She is supposed to remain in a prayerful manner throughout the night just as all the participants in the tipi are supposed to remain prayerful throughout the night. Occasionally I have been at meetings where the water woman sat in the tipi and

then left the tipi at the appropriate time to prepare the water. This seems to be a common and accepted practice.

According to Thau, ideally, the drum should have gone around the tipi four times, so that every worshiper has had the opportunity to sing four times throughout the night. After this has happened it is time to call for morning water. Thau at a different time said that his father used to call for morning water at a certain time whether or not the drum had made four complete rounds during the night, so as to be able to greet the rising sun when the meeting was dismissed. Thau still does this occasionally when he runs meetings. He likes to greet the rising sun after exiting the meeting.

Typically, the water woman enters the tipi with a bucket filled with water and a cup. The bucket and cup may be plain or they may be decorated elaborately. I have even seen one bucket inlaid with various colored metals and turquoise pieces and other semi precious stones reproducing the Great Seal of the Navajo Nation. Sometimes the bucket is painted with an image expressing common iconography of the church. A good fire chief will hold open the tipi flap for the water woman. With her right hand she carries the bucket and a cup, and with the other she holds a blanket around herself. A cushion and/or blanket are placed for the water woman by the fire chief just inside the doorway. The water woman kneels or sits on this cushion, facing west, as the door opens to the east. She places the bucket in front of her between herself and the fireplace in the center of the tipi. She is facing west, as the roadman is facing east and the door.

Depending on the situation, she, the roadman, or the fire chief roles a smoke for her, usually tobacco in a squared piece of dried cornhusk. She lights the cigarette and prays

silently or aloud over the water with the sacred tobacco smoke. As with many Native American ceremonies, praying with tobacco is extremely important. The tobacco smoke carries prayer to the Creator. Personal expression is respected. The water woman can pray for as long as she feels necessary, or she may be quite brief.

After praying, over the water, for the patient, for the participants, for the ritual breakfast that later will close the meeting, the water woman pours a little bit of water forward toward the fireplace, the altar, and the medicine. They "drink" first. Then the bucket with the cup is passed clockwise from the doorway around, so that everyone can refresh himself or herself. Sometimes, the roadman will yield the floor to anyone that wishes to express himself or herself at that time. Thau says that this is not the old Kiowa way to do things but is a relatively new and therefore, in his eyes, a suspect practice. After the bucket has gone around back to the fire chief, the water woman will drink and then will be ready to take the bucket back into the house. The fire chief will again hold the door flap open for her. The water is blessed now and cannot be discarded. Later in the day when a table is set with all the noon feast food, the bucket and the cup will be there also, so that people can once again sip the blessed water if they so desire.

Thau told me once that if a meeting is really good, proper, and spiritual, if everyone participating in the tipi kept their minds on this peyote and the patient, if everyone participated without ego, so to speak, then that time would be very special and blessed. Moreover, if the water woman came into the tipi at morning time and if she was properly focused upon the meeting, then when she came in, she would be able to look around and see that everything was good and proper. When this happens, she could just

light her smoke, take four puffs, declare that everything was good, and then serve the morning water. Thau said that he had seen this in his youth, though it is rare. Most of the time, the water woman will pray for a longer time than just four puffs of smoke.

This is the only formal ceremonial position that a woman holds in the Native American Church. There is no ordination or formal training for this per se, as there is no formal, "institutional" ordination for a fire chief or a even a roadman. There is no seminary in the Native American Church. Instruction can potentially happens in both systematic and *ad hoc* ways. Any woman can bring in water if asked and if willing. The only sanction of which I know is against a woman's participation during a woman's "moon" the common polite reference to menses used by practitioners. During this time a woman is not to participate in a peyote meeting at all. And if she is the patient, then she will usually be in the home during the meeting not in the tipi. Remember that a patient need not be in the tipi meeting to receive the prayers and the blessings of her or his relatives and the blessing of the medicine. Beatrice Medicine points out that among the Dakota and Lakota peoples, contrary to some mistaken ethnographies, that menstruation is not "polluting" as it is powerful and can render male medicine bundles and objects ineffectual (2001:193). In the Native American Church, I have not been instructed that menstruation is polluting. It is powerful, as it is a part of how women give life. But it is a different quality and kind of power than the ritual power that men are to exercise as ritual leaders of the Native American Church.

Relationship of Women in the Meeting

I have described a bit of what a water woman does in a tipi meeting. Who the water woman is, at a particular meeting, is no less important than what the water woman does in the ritual. In the most ideal of circumstances, the water woman will be the wife of the roadman. Just as the ideal roadman would be a good father, husband, and grandfather, the ideal water woman would be a good mother, wife and grandmother. Just as a roadman is supposed to be an upstanding community member, so too should his wife. Together they should be moral and ethical exemplars within the value systems of the Native American Church and their respective indigenous communities. Whatever the values espoused by members of the NAC, it appears to me to be a common practice to project these normative values of the "good" father/husband and "good" wife/mother on believers, most especially on a roadman and his wife.

Neither partner should be "cheating" on the other, as this would be unethical behavior. Both my Thau and DaveRay have told me that this is an ideal. And some roadmen and their wives embody this ideal. But, they could also tell me stories, and have, about roadmen who were unfaithful to their wives, and a couple of stories when wives were not faithful to their husbands. It should be noted that this usually does not bar either a roadman or his wife from participation. Certainly not all roadmen live up to these ideals. Sometimes their wives do not either. But there does exist the image of the "suffering wife" who remains faithful throughout all of her husband's missteps, never wavering in her personal moral character. As far as I know, Thau's ex-wife, Mary and his current significant other Beverly have never "cheated" on Thau.

Thau thinks that it is important for the wife of a roadman to bring in water for him. This shows support for her husband's position as a leader. The roadman also shows his appreciation for all the love and support he receives from his wife. Moreover, it shows harmony to the rest of the participants and reinforces this harmony in front of the holy medicine and the sacred fire.

We can also recall Thau's emphasis on the idea of masculine and feminine complementarity. There are two occasions in the all night meeting for bringing in water to refresh the participants, one at "midnight," and the other at "morning." The fire chief, a man, brings in water at midnight. The water woman brings in water in the morning. "Just as it takes both a man and a woman to give life," Thau told me, "you need a woman and a man to bring in that water." Moreover, the masculine/feminine complementarity of roadman/water woman is reiterated. So, at morning water, the water woman symbolically completes the masculine/feminine dyad in respect to the fire chief and the roadman. Bea Medicine also pointed out that there is spiritual complementarity in many Native American groups and religious cultures (2001:192).

If the roadman's wife is not able to bring in water, another candidate may be the fire chief's wife. To my knowledge, there is not necessarily a ranked list of water women candidates. Other possible water women could be any female relative of the roadman, of the fire chief, of the patient, or the sponsor of the meeting. As mentioned previously, the term "roadman" is thought to refer to the man traveling the good, spiritual peyote path or "road." The term has also been said to refer to the very early days of the cult's development in Oklahoma, when a qualified ritual leader would have to travel a lot in

order to run meetings in distant places. Because of this need to travel to various locations, the wife of a roadman would frequently remain at home to take care of her own children and household. Thus, it is logical for a woman of the patient's household or family to participate as water woman. Occasionally a roadman's children may attend a meeting with him. In the case of a daughter, she may also be eligible to carry water for her father.

I remember this one meeting there at Bev and Thau's place, and Thau was running that meeting. Beverly wanted to sit in on this meeting, but could not as it was "moon" time. One of her nieces volunteered to sit up in the meeting, but she became ill that very evening. So, here we all are in a meeting that Thau is running, and our initial water women were unable to carry water this particular night. That night, my segi, Thau's younger brother sat to my left, DaveRay, immediately to my right. My uncle leans to my ear, his hand up to speak directly to me and says, "hey, nephew, you should carry water for your dad, help him out." We instantly dissolve into laughter. My pavi looks over to see what happened, so trying to contain my laughter; I repeat our segi's suggestion. Then, there we were, the three of us dissolved into complete uncontrollable laughter, other participants staring at our apparent lack of decorum. We tried to stifle ourselves, sniggering. We went on like this for about twenty minutes. What was special about this moment was our ability to play with gender and joke with each other. Relatives can do that. Anyway, I did not carry water that night after all. A EuroAmerican wife of one of the Diné men at the meeting carried water for my Thau that night. When socializing the next afternoon, my Thau wondered why Segi, DaveRay and I were laughing so hard; Thau wanted in on the joke. We told him. He laughed.

It may seem that we have belabored this point about who may carry morning water for a particular meeting. I must reiterate that this is no unimportant matter. Thau has repeatedly emphasized to me how powerful this medicine is, and how powerful prayer and intention can be. While explaining to me the importance of the water woman to certifying the blessings and healing prayers of a peyote meeting, he also reminded me of the fact that sometimes a person may not have the best of intentions nor fully altruistic motives.

Thau has also spent a little time instructing me on how things can go wrong. For example, let us imagine that a roadman's wife remained at home and did not come to the meeting. Suppose a young woman from the sponsor's or the patient's family is asked to bring in water. If that roadman wanted to "know" that young woman, he might be able to bring about that desired situation through his intention, made more powerful through using the medicine.

A ceremony like a peyote meeting requires faith, devotion, empathy, and openness. The negative aspect of openness is vulnerability. It is the roadman's responsibility to spiritually watch over the medicine, the patient, and all the participants involved in the ceremony. This includes "protecting" everybody from bad or malicious influences from outside the tipi, or from inside the heart of a participant harboring a bad intention. At the time of morning water, the water woman is opening her heart and mind to pray. She could be susceptible to a roadman's influence, heightened by the power of the medicine. A knowledgeable roadman with less than pure intentions can influence the water woman to desire him. For this reason, it is important to have a water woman that is

a relative of the roadman, thus, negating the possibility of untoward influence, reflecting traditional incest taboos.

Also, a knowledgeable water woman can negate all untoward influence by rolling her own smoke for the morning water prayer, thus not having any intimate contact with either the roadman or the fire chief. Normally if the water woman is the roadman's wife, he may roll and light the smoke for her. This is considered to be nice, and an opportunity to show affection. If the water woman is the fire chief's wife, then the fire chief may roll and light the smoke for her. If she is not related to either the fire chief or the roadman, Thau tells me that it is best for her to roll her own smoke and light it. I wish to emphasize this point, as to show that women can be and are knowledgeable about Native American Church ways, and how these ways might be misused.

According to my Thau, many of the meetings in his grandfather's generation were male only save for the presence of the water woman. Thau reminds me, "this medicine was found by a woman. She brought this medicine back to her people and taught them the first peyote songs." I cannot help but wonder about the mythic origins of the use of peyote medicine and its very gendered relationships. A woman separated from her people despairing of her life, and depending on the story, the life of her infant or small child or children who are with her in the wilderness, is rescued by the medicine, which speaks or sings to her. The medicine then instructs the woman to eat him thus relieving her thirst, hunger, fatigue and despair, then guides her back to her people who had thought her dead. Then she gathers the spiritual leaders together and gives them the first instructions about

the medicine and the use and worship with the medicine. The leaders are left with the task of making a ritual around the medicine. Then we hear no more of the woman.

One can interpret the water woman and the morning water ritual of the all night ceremony to remember the mythic origins of the medicine as the double gift of a woman. The medicine saves her life and the lives of her children both living and future children, and thus the lives of subsequent generations. And the gift that women give in the lives of all people that of giving birth to children and thus future generations. Thau says, "This medicine is life. It's all about life," and also that, "women give life. So, you have to have a woman bring in water in the morning, because that man (the fire chief) brings in water at midnight. It takes a man and a woman to bring life."

WOMEN OUTSIDE THE MEETING

Certainly there are always women at NAC meetings and functions. Thau reminds me that women are very important for life, for cultural preservation, for proper balance in life. But according to "old" teachings, women should be in the home while the men are praying and singing in the tipi. Thau also cites complementarity in describing a woman's place in the home. In this case one "home" that of the family's residence is the domain of mothers, grandmothers, wives. And the other home, the home of the ritual, the tipi, is the house of prayer and singing and healing.

Position in the Home

Though women do participate in tipi meetings, singing and praying and sitting up all night, women also continue to care for the home and any guests that come to the meeting but who may not be able to go inside the tipi. Remember that seats in the tipi are limited. Also, there may be children that stay out of the meeting and rest in the home while their parents pray in tipi. I have yet to hear of a man who stays out of the tipi to help out in the kitchen helping to prepare for the next day, except for a Native American male who may already resonate with participating in traditionally feminine activities. At one meeting I attended with Thau on the Navajo Reservation, I met a young man who was working on a masters degree in education, a relative of the patient who was helping his sisters, and mother prepare the food for the breakfast and the feast. He did not participate in the tipi meeting.

Most all food preparation, that I have observed, is done by women. But even I have assisted when asked and when allowed. It is ambiguous to me if my participation in food preparation is simply allowed on the need for assistance, or if I am allowed to help with the food as I am queer. The most important meal is the ceremonial breakfast served after the morning water. This ceremonial breakfast consists of four symbolically traditional foods, water, corn, fruit, and meat. The water woman and/or other women bring in the bowls of food. Then somebody will pray to bless the food. This prayer can be said by anyone, by the roadman or by anyone the roadman may designate. Thau told me that he likes to pick a young woman or a young man in attendance to pray for the breakfast in order to encourage them to learn how to pray in the tipi. Then the breakfast is

passed around the tipi clockwise from the doorway. Most of the meetings I have observed with Thau, he has asked a woman of any generation to pray over the morning breakfast.

Other meals prepared for the participants are served either in the home or just outside the home. These meals include a supper before the beginning of the meeting, a light breakfast directly after the meeting is adjourned, and then the noontime feast, which is usually the largest meal consisting of food brought my many of the participants. I have learned from my Thau and my relatives through the Native American Church, that it is a great virtue to be generous with food in NAC households. Usually on the table where the noontime feast is spread will be the morning water bucket and the bowls of corn, fruit, and meat if they were not emptied in the tipi at the closing of the all night meeting.

After everything, women clean up the kitchen and the home, usually the hostess and her female relatives, while the host and other available men take down the tipi. The social time after a meeting is usually quite joyous. This is when participants have the greatest opportunity to catch up and visit with their relatives and friends.

I have observed Beverly in some of her preparations for tipi meetings. One of the things she enjoys doing most is preparing the peyote tea that will be consumed in a meeting. “Hand me that bag please, Chris,” she asks me, as I grab a thin canvas bag. Beverly then fills the bag with dried peyote buttons, many of which we have cleaned together. Beverly places the bag in a large pot on the stove and boils it in the water. “You should always do this with a good thought. Don’t be negative in any way. This medicine will be with people’s prayers tonight,” she tells me. “Sometimes, this (medicine) tea will even seem sweet, if it’s made with a good heart, you know. If the medicine is boiled

properly, perhaps some of the bitterness will not be there," Beverly says. Of course, Thau reminds me that medicine is supposed to be bitter. When the tea has been properly boiled and simmered, Beverly then fills large glass jars of this peyote tea. The tea will be passed around in tipi as one of the ways to consume peyote as a sacrament. When I have watched Beverly prepare the medicine tea, I have noticed that she does it with care, happiness, even excitement, as well as love.

I have also watched Beverly prepare medicine and helped her with it. After peyote has been harvested, it can be dried. I have seen some people dry peyote buttons in food driers. But sometimes, when people travel to the Peyote Gardens in South Texas to collect medicine, they may obtain peyote that had been previously dried by the state licensed *peyotero* or *peyotera*. Once peyote buttons are dry, the small tufts of white "fuzz" on top can be gently removed, usually with the assistance of a small knife. This is called "cleaning" peyote. Thau says, "It's good to clean peyote because nobody wants that fuzz getting caught in the back of the throat," while chuckling and mock coughing. It is quite uncomfortable. Anybody can clean peyote as long as you have a "good thought" or a "good heart" while you are cleaning it. Beverly also enjoys cleaning peyote. One Sunday afternoon before everyone had gathered around the kitchen table, with a large tin of dried peyote buttons, Bev handed me a very small knife and said, "Here, have a seat, make sure you have a good heart. Don't think anything bad for anybody." I took her words to heart. I asked, "What do I do?" And Bev replied, "Just like this. Try to pull off the hairs with the knife and your thumb." It took a few tries to do it neatly.

In many ways, a wife's willingness to support her husband as a roadman is virtuous and pious. At least this is what I have gathered from spending time with my Thau and Bev. In Thau's case in particular, it is important for him that his wife supports him in this way. His ex-wife was raised Christian. Over the course of their rocky marriage, most of the time she was fine with participating in the NAC. At other times of personal revival of Christian fervor, she would not participate in NAC nor encourage her children to follow their father's "pagan" ways. Thau is glad that his current partner believes in NAC and wishes to participate in this form of ritual practice.

In fact it was through the NAC that Thau and Bev met. Bev also knew Horace, Waldo's thau, my Khön. Every now and then, Bev credits Horace with their coupling, and sometimes, she blames Horace. Sometimes Bev or Thau will joke at each other that Horace "influenced" Bev to be interested in Thau, hence the "blame" during rough moments. Thau declares his love for Bev out loud, "I love my mahyi".

Relationships with Work and Individual Prayer

Beverly actively participated in the Native American Church for many years. Her previous husband, a Diné man, was also a practitioner. They used to attend meetings together. Beverly had been known as a generous, kind, pious woman who sang well in church. After Bev and Thau got together, however, Thau actively discouraged Beverly from participating in NAC meetings or singing in the tipi. Though Beverly, who is Akimel O'odham, admits that this is proper according to Kiowa way, she herself seems to

be a bit sad about it. I think that she would prefer to attend more meetings and to sing peyote songs in the meeting.

I have not heard her complain about that though. It is more of a feeling that I get, a lowered glance, a turning away when Thau says, "women ain't even supposed to be in that tipi," or something to that effect. Beverly's mother was Akimel O'odham, and her father was EuroAmerican. So, it is Beverly's choice to conform to the Kiowa ways that Thau claims to expound/impose.

This does not change the fact that Beverly believes in this medicine. It is probably her faith in the medicine as much as her devotion to Thau that keeps her happy with the fact that she does not sing often in tipi anymore and that she rarely goes into meetings, even when they are happening at her own home. She also takes very seriously her duty to be a good hostess, keeping the house clean, preparing food, or overseeing the preparations when there are abundant helpers. Sometimes her nieces may help. Occasionally one of her nieces may attend the service. Not as often Bev's son or daughter may visit, but I have not been at a meeting with Bev's children present. I have attended just one meeting when one of Bev's nieces attended.

Beverly prays in her own way, in her own time. I have not witnessed her private devotions, nor have I sought to do so. With Thau on the other hand, he has dragged me outside to observe his devotions on occasion. I assume that this interactive dynamic is also gendered. I do not think that Thau would do the same with me if I were his daughter. But I also think that my Thau would not do this for me if I were not his "Bo," his sonny boy. So this interaction is not merely a gendered interaction, but is simultaneously the

enacting of close familial relationships. Beverly expresses her religious devotion by doing the best she can on the job, taking care of her house, and taking care of her family, including Thau.

One nice morning, Thau tied drum. That means that the ritual iron kettle drum that is used in peyote meetings was prepared for use. This is a skilled and sometimes painful process. What must be done is that a hide must be stretched over the top of the kettle with seven smooth stones and a long rope using an overlapping weaving pattern. Usually the point of a deer antler is used as a tool to work with the rope. After the drum is tied it must be filled with water. It is now ready to play. Thau tied the drum to show DaveRay and me how to tie a drum, and because he promised Bev that she could sing with it. Apparently, to sing peyote songs is not forbidden for women, but singing in a peyote meeting is certainly discouraged by Thau. But on a bright spring Sunday morning, in the privacy of the backyard, Bev could sing to her hearts content. Bev's eldest niece, another believer in the NAC and a Roman Catholic also sang peyote songs that morning while holding her infant son.

Beverly is the main breadwinner in the house. She is also the one who runs most all of the errands. Thau does not have a job, nor can he drive, legally. Thau sometimes has his own money, but the steady income comes from Beverly's "nine to five." If Thau wants to head up north for a meeting, Beverly drives. Thau has some tumors in his right leg that make driving long distances rather painful. If the meeting or journey takes them far enough, then Bev needs to take time off from work. Thau usually stays home all day, relaxing, thinking, working in the yard or visiting if somebody stops by the house. He

used to do a lot of beadwork and used to make feather fans and gourd rattles, ritual implements of the Native American Church. However, he has not done as much of this type of work over the past few years.

THE CHANGING PRESENCE OF WOMEN

Thau expresses discomfort, disapproval, and distrust over changes that he has seen in the NAC and ritual procedures within the NAC. There are a few differences in ritual practice between the ways the four original tribes conduct their peyote meetings. These differences are not significant to the efficacy of the ceremony, in Thau's eyes. However, Thau is very much Kiowa-centric, feeling much more comfortable with the traditional Kiowa procedures, and carrying the opinion that the Kiowa way is the "best" way.

Historic Participation

As previously mentioned, when Thau was growing up, the meetings he attended rarely had female participants. The women were in the house taking care of everything else that was not the tipi meeting itself. Thau's mother did not attend many meetings even though her father, her husband, and her brothers were roadmen. When Thau's dad traveled to run meetings, Erma stayed home to look after the home and the family. Indeed, when the NAC first started forming in the late 1800's in Oklahoma, only men participated in the meeting. La Barre notes that for the Kiowa and the Comanche, in the early days of the developing peyote cult in Oklahoma, women were not allowed in the

meeting. Gradually this changed as women began to attend meetings as patients and later as attendees, but "they could not use the ritual paraphernalia; under no circumstances may a menstruant woman enter" (1959:60).

These days women sit up in tipi and sing. During my short experience with NAC, I have not attended a meeting when women did not sing and sit up in tipi. I know that Thau does not fully approve of women singing in the tipi, but I have not heard him express this to anybody else but us. "Well, I'm not back home. I'm not in Oklahoma. I'm here in Arizona with these tribes. They have their own ways." These kinds of statements remind me of general Native American reluctance to "correct" or interfere with the right of people to do as they please. "But if we were back in my home, and I was running the show, I'd let them all know what's right, or what's proper." These kinds of statements from Thau remind me of his own need to exert authority the way he describes his father during his heyday.

There is symbolic importance to the ritual of women bringing in the morning water, as mentioned earlier. Thau has also told me that the reason for this comes from the origin stories about how peyote came to the people. "Peyote came to a woman. It was a woman who first heard that medicine and listened to him and ate him. She brought that medicine back to her people, to the medicine men and religious men of her tribe. She showed them the medicine and said that the medicine said to make a ceremony, a procedure to worship with that medicine." So, the water woman represents this first woman who brought the medicine back to her people.

Ritual Participation as a Mark of Tribal Identity

In Thau's mind, tribal identity is closely interlaced with "traditional" identity. In other words, the more "traditional" a Native American is, the more Native American they truly are. Being more "traditional" is also interwoven with gender identity. A truly "native" woman must act like a "native" woman. In Thau's mind this point comes vividly to life around the issue of women singing in the NAC meeting. A traditional Kiowa woman would not go into the meeting, and if she did go in, she would not sing without her husband's permission. This also holds for the so-called traditional Cheyenne NAC participants of Thau's youth. Thau's father was Kiowa, and his mother was Cheyenne. So, if you were a traditional Kiowa or traditional Cheyenne woman from an NAC family, you would not even try to attend or sing in a tipi meeting.

As the NAC spread to other reservation communities, change seemed inevitable. In particular, NAC became rapidly popular among the Diné (Navajo). In the beginning, mainly Navajo men participated in the church. But over the years more and more Navajo women have attended tipi meetings, sometimes even bringing their young children into the meeting with them. Sometimes Navajo men and women will attend the meeting together. Thau understands that among the Navajo, women are considered the primary gender, men, the secondary. Though this is a broad generalization, it appears to be non-problematic to most contemporary Navajo people that women participate in the NAC. My point is not to say that women do not belong in NAC meetings. Nor is it my point to cite the Navajo as the pioneering group to advocate the participation of women in the all

night meeting. I do point this out, however, as it relates to Thau's explicit views of gender and identity.

As Thau has spent most of his adult life in Arizona, and as he was married to a Navajo woman for more than twenty years, he has had much contact with Navajo people both on the Navajo Nation and in urban areas like Phoenix, Tucson and other places. Moreover, Navajo people live on various other reservations in Arizona. Thau perceives the Navajo NAC as having the highest rates of participation in tipi meetings. This includes Navajo practitioners off their reservation. Many of the meetings that Thau runs have been on the Navajo Nation, including a few that I have attended. Though as my Thau's health has declined a bit in recent years, he does not travel as often or as much anymore.

Navajo participants dominate many of the meetings I have attended with Thau at Bev's house, basically everybody that is not Thau, Bev, DaveRay or myself. It is the way that some Navajo people enact their participation in the NAC that irritates Thau's sensibilities in general. "They put too much of their own ways in it (tipi meeting, NAC). They think that it comes from them (Navajo people). Some even say that Navajo people invented this Church and that they always had this medicine. Bullshit! I'm Kiowa, I'm from Oklahoma, I know where it really comes from." In Thau's mind, one can tell what tribe a participant comes from by their participation. A Navajo woman will go into the tipi and maybe sing in the meeting. A Kiowa woman would not. A Cheyenne woman would not.

Both Thau's and Bev's previous spouses were Navajo people. So, both Thau and Bev are familiar with Navajo language and customs. It is always interesting to watch them discuss what it means to be "Navajo" and what it means to be "Kiowa" or any other ethnicity.

For many Navajo practitioners, a woman going into tipi is a normal and acceptable practice. However, this has changed through time. According to Aberle (1966), Navajo women were attending peyote meetings. However, one of Aberle's closest teachers, Mike Kiyaani told Aberle that he preferred that women not sing nor hold the ritual fan, but that he would not stop a woman from doing so (130). This is a ritual change that Thau is not comfortable with, though he states that he would not tell a woman to leave the tipi, nor would he tell a woman attending not to sing. Thau believes that people are going to do what they are going to do. But if they had the right and proper teachings of this Native American Church (read, old, proper, Kiowa ways about this Native American Church, as Thau perceives those ways) they would behave properly. And that means that the man/husband would fulfill his duty to pray, and the woman/wife would take care of all the things that go on outside of the tipi. Please note that these issues of "gender" identity and "tribal" identity are interrelated. In the time that I have spent with my Thau, these realms of identity are not separate from each other, nor are they limited to the fields of "gender" or "ethnicity."

Obviously notions of gender identity and gender responsibilities are not uniform across Native American nations or even within particular nations. For the Navajo, the primary gender is the feminine, women (Thomas 1997, Epple 1997). Males and the

masculine are considered secondary. So, in the Navajo mind of this Native American Church (in general) mothers and women can be religious practitioners. This may be one of the reasons that the NAC has become so popular with Navajo people. Usually, however, the traditional Navajo adepts are men. And women still take care of the home. But then again, this illustrates the parallel development of "church" among the Navajo. Christian churches encourage the participation and worship of both men and women. The Native American Church in the minds of most Navajo, follow this paradigm. Though there are no female Navajo "roadmen" just as all Catholic priests and most Christian preachers/pastors are men, so too Navajo roadmen are indeed men. I also must say that as my time with my Thau has been in Arizona, I have not spent time in Oklahoma observing NAC meetings populated with many Kiowa or Cheyenne people. In the future I wish to attend more meetings in southwestern Oklahoma in order to observe women's participation in the NAC both inside the tipi and inside the home.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH WOMEN

I love my Thau, but I would not consider him to be my primary role model for behavior towards women in general. Moreover, aspects of Thau's gender identity models and structures do not resonate with my own. A caveat; though I wish to explore ideas around my Thau and his relationships with important women in his life, I do not feel that I can speak fully, authoritatively, nor completely on this subject. I am merely working with some observations through my own eyes and my interpretations of some of Thau's statements.

As Nurturers

Thau mentions his mother almost every day that I spend some time with him. Thau loves his mother. Unfortunately, she has lived all her life in Oklahoma, and Thau has spent most of his adult life in Arizona, mostly Phoenix. His mom has come to Arizona to visit for about two weeks roughly once a year for the past few years. Thau is always happy about this. Due to a few legal issues, Thau avoids going to Oklahoma and spending time in Oklahoma. The effect of this choice is physical separation from members of his family, from the Kiowa tribe, and from their community rituals and ceremonies, especially NAC meetings run in the Kiowa "style."

Thau has only told me a few stories about his mother. Usually, he will only make very brief statements about his mother. The most inspiring of which is his mother's encouragement to Waldo about his alcohol use, "Son, if I can quit, you can too." When Thau was young, after his mother and father split up, Thau was living with his mother and his mother's Cheyenne people in Kingfisher, Oklahoma. During some of this time, Thau says his mother and many of his aunts, uncles, cousins, and other relatives were all perpetual drunks or binge drinkers. Thau says that he saw "crazy" things then. Relatives fighting, drinking, passing out, stealing from each other and other things that Thau feels are bad things. He says he witnessed violence, sexually inappropriate behavior and abuse between affines and blood relatives, and various forms of self-abuse and abuse of others. My Thau remembers:

> Sometimes, when my mom's boyfriends fell asleep, I told my brother Gino, hey, let's get his money. So, I would get my knife, and would cut open his jeans, you know, at the pocket and take his money. Shit, you know he was just going to spend it on liquor. So, Gino and I would take the money and go to the store and buy bread and eggs and milk, anything, you know. So, we wouldn't go hungry.

Thau says that because he did not want to be around this kind of crazy lifestyle anymore, he decided to call up his father.

I believe that Khön was living in Shiprock at the time. Thau asked Khön if he could go out and live with him. Khön agreed. When Thau was in high school he relocated to his father's house. Also at this time, Khön started taking Thau with him to meetings almost weekly. Thau says that it was alcohol use that drove him away from his mother and mother's side of the family at that time. But things would change, as they often do.

But, when my Thau talks about his mom, I cannot recall hearing anything said about grandma, his mom, in a negative way. I have not heard Thau speak ill of his mother in any way, to the best of my recollection. And I have also heard from my Thau that "I'm my mom's favorite. But don't tell any of my brothers that," as he bursts into laughter. On the rare occasions that Thau has gone to visit his mother in Oklahoma, he says that, "my mom lets me get away with things that she doesn't usually let people get away with. She lets me drink in the house and smoke in the house. My brothers or sisters might ask mom, 'hey, why do you let Waldo get away with that,' but my mom doesn't answer them. Or she says, 'Waldo's only visiting. He isn't here that often.'" Waldo chuckles again. "Yeah,

my mom loves me." Moreover, I interpret this recounting by my Thau as an example of how his mom shows affection for him.

Wives may also act as nurturers in the lives of men. Beverly prepares many of the meals, and Thau is free to just sit at the kitchen table and wait to be served a plate. Most of the time I was instructed to fix my own plate. But there was the rare event when my plate was brought to me and taken away when I was done. I do not expect this behavior, but Thau does. Thau is not incapable of making his own food. On the odd occasion when we were in the house but Bev was not, I observed Thau make his own food. But I have not observed Thau do laundry in all the years that I have known him.

Another perplexing behavior to my eyes is that of serving beer. Bev drinks but very rarely. Thau is the heavy drinker. Thau has said many times in my presence, "hon(ey), get me a beer." And she does. Even more perplexing to me is another behavior. Thau says often, "hon, roll me a joint." And she does, though she smokes marijuana also very rarely. If she is not available, Thau rolls his own joints and gets his own beer. Unless, DaveRay is around, then DaveRay sometimes gets Thau's beer for him or rolls a joint for him. None of these behaviors make much sense to me. However, I impose my own interpretation on them. It seems that it may be an act of affection to provide Thau with his alcohol and pot even if it may be detrimental to his health. Also, I suppose that in the gender systems that both Waldo and Bev were reared; it seems perfectly reasonable and acceptable for the wife/mother to do most of the cooking, cleaning, and serving of consumables in the house. This is the only way I can explain these behaviors.

In order to support us all, my mother worked two jobs most of the time. So being, my siblings and I participated in household chores including preparing meals and housecleaning from a very early age. Rarely was I served my food. Though occasionally my grandmother may have served me food at the table, which while growing up, I thought a bit strange. At some level I had internalized the notion that gender roles regarding household chores and food preparation were merely a television or Hollywood fiction. In a seminar led by Chief Wilma Mankiller, Chief Mankiller expressed that she is a "feminist" but also that what "feminist" means can be diverse. For example, Chief Mankiller recounted an interview she remembered when the interviewer asked her what her hobbies were. Chief Mankiller replied, "I love to cook." The interviewer objected to Chief Mankiller's response saying, "oh, please don't say that."

Chief Mankiller went on to explain that because household work and food preparation had been so devalued in mainstream American society, that many mainstream Americans may perceive food preparation as somehow menial or devaluing to the status of women. Chief Mankiller talked about how important it is to feed people, especially in the community to which Chief Mankiller belongs. She went on to point out that in many native communities food preparation had long been considered the most important task in whatever division of labor. How can this devalue a human being? Chief Mankiller also mentioned that she enjoys feeding people and making food for her family and her community. Gendered labor can be configured differently in different cultural and social contexts, as well as the value of that labor. Chief Mankiller also writes that, "From the time of European contact, there has been a concerted attempt to diminish the role of

indigenous women" (2004: 9). I think that dislodging feeding and care from the European patriarchal assumption of devalued labor is a very keen site of cultural resistance.

Also, Chief Mankiller writes that, "They (Native American women) conduct their work and live their lives within the context of the family, the clan, community, nation, and universe. Context is everything" (2004:5). Chief Mankiller is speaking, I believe, of all the ways that Native American women are related to their relatives in their lives, that all these relationships form the "context" of their lives. It is the "everything" that makes the lives of these women. But, I think that these same interrelated contexts are making up the lives of all Native people.

As Partners

Thau expressed to me that he has matured a bit in the past few years. He admits that he has made mistakes. He admits that he has done many things in his life of which he was not proud. It seems that the regret he has most consciously hinted about is that he has cheated on his significant others. He cheated on his ex-wife Mary, a pseudonym for the purposes of this project, many times. He has not told me these stories, but in jokes between Thau and DaveRay, infidelities and peccadilloes are referenced. To the best of my knowledge, Thau has not cheated on his current partner Beverly. But he has joked about the possibility of doing so, usually when in the company of men, thus reflecting, I believe the sexual joking of male gendered joking behaviors, which in themselves could be the subject of a large and complex monograph.

There seem to be time periods when he treated his ex-wife rather badly. On one "family" trip one summer, Thau, Mary, DaveRay and myself headed up to Chinle, Navajo Nation, in a borrowed car. We stopped in Holbrook for dinner. We stopped at my favorite restaurant in Holbrook at the time. We sat down to order dinner, and Mary looked very confused and excited all at the same time. I asked her if she was all right. She responded that she had never before been in a restaurant. "Shit, Thau, how the hell do you have a wife for 20 years and never take her out to dinner? That's fucked up, Thau!" It was the first time I had ever heard DaveRay say anything critical or contrary to our adopted father. I literally took Mary by the hand and helped her order from the menu. Thau was already buzzed; he seemed to ignore the comment. He may have said something in response; however, I was still too stunned to have recorded any memory for the next few minutes.

What hurt Mary the most was when she had to enter University Medical Center in Tucson for chemotherapy. One of Thau's uncles, one of the Cheyenne Turtles, had just died, and Thau had left the state for the funeral and to be with family. Then Thau had to go to the Pacific Northwest to run a few peyote meetings. Mary was upset that Thau did not immediately come to her side. Thau did eventually make it to Tucson to be with Mary. I had visited her every day for a week, when she told me that, "when I get better and get out of here, it's over." She decided to "divorce" Thau then. They were never officially married, so the divorce was a more traditional Navajo divorce. One day Thau got home and found all of his stuff strewn over the front lawn and sidewalk outside of the apartment they had been living in at the time.

Thau was concerned for Mary, though he was not very vocal about it. He sponsored a meeting for Mary to recover from her cancer and her chemotherapy. Ben Eagle ran this meeting at Beverly's house. The tipi was very packed that night. I suppose that there were many people who wanted to pray for Mary's health. I attended this meeting because I cared about Mary. She did recover. She remains cancer free to this day.

It was shortly after this meeting that Thau moved into Beverly's house. Mary had kicked him out of their apartment. Or Thau left of his own accord depending upon who is telling the story or what kind of a mood the storyteller is in at the time. Either way, it seems that the split was mutual. This began a rift between Thau and his children, who sided with their mother, especially the daughters. I know that Mary was particularly bitter about the breakup and about Thau, calling him the "Devil" on numerous occasions. Mary also dove deeper and deeper into fundamentalist evangelical Christianity, thus further deepening the gulf between herself and Thau, as peyote church is demonic in the eyes of such Christians.

It seems that for Thau, Mary was always the subordinate and subordinated wife and partner. She cooked every meal, every day for herself and her family, except for that one dinner in Holbrook already mentioned. She took care of the kids. I believe that she held a job for many years. There were some years when Thau worked steadily, either illicitly or licitly, thereby providing income. But it is clear that for most of the time, Mary was the provider of stability for the household. Thau enjoyed partying with his sons who were variously involved in gang activity in Phoenix. This has provided Thau with a lot of

story telling material from drug parties, to grand theft auto, to prostitution, to liquor store robbery, fighting and assault, *et cetera*. Either Thau participated or simply witnessed such activities depending on the situation. Mary never once participated in these activities, remaining in the home ready to take care of her husband or wayward, adventure seeking sons, or ready to bail them out of jail if necessary.

Thau does not give Beverly as much trouble as he gave Mary. Thau has given me a few reasons for this. In no particular order, first, "I'm too old for that shit, but I still think about it," second, "I'm tired of all that," third, "I guess we all have to grow up sometime," fourth, "I miss my grandkids, and I want to see them again," fifth, "my daughters won't let me see my grandkids if I'm all fucked up or drunk, you know." In many ways, Thau has matured enough to know that the way he treated Mary on occasion would not be easily repeated with Beverly. Moreover, Thau's years of hard living and heavy drinking have caught up with him. "I used to be able to walk on my hands, bo, and I used to do those hand-stand push-ups, you know. But I can't do that anymore." Thau regrets the strength that he has lost. Plus his health has become an issue of concern. Another reason that Thau does not give Bev as many problems and heartaches as Mary could also be that Thau wants to express his affection for Bev by treating her better than he has treated previous partners. Thau, I think, wants to be more supportive and affectionate to Beverly, especially since Beverly expresses her affection for Thau in so many ways.

It is together that my Thau and Bev are actively participating in the ritual life of the Native American Church. As my Thau does not travel as much as he used to in order

to run meetings, when my Thau runs a meeting, it is usually in the yard of Beverly's house. Beverly had hosted tipi meetings at here home prior to the time that Beverly and my Thau became attached. As Thau prays and runs the meetings, usually, Beverly will be in the house tending to the guest and to the preparations. Beverly will be visiting with other ladies that are helping her. Or, Bev and other mothers will be tending to children or putting them to sleep on recliners, sofas, or large cushy chairs. In the life of the church, these appear to be complementary activities. Laura Jane Moore, writing about historic Chiracahua Apache states that, "The sexual division of labor did not put women in a subordinate position to men, but instead led to complimentary roles for women and men" (2001:94). I see parallels here with how my Thau and Bev participate in church activities. Moreover, Mary Jo Fox and Sheila Nicholas point out that many American Indian women, especially those still a part of tribal communities, "assume a role of responsibility and obligation to her people and aspire to become an honored woman in the community" (2005:176). Over the few short years that I have known Beverly, I see a woman who assumes great responsibility for her relatives and loved ones, including her children, nieces, my Thau, her guests and fellow church members, and even me, thus commanding much honor from many directions.

I am reminded of Inés Talamantez who stated, "The indigenous framework within which many of us (Native American women) work reveals the systems of relatedness, obligation, and respect that govern the lives of many native women" (2005:222). I would like to add that these same systems of relatedness, obligation and respect are also part of social systems that include Native American men and other relatives, men or women,

Native and non-Native. In Beverly's case, all of the effort she makes in relation to the Native American Church is an expression of her commitment to her relatives, to her community, and to her indigenous people. She does all of this with love, affection and with a good thought and a good heart. In all of this she is doing this with respect and care, thus fulfilling all of her own perceived obligations and duties within a social environment of reciprocal relationships.

Furthermore, I see Beverly's life and commitment as part of the ongoing responsibility that many Native American women take in building and protecting their families and their people. Sylvia Maracle, a Canadian Mohawk community leader contextualizes such work and the lives of native women as community development (2003). As so many indigenous communities are faced with so many devastating and destructive forces from so many different sources, both external and internal, even "internalized … many forms of violence" (71) community development is central to survival, to healing, to remaining a people. For many Native American communities, this kind of work, feeding, hosting, praying, making space for people to feel welcome and safe, is indeed, community development in a very radical way. Beverly places herself right in the middle of developing her community through this Native American Church.

ABOUT ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCES IN OUR LIVES, AND ABOUT SOME OF ITS RELATED PAIN

This chapter is very difficult to write.

Many people have written about alcohol and alcohol use among Native American people. Moreover, images of alcohol and Native American stereotypes still color American consciousness about Native American people and communities. The "drunken Indian" stereotype still exerts some power in American popular images of American Indian people. Even though many Native Americans live without alcohol, the high prevalence of alcohol use and misuse among some Native American people touches the lives of nearly all Native people through friends, relatives, and loved ones.

Academics, scholars, and government officials have authored technical reports and texts describing alcohol use and misuse among various Native American groups, communities and individuals. Some of these works have attempted to influence health policy, others are merely descriptive, and still others propose and analyze measures of prevention and treatment of alcohol abuse. However, all of these texts combined with the stereotypes of "drunk Indians" construct a "problem" of "Alcohol and the Native American."

All though I too am contributing to the discursive construction of the "alcohol problem" by writing this chapter, it is not my central focus or motivation. Instead, my

intention in writing this chapter is to explore some of the ways that alcohol use exists in my Thau's life, how it is a part of his life and reality. And in my descriptions, I will try to look at how alcohol, as a part of my Thau's life, has also become part of my Thau's relationships to other people, including myself. I am not recommending policy, nor am I analyzing alcohol use in an attempt to reform or treat my Thau. But alcohol is there. So, I feel compelled to write about it. Also, this chapter will speak mainly of alcohol, but other substances may be mentioned, such as marijuana, methamphetamine, and crack cocaine.

"Tell the truth, Sonny Boy." I remember my Thau telling me at some point. "You know, Sonny Boy, some books out there try to make things all pretty and shit. Don't do that. They don't tell the whole story, you know. Some of these roadmens out there, they have problems. I'm not perfect. So, tell it the real way." Having these words in the back of my mind, I will try to talk about alcohol and drugs in my Thau's life and my experiences with him.

Scholars, policy makers, missionaries, and officers of the government have made alcohol and alcohol use among Native American people, communities and groups a subject of inquiry, interrogation, regulation, and intervention in some form since first European contact. It would therefore be disadvantageous to make a comprehensive review of the literature at this point. But it is advantageous to point out that there are waxing, waning, persistent and interweaving discursive interlocutions including but not limited to issues of medicine, public health, hygiene, education, morality, religion, identity, and other interventions attempted and completed through the regulation of American Indian lives and bodies by governmental representatives. One very simple

example I would like to mention here is the United States 1832 ban on sale of liquor to the Indians. Luis S. Kemnitzer also points out that in 1893 "the Commissioner of Indian Affairs promulgated a set of regulations that included offenses punishable by Indian courts," (1972:138) and among these offenses include Indian intoxication, the sale or barter of liquor to Indians and between Indians. Interestingly enough, these 1893 regulations also banned plural marriage, the practices of medicine men, and the consultation of medicine men, among other practices. Kemnitzer notes, "that more than half of the 'offences' were the continuation of traditional practices, and that intoxication was considered only a little worse as a crime than consulting a medicine man" (ibid:139).

That alcohol use and its effects exist is not in question, either for Native Americans or for mainstream Americans. Beatrice Medicine further places the presence of alcohol as something that informs the position of Native Americans in a wider American social context that includes racism:

> But a myth persists. The 'Drunken Indian' image pertains to all Indians – male and female. It is part of the fabric of white and Indian relationship in the past and present. Patterns of alcohol utilization, behavior while drinking, and attitudes toward liquor vary from group to group. Nonetheless, the image of the aborigines who are 'unable to hold their liquor' remains. (2001: 234)

It is this "myth" that I do not wish to promote nor contend with in writing this chapter.

Yet, my Thau loves his beer. He drinks it almost every day. And many a wonderful day of stories and conversations and good feelings have included beer. How can I ignore the presence of alcohol in my fieldwork, my writing, or worse in my own

relationships with my relatives? How can I unilaterally condemn the presence of alcohol in the lives of my relatives and friends? Is it possible to "de-problematize" the use or presence of alcohol through writing a dissertation portion about relatives whose lives are touched by alcohol or substance use in some way? This is the tension that has flowed gently beneath the surface of the preceding chapters, and will surface, boil, and sometimes overflow in this chapter. I feel that I may not ignore the use of alcohol in this project, and I do not wish to add my pages to the bloated discourses of Indian alcoholism. Hence, here is the manifold difficulty of writing this chapter; notwithstanding the pain and grief that can accompany lives damaged by alcohol use.

Paul Spicer in an article in 1997, advocates for what he calls a "(dys)functional anthropology of drinking" (307) that recognizes the social (functional, both disintegrative and integrative) and personal (psychological and interrelational) ambivalence and complexity of drinking in American Indian lives. Moreover, anthropology "has the most to contribute to an evolving understanding of the ambiguous and contradictory nature of the human experience with alcohol" (ibid: 319). Spicer was dissatisfied with the emphasis in the anthropological literature regarding how alcohol use is socially integrated in the lives of American Indian drinkers, or that particular groups of American Indians have developed drinking patterns that reflect traditional or indigenous models of sociality, conviviality, and economic exchange. Spicer wishes to point out not only that there are great social costs to Native American drinkers and their relatives, but also that "Indian drinkers simply do not exemplify one opinion about drinking. Instead, their attitude is a product of the tension between two mutually incompatible positions: those

that favor alcohol use and those that condemn it" (317). That is the personal psychological dimension. In the social context of Native American communities and groups, alcohol use can bring people together as well as tear people apart. I am grateful for Spicer's call for complexity and for acknowledgment of ambiguity and ambivalence of alcohol in Native American lives.

My Thau's life certainly reflects ambiguity, complexity, contradiction, function and dysfunction in many different aspects and issues, including alcohol and substance use. Some of my reflections on my Thau's drinking and sobriety, life and spirituality will express such ambiguity and complexity. But one of the dynamic themes I wish to draw attention is that of pleasure/pain. Briefly put, Waldo enjoys drinking and partying, when he is able to party. And at this point in his life, my Thau understands that he is now alcohol dependent, despite his cavalier and jovial attitude. And my Thau feels not only physical pain, but also emotional pain, thereby perpetuating more alcohol use.

THE UBIQUITY OF ALCOHOL

A lot of the time that I have known my Thau, Waldo, he has been different levels of drunk. There have been periods in Thau's life, some even spanning years when he was completely sober. However, the time I have spent with him, specifically for the fieldwork for this project (2 years), he has not been sober in my presence. There was a particular month during the fieldwork when I was unable to see him as both of our schedules could not overlap. According to DaveRay and to Bev, he was sober for that time period. I was looking forward to spending time with my Thau sober. I headed up to see him the next

week. When I got there that particular Saturday afternoon, Thau had been drunk for about a day. That particular sober window of opportunity had closed.

While listening to the audio recordings that had been made during the course of the fieldwork, I noticed on almost every tape, the sound of the "pop" of an aluminum can. Though one cannot see the aluminum can on an audio recording, I remember clearly that this sound emanates from a can of Natural Lite, a very cheap, very bad brew of pilsner, easily purchased at any convenience store by the eighteen-pack for about nine to eleven dollars depending on the sale.

I remember, after my Thau had requested beer from me, I once bought on sale two 36-packs of Natural Lite from a convenience store in Tucson, Arizona for about thirteen dollars each. The bargain hunter in me was pleased that I stumbled upon my Thau's favorite beer for such a low price. I remember feeling generous at that moment, and I remember deciding to buy not one pack but two 36-packs. Thau was not the only person to drink Natural Lite that weekend in September 2006. Thau's "adopted daughter by extension," DaveRay's sister, Karla, drank some too, as did her fiancé who was also present. Karla and her fiancé visited my Thau and Beverly the Saturday afternoon of that weekend. As usual with various people of various levels of inebriation, the atmosphere seemed slightly tense, on the verge between miscommunication, misunderstanding, hurt feelings, and angry shouting, even some racial tension, as Karla's fiancé is "white."

I did not purchase beer for my Thau again.

But there was always more beer in the refrigerator, most often in the form of cans of Natural Lite. Occasionally, Natural Lite appeared in the fridge as liter bottles. Natural

Lite came from the grocery stores, nearby Albertsons or Basha's, or from the convenience stores that sold the beer and the gasoline that enabled Bev's car to make beer runs when the present supply was running low or gone. These days, Thau cannot drive, nor does he own a car. Thau presently is unemployed, so he does not have any "official" personal income. The money for beer and marijuana comes from his significant other. She has both the income and the vehicle to make the beer magically appear in the refrigerator. Sometimes she refuses. This of course leads to arguments and hurt feelings on all sides. Sometimes she anticipates, thereby not allowing the stash to become fully depleted. Sometimes she purchases only after the present supply has ended, in an attempt to limit Thau's rate of intake. Thus resulting in multiple trips to the store per day. There is no easy way to keep the river of Natural Lite flowing, nor an easy way to stop the flow. Thau "chain" drinks his cans of Natural Lite, just as a chain smoker will go through several packs of smokes in a day.

Relationships with Alcohol

This project is supposed to be about relationships. I felt that I must say a few words about alcohol, as these past two years, during all of my interactions with my Thau; my Thau has been drunk. Many times, he has been drunk and stoned. My Thau really likes marijuana too. In some ways, alcohol has become a character in and of itself in this story.

Thau's significant other, Beverly, does not drink as Thau does. I think that she rarely has a beer or a margarita. She drinks less than I and far less than Thau. I do not

drink very often, but I am not an abstainer. She may rarely take a puff off of a joint at the insistent request of my Thau. But other than that, I have not known of nor heard of her using drugs. She may have experimented with drugs in her youth as most American and Native American youth do. But that was years before I ever met her. So, many weekends, the only person in the house drinking and/or using was my Thau. DaveRay, my Thau's adopted son, has never even tasted alcohol, nor taken any drugs. So, on a weekend when we were all present, the only drunk and/or stoned person would be my Thau.

Thau acknowledges many times and many different ways that he, "has a problem with this alcohol." He has declared that, "I'm just a drunk," or "I'm a drunk." Thau does not like the word "alcoholic." He very rarely declares himself an "alcoholic." At this point, I'm not sure why this is so. Jack Waddell, while studying social drinking among Tohono O'odham in Tucson, does "refer to the terms 'alcoholic' and 'alcoholism' as folk taxa because they define states of psychosocial being, physiological responses, and conditions of behavior only from the perspective of a single cultural orientation" (1975:14). Thau prefers to just call himself a drunk, if he acknowledges that there is a problem at all. Thau's relationship with alcohol is a long-standing one. Thau has told me stories about getting drunk at powwows when he was a young adult. Thau has told me stories about watching his mother and various relatives, aunts, uncles, cousins, binge drinking to the point of passing out on sofas, on beds, on porches, and sometimes of the resulting violence and abuse fuelled by alcohol.

Alcohol has been present for celebration and for mourning. Alcohol has presaged elation and violence. Alcohol has been the cause and the effect of pain and suffering.

Thau has told me stories about having fun and acting crazy with alcohol and drugs. He has told me stories of parties and drunken carousing. He has told me about drinking alone or with relatives and friends. Some stories end with jokes and good feelings. Other stories end with fights, blood and the rare police intervention. In a way, alcohol has become another character or relative to be mindful of, to listen to, to include or exclude, to remember by its presence or absence.

Waldo's father did not drink habitually, according to what my relatives tell me. However, Waldo tells me that his mother for a time was also a drinker. Waldo, my Thau has told me, with a little bit of pride in his voice, that his mother woke up one day and just quit drinking altogether. "She was done with it," he tells me. And he added, "my mom always tells me, 'son, if I can do it, so can you,' and I believe that." My Thau believes at some level that he, like his mother can give up this alcohol altogether if he really wanted to do so. The problem is, Thau says, "I like it too much."

When Waldo was a teenager, at some point, he left his mother's household and relatives to go live with his father near Shiprock, Navajo Nation, because his mother and relatives on his mother's side were always drinking, and he did not wish to live that way anymore. His father, my grandpa by extension, took him in, and took him along to many peyote meetings. Waldo would carry drum for his father at peyote meetings and thereby learned how his father ran meetings, how his father prayed for people and helped them get well. Waldo learned the songs that people sang in worship in the church. As Waldo's dad traveled all over Indian Country leading meetings, Waldo met believers from all sorts

of Native communities all over the United States. Waldo fondly remembers this time in his life with his father and almost weekly peyote prayer services.

Khön taught Thau a lot about being a roadman. He also taught Thau about being an "Indian Doctor," somebody who has the knowledge to help people heal from physical problems, pains and sicknesses. Thau has not explained much about "doctoring." The rules that govern this knowledge are much more strict than the rules that govern knowledge about peyote and NAC. Knowledge about peyote and NAC is very open. Doctoring, in the Kiowa tradition is much more strict and requires not only dedication from the learner, but also a "right" to have access to this knowledge. Thau's father was a very famous and powerful Kiowa doctor. This topic has been taken up in a previous chapter of this essay.

During this time away from Oklahoma and his mother's relatives, Thau was not entirely abstinent from alcohol use. However, it seems that Thau would use alcohol to have a good time, to party with his friends, or to socialize. From what I can gather, and this is my interpretation, Thau's use of alcohol was tempered and circumscribed by its social use rather than its quotidian and habitual use. In his youth, Thau could drink with his cousins, his brothers, his friends, or the friends of his friends. Thau, like most young men, had his group of drinking buddies. This is common not just among Native American peer groups, but also among mainstream American peer groups.

Later in life, as mentioned in an earlier chapter in this essay, Thau met his non-biological brother, his pavi, David, who we sometimes call "Mobein." Thau and Mobein have been friends, brothers, and drinking and partying buddies for many years. I do not

know when they met. But they were already calling each other “brother” when I first met Thau. Moreover, DaveRay, my friend who introduced me to his adopted father, Waldo, was already referring to David “Mobein” as his uncle, his “segi” when I first met DaveRay. Thau has told me more than one story involving spending time with David on a road trip, camping trip or fishing trip. Thau has also told me more than one story about how he and Segi Mobein drank themselves silly or into oblivion, or stories about smoking crack or snorting cocaine, or smoking pot. These stories with Mobein always seem to end on happy notes rather than sour ones, usually with a chuckle of gratitude for having such a good time with such a dear friend.

That is not to say that there are not horrible stories involving relatives and alcohol as well. The worst that I can recall is about one of Thau’s uncles on his mother’s side. Wayne Turtle, son of Ralph Turtle Jr. my Thau’s uncle on Thau’s mother’s side, also drank. Since I did not know Wayne very well, only in stories actually, I cannot speak to how much Wayne drank. I do know from stories that Wayne was a roadman, that he led meetings, and that he was another kind of “Indian Doctor” who helped people recover from physical ailments. One day, my friend DaveRay called me up to tell me some very bad news, that Thau’s uncle Wayne had died. Wayne had gotten drunk. Some Navajo drunks had picked a fight with him. Two against one, they beat up on Wayne. Wayne, now drunk, bloody and beaten, sought shelter somewhere, but had been turned away. Wayne was tired now, late at night, and decided to rest in an ally behind a Circle K or a Seven Eleven. It was a very cold February night in Gallup, New Mexico. Wayne froze to death, alone and uncomforted. Thau was very shaken up by this. He was also very sad

and emotional about this for many months to come. Over these months, I cannot directly ask about relatives who have passed on as it causes much discomfort and pain. Also, there are certain taboos about speaking of the dead that I am not fully aware or fully instructed. So far, I just know that talking about our relatives who have passed away is neither a "neutral" nor "objective" nor "trivial" a topic.

Thau sometimes talks about his other relatives that drink or who are drunks. Sometimes he talks about how they are worse drunks than he is. Other relatives have gotten sober, and then after some painful event, like the death of a loved one, they begin drinking again, often to consistent drunkenness. Still others never stopped drinking. Obviously, over the course of this fieldwork, I have contemplated the presence of alcohol in my own life and past, and in the lives of my relatives, friends, and loved ones. I remember when my dad got drunk when I was a child. I remember how ugly and mean my grandfather was when he was drunk. It was only during his last years that I understood that my grandfather had started drinking after returning from Berlin at the end of World War II. Only after a stroke, when I was a college student, did he begin to give up alcohol. Only once did he ever mention to me or talk to me just how horrible, bloody, and deadly "Utah Beach" was that day when the allies swarmed onto the beaches of Normandy. He was only seventeen then; he had lied about his age to enlist. He broke down into anguished sobs, that night. He went to bed. And I never heard about D-Day from him again.

Over the course of this project I have thought about my relatives, uncles, and acquaintances that I have known that have been drunk and those who have been real

alcoholics. Somehow, my father stopped drinking. I do not know when exactly or how, since I lived with my mother after the divorce. I began to notice some of the similarities in life history between my Kiowa dad and me.

All this being said, at some point, I had to make a decision about my level of participation in my Thau's substance use. Towards the beginning of the fieldwork for this project, I decided not to contribute to my Thau's substance use. As mentioned before, I did bring beer to him once. But I chose to inform my Thau of my decision that I would under no circumstances carry marijuana or any other drug in my car. I also informed him that I would not carry a person, including my Thau in my vehicle if that person was carrying any illegal drug. This caused tension for the first two or three months. It subsided into a non-issues after that, once everyone accepted the fact that, "that's just how he is," meaning, that is just how I behave, consistently. No one thought to challenge my decision on this matter once I had proven to be consistent.

The Conflicting Medicines, Peyote vs. Alcohol

Many times Thau told me and continues to tell me that this medicine, peyote, and alcohol do not mix, that they conflict with one another. In the old days, people would not use these together, he tells me. Thau recognizes that he uses alcohol and peyote constantly. Occasionally Thau will try to "taper off" beer in order to prepare himself for an NAC meeting. Thau says that he would like to be more sober than drunk to participate in a meeting. Moreover, Thau says that he tries to be sober for a couple days before he runs an NAC meeting. This has as much to do with piety and respect as it does with

personal comfort and responsibility. Typically, a roadman will consume more peyote than anyone else in the congregation of a particular NAC meeting. The roadman is responsible for everybody in that tipi. The roadman must therefore be more in tune with the medicine and its God-given power to help people. If Thau has a lot of alcohol in his system, then the alcohol and the peyote will "fight" inside of him, making him very uncomfortable and sick. At least that is what he tells me. I do not want to put it to the test personally.

Thau has told me that, "I know how to handle it. If I'm drunk, and I'm in a meeting, I'll just take a little bit (of the medicine), because I know myself. I know how much I can take." Many times my Thau has told me that NAC has much more to do with faith than with eating medicine. "If you have faith, all you need to do is eat a little bit of that medicine. You don't need to eat a lot of it. It's your faith and your prayers." However, running a meeting requires more responsibility and awareness, and therefore, more medicine. Thau knows that if he's going to have to run a meeting, he had better not have too much alcohol in him.

That is not to say that Thau has been dead sober every time he has run a meeting. I remember the first time I was ever in a meeting that Thau ran as roadman. He had a pitcher of beer at dinner several hours before the meeting began. Plus, he was badgering both DaveRay and myself for more beer as we traveled to the meeting in the middle of the Navajo Reservation. That was a rough meeting. DaveRay, Thau and I still laugh about it, the trip, the meeting, the stories told on the way.

Over the years, with what I have been taught about the Native American Church and what I have read in books and articles, many Native American people have participated in the Native American Church as part of their personal road to sobriety. That "good red road" is a sober road. Some Native American people will continue to be involved in the NAC as part of their way to maintain their personal sobriety. Houston Smith and Reuben Snake compile and retell several first-person narratives of practitioners and members of the NAC (1996). Several of these accounts are made by Native Americans who directly credit peyote with helping them achieve and maintain sobriety, as well as living good lives, on the good red road (1996: 64-65). Kunitz and Levy, working mainly with Navajo people, observe that, "peyote religion has been used as a specific antidote to alcoholism by all the tribes that have adopted it" (1994: 28).

And it is a relatively common sentiment among many practitioners with whom I have interacted that alcohol is antithetical to peyote/medicine, and that peyote will help heal a person of alcoholism. For example, a very close friend of mine has told me about his life and relationship with both alcohol and his experience with peyote. He was a Vietnam combat veteran. During his military service, he remembers that the Marine Corp had a culture of alcohol use. Also, that drinking with fellow marines was a social experience at times coercive at times voluntary. After returning from Vietnam, as he continued to drink, he raised a family and pursued education. At some point, he sought a way to rid himself of his dependency on alcohol. My friend tried the classic twelve-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous, which he found not very useful due to its inability to address his identity as a Native American and the sources of his pain in the Vietnam War.

He later found a Native American man who I will call Rufus Smith, who modified the twelve-step program to resonate more with other Native American people, and who added his own teachings, which grew out of his own Native American background. This method proved to be the most helpful in dealing with daily alcohol cravings. My friend also participated in a NAC meeting. One of his long time Kiowa friends invited him to a meeting just outside Anadarko, Oklahoma. My friend recalls that most of the meeting was in Kiowa as he was one of only two non-Kiowa participants. My friend also tells me that even then, in the early 1970's, it was a common sentiment among Native Americans that this Medicine helps a person break free from the grip of alcohol.

"Smith's" method, as best I can describe with my limited understanding of it, includes the perspective that alcohol itself is a very powerful medicine, albeit usually destructive and disruptive to Native American life and culture. In that it is a "medicine," it is intrinsically powerful. Hence, Native American people should treat it with the same amount of respect, fear, wariness, and reverence as they would treat any powerful medicine. Peyote is healing medicine that can be used to heal the spirits of people that had been hurt by alcohol, or hurt by other things that led to their alcohol abuse.

I do not think that the perception of alcohol as a powerful medicine in its own right is unique to "Smith's" method. Anastasia Shkilnyk observes that the Anishanabe of the Grassy Narrows community, devastated by relocation, alcohol abuse and mercury poisoning, also perceived alcohol in very complex ways. But one of these ways was summed up by one of the elders of the community, "is that alcohol is a stronger power than the love of children. It's a poison, and we are a broken people" (1985:48). We see

here that alcohol is so powerful over individuals and the community as a whole, that ancient cultural values such as the care and love for children cannot supersede the deleterious effects of alcohol use. Shkilnyk's incredibly compelling ethnography of Grassy Narrows describes the destruction of this native community. As the community is fractured and broken, by other colonial, economic, and oppressive forces, as its ties binding each other together and binding them to their traditions, the destructive power of alcohol becomes overwhelming. But Shkilnyk also notes that alcohol alone was not responsible for the community's destruction, especially prior to the forced relocation of the people.

In a very different cultural context, Christine Eber presents another complex perception of alcohol in the lives of a highland Maya community. She writes, "As we have seen, in their rituals Indigenous people imbue alcohol with a sacred power that is absent in Ladino society" (2000:206). Some Maya community shamans, as Eber calls them, use alcohol to effect their healing visions and power. Also, rum and cane alcohol are ritually consumed during festivals, with symbolic power. And God and other spirits recognize the power of rum and the traditional sugar cane alcohol, *chicha*, in rituals and ceremonies. Eber recognizes that though alcohol can act as a destructive force within her indigenous community of study, alcohol can also wield symbolic power to bring community together. Eber concludes that what remains central to the community is the community itself, that problems with alcohol, healing from alcohol, or ritual use of alcohol are all woven into the "total fabric of Pedrano society" (247). Furthermore, Eber concludes about alcohol, economic oppression, and other social problems that:

> Like indigenous peoples throughout the world, Pedranos struggle on a daily basis to resolve contradictions between their Native beliefs and those of the "modern" world. Pedranos showed me that both their problems and solutions arise from their embeddedness in a social, spiritual, and economic whole with deep and strong roots (249).

For both Eber and Shkilnyk, in their respective indigenous communities of study, alcohol use as a problem or poison, is not merely confined to any particular individual's problem. Nor is the understanding and interrelationship of alcohol within a community merely the result of an individual's perspective. Instead, the picture is more complex, consisting of individuals as individuals and the community together, inclusive of its individuals. Further refractions of complexity express themselves not only in the multivalent symbolic associations of alcohol itself in its social and ritual use, but also through the interconnected lives of community members, with both common and unique uses and views of alcohol. As an individual within a community is neither "good" nor "evil," so too appears to be the presence of alcohol, and its use.

Peyote has its own power. And supposedly this power is always in conflict with the power of alcohol. Because of this, many Native American people have been able to enhance and travel their own road to sobriety with the assistance of this healing medicine called peyote. Even my Thau has said that he has felt peyote and alcohol "fight inside" of him. He says that it does not feel good; that it feels very uncomfortable. La Barre recording information about peyote religion many years ago also noted that one of his

informants said that “whiskey and peyote fight in a man,” echoing this inner fight between alcohol and peyote (1969: 96).

Peyote as purifier will drive from a person many impurities including alcohol. Many people believe that the purging effect of peyote, especially manifest though emesis, is the process and evidence of purification. The idea is quite common that if a person is vomiting, then peyote is driving out of that person, their impure thoughts, actions, and ingested substances, including alcohol. Peyote must do this. Peyote must purify the believer before he can show the believer other things. There must be purification before revelation. And there must be purification for healing and a restoration of balance. At least this is how it has been explained to me.

My Thau would like his children to follow this peyote religion because he believes that the medicine is good. He believes that the medicine has taken care of him through the years and that the medicine can and will take care of his children and grand children. Moreover, Thau would want his biological sons to take up and learn his knowledge, to participate in the NAC and to eventually run meetings and pray for people. But my Thau tells me, “don’t follow in my footsteps. Don’t use this peyote and alcohol together. I can handle it; I know what to do. But you guys can’t handle it. This peyote and this alcohol don’t go together.” And on other occasions Thau tells me, “don’t do it like I do. Stay away from alcohol if you’re going to use this peyote.”

Thau also mentioned to me that there are other roadmen out there that also use alcohol or get drunk regularly. He pointed out to me that this is also less than ideal. But

maybe, Thau mentions this only to get himself off the hook so to speak. Thau has mentioned other relatives of his that led NAC meetings and who also enjoy alcohol.

My Thau is aware that he is not being very proper by continuing to be a drunk and continuing to pray with peyote and even to lead peyote meetings. Thau has also acknowledged to me that if he did not have a problem with this alcohol, then he would be able to run more meetings for people and pray and help people more than he does at present. He says, “When I put this (alcohol) away, when I’m through with it, then you won’t even recognize me. Then I’ll run meetings more often, you know.” Thau expresses great hope for himself if and when he is able to “leave this alcohol alone”. Thau knows that his health will be better, that he would be able to run meetings better, that he would be more useful to this NAC and this medicine in helping people get well and live happier, easier lives.

On the other hand, I think my Thau uses this idea of “putting alcohol away” as a smoke screen for his fear of giving up his alcohol dependency. “You all won’t know me then. If I give up this alcohol, you may not even like me. Nobody will like me then. You all are used to me now, you all get your way with me. If I sober up, you’ll have to do what I say. You won’t like me then.” In other words, my Thau thinks that he would be doing all of us a favor by staying drunk.

His image of himself as “drunk” is an image of himself as happy, calm, contented, easy to get along with, jolly, but also malleable and easily bent to the will of those around him. This self-image contrasts to his hypothetical “sober” self-image as a strict disciplinarian, as the knower of how things “should be,” as the headstrong head of

household whose will to rule is irresistible, inscrutable and unquestioned. My Thau thinks that he does everything that we want when he is not sober. But he also thinks that if he were to become sober, he would not let anybody impose his or her will upon him, that he in fact would impose his will upon everybody else. The result would be many hurt feelings. These hurt feelings would not have any affect on Thau's hypothetical sober behavior, because he does not need the approval of any body else. Therefore, if one of us does not like Thau's will or opinion, "there's the door," as he is so fond of saying. So, in my Thau's mind, he would prefer to stay drunk so that everybody will like being around him, and that everybody around him will not suffer the truth of his "correct" rule over the household.

Personally, I am less than convinced. The rest of us, including Beverly, DaveRay and myself want Waldo to be sober. Other non-biological brothers of my Thau, Joe and Bernie also want Thau to get sober, as they have, or claim to have done. We all want him to pray for people and to run more peyote meetings for people. We want him to be healthy enough to travel to other places to run meetings. We want him to be in the best health possible. If that meant putting up with a crankier version of Waldo, so be it. Furthermore, I am less than convinced by my Thau's statements because, I have seen him be mean, nasty, imposing, and cruel when he is drunk as well as being nice, friendly and jovial when he is drunk. My sense is that he would be capable of both happiness and anger when sober as well as drunk. I suppose that Thau is not ready to give up alcohol, and so, he makes up many excuses including this most elaborate excuse of protecting our feelings.

MARY JANE, "SECOND WIFE"

I have mentioned before that Thau likes to smoke marijuana. On several occasions, while visiting for field work and while just visiting my Thau, he has smoked joints of marijuana. There have been a couple of weekends when Thau has chain-smoked joints of marijuana. He says he enjoys it, and that it makes him feel good.

Substance Use as Normalcy

During the first couple of months of visiting Thau for fieldwork, Thau consistently asked DaveRay to bring up some pot for him to smoke. Thau had become accustomed to his sonny boy DaveRay, providing anything he wanted. DaveRay was always more than happy to give his Thau whatever he wanted. In fact, I had heard many stories from DaveRay and from Thau about how DaveRay would take Thau various places in and out of state to run meetings, to visit relatives, to party and hang out, or to go to bars, even though DaveRay never drinks. Over the course of our friendship, I have not known DaveRay to refuse any of Thau's requests. For example, if Thau and his significant other had a huge argument, and Thau wanted to just pick up and leave for a time, DaveRay would happily drive up to Phoenix or the surrounding area reservations, from Tucson, pick his Thau up, and either take him home to Tucson for a few days or weeks, or deposit Thau at the home of another relative.

This situation presented a problem for Thau, DaveRay, and myself. Thau would ask DaveRay to bring up some marijuana from Tucson. DaveRay did not have access to a

vehicle during part of the fieldwork for this project; so, DaveRay would ride up to visit Thau as a passenger in my vehicle. Thau would also ask me to bring him pot from Tucson. I flatly refused. DaveRay never refused, however, I refused to transport DaveRay in my car if DaveRay was carrying pot or anything else for Thau. This meant that DaveRay either left the pot in Tucson, or I left DaveRay in Tucson. DaveRay quickly learned how serious I was, and left the pot in Tucson.

This did not stop Thau from making his incessant requests. For Thau, smoking pot was normal. For most of his adult life, it was not difficult for him to acquire pot. When Thau did not have access to a vehicle, friends who visited him, might trade marijuana for items or services and vice versa. As Thau had never been caught for possession or use of marijuana, he never thought anything of his use or of someone bringing it to him. Moreover, as DaveRay had always given Thau anything that Thau wanted, within a particular, idiosyncratic limit, Thau thought it quite peculiar that weekend for us, DaveRay and myself, to show up empty handed.

Thau was slightly upset that particular weekend, the first time I refused to transport marijuana to him. But that did not stop Thau from finishing his stash and replenishing it the next day with help from a contact from one of the reservations. “I love my Mary Jane” Thau said on a couple of occasions. He has also joked that he has two wives. One is his “wife,” (his significant other, they are not legally married), and the other wife is Mary Jane. She would never leave him. She’s always faithful. She never refuses him. “Mary Jane is my Second Wife,” he says. Even if his first wife changes, he says smiling, “I’ll always have Mary Jane.”

The Second Wife as Provider

Thau says that he will not say anything bad about marijuana because there really is not anything bad about marijuana. “This marijuana comes from Mother Earth. It’s natural. It’s not bad.” Thau also talks about how marijuana is even used as a sacred medicine among various other Native American tribes. Thau also showed me a ritual item from another Native American group. This ritual item, receives offerings of marijuana. In order to make certain prayers correctly to the spirit that this ritual object represents, one must offer marijuana to it, and then make their prayers.

“All of these natural medicines, these herbs, like peyote and marijuana are good. They have God-given powers to help people. You have to use them in the proper way.” Though Thau knows how to pray with peyote to help people, I do not think that he knows how to use marijuana in the medicinal way. At least Thau has never talked about personally using marijuana to help people spiritually or physically, the way he has spoken about peyote. Thau uses marijuana mostly for pleasure.

There is also another reason why Thau respects marijuana. For a time in his life, marijuana provided him, his wife, and his children with income. Thau was a dealer. Even if he did not have a car at the time, he could use the bus to get from one side of town to the other. He told me that he was certainly nervous at times, especially when he would have anywhere between half of a pound to two pounds of marijuana in his backpack. Sometimes a friend would pick him up and take him to the stash house to pick up material. Other times, people would visit Thau at his place and conduct business.

As Thau tells me his stories, I recall being impressed with the facility with which Thau handled his business. He also told me that he had a group of young people who would run the pot for him, even selling in the near by high school as well as in neighborhoods and on the street. Thau tells me that he was generous with his crew. He looks back on these episodes as fun and as a good time.

How Thau gave up the life of a marijuana dealer is a fun story too. Thau tells me that the police had been watching his place for a while. The police had noticed quite a bit of traffic in and out of Thau's place where he was living with his then wife and his kids. When the time was right, the police were planning to bust Thau and his little operation. Thau tells me that one Sunday morning, very early, the police came to the door. Thau opened the door. The police asked him, "are you Waldo Daukei?" My Thau responded, "yes." The police had a search warrant. Thau told them, "Search all you want, you won't find anything." Thau told me that the police turned the house upside down; every drawer, every box, and every closet was searched thoroughly. Not a trace of marijuana was found. The police asked him, "What's going on here? We see a lot of traffic here, Daukei, why?" Thau told me that he responded to the police, "I'm a craftsman, I do bead work and make handicrafts like fans and gourd rattles," as he gestured to his desk full of beads in plastic boxes and feathers in various stages of assembly and decoration. The police left empty handed and upset.

My Thau laughingly explains that he had hidden all of his marijuana and cleaned out the house just the night before. "You see, one of my crew, a teenage boy who ran pot for me at his high school called me the night before. He said, 'Waldo, the police are

going to raid your house tomorrow morning.' His uncle was one of the police officers, and he over heard his uncle talking." This was how Thau had escaped the police drug raid of his home. Thau told me that he took all of his pot, put it in plastic bags, and buried it in a plastic lined hole in the ground under a stump in the yard. The afternoon after the raid, Thau's friend, the teenager on his crew pedaled over to Thau's place on his bicycle. "Hey Waldo, everything all right?" Waldo was laughing and told the boy what had happened. In gratitude, Thau told me, he gave the boy about a quarter pound of pot saying, "if it hadn't been for you, I would be in jail now." Thau told me laughing that he gave up running pot after that.

PAIN AND HURT

Though many of Thau's stories are funny, though he tells many of his stories when he is in a good mood, it would be quite false of me to say that all of this occurs in a context of a life of perpetual good moods. Much of this chapter explores some of the darker side of the shared stories and lives. This pain becomes expressed in the stories that my Thau tells me, in radical mood swings sometimes brought about by painful memories or by painful miscommunication in the present. Sometimes pain spills over, effecting people nearby. I find it interesting that part of being a relative is knowing about somebody deeply and sharing with somebody in very intimate ways. Negative and positive consequences arise. And this sharing of relationships can bring with it a sharing of pain.

Hurt to Self

As mentioned earlier, my Thau has been drunk almost every visit we have shared during this field project. For several of these visits he has also been stoned on marijuana. On several occasions when Thau was going to participate in a tipi meeting, he would try to not drink the day before and the day of the meeting. I could tell which meetings were important to Thau by the fact that he would stop drinking to prepare for them. I did not see him smoke marijuana at all during those weekends that a meeting took place in the back yard. Though many of Thau's friends and relatives know that he drinks, he tries not to drink in front of them while they are visiting for the meeting. Moreover, Thau will not smoke a joint while NAC practitioners are visiting the home for the purpose of ceremony.

Though Thau knows that he should not use alcohol or marijuana for the sake of peyote and for the sake of his role in the NAC, he still uses. Going into the new year of 2007, Thau had an incident, of which I only heard about a few days later. I cannot vouch for all the details of the story that I heard, but the general points will be recounted. I had spent the New Year holiday with my family in Texas; therefore I was out of state when this episode happened. Apparently, Thau had already consumed all of the beer in the house. He wanted to continue drinking. Beverly did not want Thau to drink anymore. They argued intensely. At some point Beverly, in anger went to the store and bought Thau a large bottle of Vodka. Thau drank more than half of the bottle in less than an hour.

Due to severe dehydration and alcohol poisoning, Waldo ended up in the hospital. The dehydration and the alcohol poisoning exacerbated all his other health issues. He

spent almost a week in hospital. By the time I had returned from Texas, returned to work and had a weekend off from work, Thau was out of the hospital and back home. I did not visit him in the hospital, but I did speak with him on the telephone during his stay. We joked and laughed about his situation. I told him not to give the nurses too hard of a time. I was scared for him. So was DaveRay. I prayed.

This incident provided Thau with a wake up call, so to speak. He started talking more about getting sober after this hospital stay. The doctors had told him that he was just on the verge of beginning cirrhosis. Moreover, whatever internal bleeding that he had, though the doctors could not locate the source of the bleed, would not heal if he continued to drink. Thau gave up drinking for about two weeks. When I was able to return to his house to visit him, I was excited to see him sober. I was out of luck. Thau had begun drinking again the day before I arrived.

In the spring, Thau had a meeting for himself. His pavi, Joe ran the meeting, and another one of Thau's pavi, Bernie, poked fire. This meeting was for Thau to pray about his alcohol use. Thau wanted to ask Creator and this medicine for help to put aside alcohol. This phrase was used to imply that he would not give it up entirely, but relinquish enough of it that his dependency would wane. Luckily, I attended this meeting in support of my Thau. I sat up all night praying for his health and for the health of all my loved ones, family and friends. We had great hope for this meeting. However, Thau kept on drinking.

Hurt to Others

Thau admits to me that he has been violent in the past. He says that he has not hit his current significant other. She has not told me that Thau has hit her. I do not think that he has. But I know that he hit his former wife, the mother of his children. They were together for more than twenty years. Thau told me that he did hit his former wife, though I did not press him for details or frequency. I was very sad to hear about this. I detected remorse in Thau's voice when he told me. Thau mitigated his remorse and his guilt by saying that everybody grows, learns how better to live. Everybody matures in some way. And also that everyone can learn from his or her mistakes. I feel that this remorse is genuine.

Thau has also told me stories at a very personal and confidential level about how his behavior in relation to drug use was potentially damaging to himself and to other people either loved ones or strangers. A couple of these stories are chilling stories involving gangs, prostitution, homelessness, stash houses, grand theft auto and other criminal behavior set in the backdrop of urban central Phoenix. Sometimes these stories include Thau's sons who have been involved in gangs in Phoenix, mostly Mexican-American gangs. These gangs participate in car theft, drug use and trafficking and prostitution, both in the sense of "employing" people to make money for the gang, but also "exploiting" drug addicts for whatever purpose necessary at the time, with payments made in the drug of addiction, usually "crack" cocaine. Thau is not involved with such gangs as he no longer resides in central Phoenix, and his sons who had previously been in gangs are either incarcerated or buried. For all intents and purposes, that part of my Thau's life is over.

But even so, these chilling and sometimes frightening stories take on tone of humor, suspense, and excitement. Together we find humor mainly in the idea of how wacky circumstances can get for relatives who may be involved in such activity. How we can allow ourselves to fall into situations that appear to require such drastic "solutions" as criminal activity, "well, I needed to make money real fast, you know. The car broke down and we didn't have all the money for the rent." Or sometimes the actions and situations of a loved one draw in Thau's participation in another situation or adventure, "well, Bo, my sonny boy got into some trouble, so I was trying to help him out." Spending this kind of time with my Thau made me realize that my own life, though quite boring compared to Thau's and to his blood son's lives, reflects the privileges of minimal police contact, the absence of the need to traffic drugs for a steady reliable income and a living wage, and close relatives that did not involve themselves in such dangerous situations as gang activity. I also remind the readers and myself that these privileges are also an expression of mainstream American power and class.

Philippe Bourgois (1995) notes that due to American racial and class apartheid, the drug dealers he studied, did not have the skills to "make it" in the white world so, they returned to the lucrative drug trade after failures in minimum wage, labor and discipline intensive employment. And as many of these men would only be hired for minimum wage, they had no incentive to endure the loss of dignity they experienced at a minimum wage job, albeit legitimate, when subjected to a social context of both racism and classism. Moreover, for Bourgois, participation in the drug trade in El Barrio, offers

these men opportunities to earn greater cash, as well as to earn respect within the social rules of their illicit trade.

I mentioned earlier about how Thau requested marijuana and alcohol from me. One visit, when my Thau was really drunk, "eidau", as one may say in Kiowa, meaning something like "crazy drunk" or "not in one's right mind," he yelled at me for about two hours in an attempt to make me go to the store and bring back beer for him. I was both flabbergasted and dumbstruck. I could not and did not speak. I just sat there watching him and listening to him rant and rave about how bad of a sonny boy I was because I was not providing him with alcohol, money, food, drugs, or other things. Most importantly, of course, was the alcohol. DaveRay who was sitting next to me on the sofa tried feebly to answer Thau's semi-rhetorical questions. DaveRay tried to defend me against the verbal assault. Thau circumvented these feeble attempts by ordering DaveRay to shut up and by ordering me to answer for myself. It is amazing how an addict knows exactly what to say to make you feel like total shit. Thau knew exactly what to say to make me feel insignificant, small, and worthless. I was grotesquely impressed by his skill and facility in knowing my weakest emotional points, and striking quickly, deftly, and repeatedly at these points from several angles. I sat there, staring, and receiving the assault.

The episode ended with an ultimatum, "if I have to get up, if I have to go to the store and get my own beer, you guys better not be here when I get back." It was a Friday night. DaveRay and I had intended to spend the weekend. Beverly and Waldo went to the store. After I heard the car pull away out of the driveway, I turned to DaveRay and asked, "Hey, you think Thau's being serious? Does he really want us to leave?" DaveRay

responded, nonplussed as he quickly stood up from the sofa, “yep, let’s pack it up. If you’re tired, I’ll drive back to Tucson.” Still amazed and beginning to finally feel the sting of the Thau’s preceding harangue, I said, “Let me get my backpack.” And we headed back to Tucson around eleven o’clock that Friday night. Whenever it may have been that Thau and Bev got back from the store, we were no longer there. Once upon the road, I became angry. I vented and discussed what happened with my bro, DaveRay.

DaveRay was not upset, only mildly irritated. I was grateful for his positive attitude. “Thau will see that we’re not there, we’ve left. Let him be sad about it if he wants company.” I thought that my fieldwork was over; that Thau did not want to talk anymore; that I needed to find yet another topic for a doctoral dissertation. DaveRay said, “maybe. Who knows? He might change his mind again. Watch.” DaveRay added, “besides, I know my Thau, he gets worked up; then he calms down. Besides, he was so drunk, he won’t even remember what he said tomorrow morning.” And laughter filled the car. But I wanted Thau to remember. I wanted him to remember that what he said was malicious and that it made me feel bad.

THE PAIN OF SEPARATION

I often wonder at how painful life can be. I have often wondered about how much pain we can bring to ourselves and to other people, even people we claim to care about deeply. I recognize that my Thau hurts, on many levels and for several different reasons. All of this pain depresses him. All of this pain encourages him to continue to numb his pain with beer and pot, daily surviving through a haze and fog that has lasted for several

years. I notice that this "haze" has been there through most all of the time that I have known him, and certainly through all of the time that he has been my "dad" and I have been his "sonny boy."

If we accept that substance use is at times, at some level a form of self-medication against the pain and suffering of depression, of physical ills, or hopelessness, then we can see my Thau as a man coping with his suffering in the most familiar ways possible to him. Over the course of this project, Thau threw hints at me, and bold statements about his disposition, his fears, and his pains. If this pain indeed fuels the consumption of beer and marijuana, then it is important to note in more detail the loci of these pains in an attempt to more fully understand the total environment that interacts with an identity, and the total environment shared by a collection of identities.

Separation from Grandchildren and Other Loved Ones

My Thau has been most vocal in his sadness about missing his grandchildren. Since he and his ex-wife split up, Thau's daughters have not communicated much with him. Nor have they allowed Thau to visit them and their children. Nor have they wanted to visit Thau at Beverly's house. Beverly is the "other woman" in the minds of Thau's children. Thau told me on more than one occasion that his kids have chosen their mother's side of this dispute. During the course of the fieldwork for this project, those walls seemed very high indeed. However, at the time of writing this chapter, relations between Thau and his biological children have thawed ever so slightly.

Thau expresses both sadness and anger that his daughters do not wish to spend time with him. At some level he feels that he has been slightly betrayed by his children, as evidenced by their distance and absence. When Thau was in the hospital over the "vodka incident," none of his biological children called him. Thau felt hurt over this. He felt that they did not consider him to be important enough to warrant concern. DaveRay was with him. I was not able to go to the hospital during his stay there, but I did speak with him over the telephone. Thau said, "but my kids, they're grown, they're adults. They can decide for themselves if they want me in their lives. But I miss my grandkids. I pray for them everyday. And that one day, I'll have them here with me." I remember once that my Thau said, "nothing is more important to a man than his grandkids." And if his daughters do not spend time with him, then he does not get a chance to spend time with his grandchildren.

One of the feather fans in Thau's cedar box is made of scissortail feathers. Thau said that in Kiowa tradition, these feathers represent women, or are owned by women. But the men hold these feathers for that woman relative. In this case, this fan belongs to his eldest granddaughter. When Thau uses these feathers, he told me, "My grandkids get a blessing, especially my granddaughter." One day, Thau wants this feather fan to pass on to his eldest granddaughter. They belong to her anyway.

When my Thau agreed to do this project with me, he asked for only one thing in return. He asked that I pray for his grandchildren. "I don't want money or anything like that. I just ask that you remember my grandchildren and pray for them. Whenever you remember me or them, just pray for them. That they have a good life, that they can be

happy." Knowing that Thau feels and believes that prayers are real, and that they are powerful, I recognize the importance of this request. But it also reinforced to me just how important Thau's grandchildren are to him, even if he is unable to see them or spend time with them.

Thau also misses his father a great deal. He is less vocal about this topic than about missing his grandchildren. But every now and then while recounting a story about his father, Thau will exclaim, "I really miss that nigga." Moreover, anytime Thau talks about NAC, its rituals or procedures or about how his faith in this medicine has meaning in his life, he will talk about what his father used to say about that particular topic. But as Khön has passed on, after a good life, Thau accepts this separation as natural. The separation from his grandchildren is not natural, albeit rational.

Similar to Thau's nostalgia about spending time with his father on the peyote roads throughout Indian Country, is the nostalgia felt over various other uncles, grandpas, aunties, grandmas and other relatives who have passed away who gave Waldo teachings, encouragement, comfort, stories, prayers, songs or other memories. Earlier in this chapter I mentioned the loss of Thau's uncle Wayne. This occurred during the time that I have known Thau. This tragedy is still near enough to cause discomfort in remembrance.

Sometimes a memory of pain can be so strong as to overwhelm completely a sense of self, or time or even interaction with others. One of the worst stories my Thau ever told me seemed to have this effect. One Sunday afternoon, DaveRay told Thau, "tell him about your first wife." I reacted surprised, "first wife? I thought Mary was your first wife?" Thau replied, "I don't want to tell that story. I don't want to get depressed." It was

a couple weeks later that Thau recounted to me one of the most painful events of his life. When Thau was seventeen in Oklahoma, he was in love with a young girl also seventeen years old. She was pregnant with Thau's child. Thau says that he was the happiest guy in the world then. One day Thau was at a powwow with his cousins and buddies. He was drinking and having a good time. He was also eagerly awaiting his beloved and her mother and sisters who were on their way to the powwow grounds. In the late afternoon, early evening:

> I heard my name called over the PA. I wasn't paying attention. My cousin shoved me; we were sitting in a truck. 'Hey, pavi, isn't that your name they're calling?' Yeah, that's me. They said, 'Waldo Daukei, please come to the MC's table.' So, I go over to the table to see what they wanted. When I got there they told me that there was a bad car accident and that my wife and mother-in-law were dead and her sister was in the hospital. I lost them all, and my unborn child. I was so angry and sad. I got really drunk that night, I picked like three fights. I even beat this one guy so bad, my cousins had to pull me off of him.

Thau was almost incapable of speech. I had never before seen him so choked up and unable to comport himself. It was clear to me that even more than thirty years later, he still ached for the family and the life that he had lost. "Maybe my life would have been different, you know. Maybe I wouldn't be a drunk. Maybe I'd have my own home in Oklahoma with my people. Who knows?" This is one of the defining pains of my Thau's life. After this, weeping silently, tears rolling down his cheeks, Thau got up from the table went to his bed, and I did not see him again until dinner that night.

Other relatives are separated by distance. Many of Thau's nephews both Kiowa and Cheyenne are in Oklahoma. Waldo would like to spend time with them in order to encourage them to attend or even run peyote meetings. Thau is still hoping that one of his nephews Daniel will come out to Arizona and run a meeting for him. Daniel, Thau told me, knows how to run a meeting in the traditional Kiowa style, which in Thau's feeling is the best way to run a meeting. Thau feels that a meeting run in the Kiowa style and attended by his close relatives would have a better chance of helping him put aside alcohol. Moreover, Thau said that he could relax and enjoy himself more in a meeting run in the old Kiowa style, with the old style Kiowa songs that his relatives know.

And, I conjecture, that my Thau feels pain over the separation he feels from himself, or rather the image of himself, as a ritual helper and ceremonial healer. Thau knows that he has some knowledge about this medicine, about Kiowa doctoring, and about life in general that he has learned through experience and through the mystical revelations of peyote. Yet, Thau feels separated from the fullness of this potential identity. "If I can put this (alcohol) away, I can pray better, and help people in there (NAC/tipi meetings)." I told Thau, that there is a lot of pain in the world, and there are a lot of people out there in the world that need prayers. "Yep," he replied. I continued, "So, get better, Thau! And get busy." We all chuckled.

Separation from a Religion-less Future

Sometimes Thau expresses great pride in the Native American Church, especially as embodied by Kiowa practitioners who like to preserve the ways of past generations.

Thau also expresses great pride that people from many different Native American groups have sought out the ways of the Native American Church from groups like the Kiowa who were among the first practitioners of the "new" peyote cult in late 19th century Indian Territory. One of the reasons that Thau thinks so many different kinds of Native Americans have practiced the ways of NAC is because of its efficacy and because of its simplicity, and because of the power of the medicine itself. Thau, like many Native American people, recognizes the various pressures threatening the survival of Native American religion, culture, language, and communities.

The Kiowa themselves have gone through great changes over the past century due to American militarism, colonization, and missionization. For example, in the late 1800's when the American government banned all traditional forms of ceremonial expression for the Kiowa and for many other indigenous people, the development of the Native American Church as a possible alternative to both traditional banned practices and to Christian mission churches, signaled a major cultural and religious change in Kiowa history. Thau told me that the communal religious transformation was foretold by Kiowa prophets many years prior to the development of the Native American Church. "We had prophets that told our people that we were going to lose our religion, and that we were going to have a religion based upon an herb," Thau told me one Sunday morning. They may not have called it "peyote religion," but the prophets knew that major religious change was inevitable for their people.

Thau sees other religious changes for his people and for Native American people in general. He is not optimistic most of the time. He feels that the NAC is in a kind of

cultural and religious decline. Thau expressed these feelings to me in various ways and on various days.

According to Waldo, this decline stems from the way people learn about the ways of the church and how people learn to run meetings these days. “They don’t have the right teachings. It’s just monkey-see-monkey-do out there. Some of these roadmans out there, they don’t even know why they do things. They just do thing because they saw somebody else do it at some other meeting.” This form of ritual knowledge transmission is suspect in Thau’s thinking. My Thau tells me that a roadman should receive a complete fireplace from one mentor. This would ensure a more orthodox transmission of the proper rituals and procedures. Most people are picking up their teachings, their procedures, their beliefs and methods in a haphazard, piecemeal fashion, according to Thau.

Thau privileges four tribes in the history of the NAC as having true, complete and real fireplaces, or traditions of proper peyote worship in the United States of America, namely the Comanche, the Kiowa-Apaches or just “Apaches” also meaning the Lipan Apache and the Mescalero Apache, the Kiowa, and the Cheyenne. According to Thau, the Comanche developed these procedures first, through the efforts of Quanah Parker. He shared these new procedures with the Kiowa and the Cheyenne. The Apaches already had a similar style that some think informed Quanah’s version of the ceremony. According to Thau, the Apache fireplaces are powerful and efficacious because, they did not teach people of other tribes their fireplace, not did they give their fireplace to other tribes. So, it retains all of its original potency. It also remains powerful because it has not changed

much over the years. Ritual strength and potency, it seems, resides in the consistent adherence to proscribed ritual forms.

Furthermore, from Thau's perspective the fireplaces are weakening over time because various people from different tribes add things, practices, procedures, little rituals and beliefs from their own tribes, disregarding the integrity of the fireplace given to them by one of the four "original" tribes. Thau interprets this lack of respect for ceremonial integrity as a lack of faith. Therefore, with a lack of faith, the fireplace will eventually die. It will die because without faith, the fireplace will lose all efficacy. After that, "what's the point?" Thau can get very upset when he witnesses a needless or worthless change in the standard, simple, "common sense" procedures he cherishes in the old Kiowa fireplace as used by his father, uncles and grandpas, or the old Cheyenne fireplace used by his Cheyenne uncles and grandpas. The worst offenders in Thau's eyes are the Navajo. In his opinion Navajo practitioners who have received either Cheyenne or Kiowa fireplaces have added so much of their own Navajo ways and beliefs, or have changed so much of the old procedures that the fireplaces have become unrecognizable. They eventually will become useless in his opinion.

A greater threat looms on the horizon for the future of the Native American Church in my Thau's reckoning; one that is wed to his perceived decline in ritual integrity. The threat is neither colonial nor Euro-American. This threat is that of the NAC becoming a purely social event. "Powwows used to be sacred, those dances and that drum used to be sacred. But now it's just social. This Native American Church is getting like that. Soon it will be just like powwow; a social thing, you know." NAC meetings are very

social. There is opportunity for participants to socialize both before and after the all night ceremony. Certainly, my Thau has expressed many times that the ceremony itself should be taken seriously with some room for humor, as both peyote and good feelings are good medicine for an ailing patient.

But Thau recognizes that many people go into the tipi, "not to pray for that person, but just to show off in there. I can sing real good. I can drum better than that guy. My fan is prettier." This coupled with practitioners not having "complete" teachings about this medicine and this Native American Church will eventually reduce NAC to another Indian social opportunity. Thau uses peyote songs as an example of this perceived decline in ritual and social integrity. "These guys that show off, to sing, a lot of them don't even know where that song comes from, what it means. Some songs belong to somebody or a song was made for a person in some family. You can't just sing it without their permission." Furthermore, "these old Kiowa songs that don't have words they sort of mean 'I'm a man,' or 'I'm a man praying to you Creator,' and some women in that tipi sing these songs. They don't understand. That's wrong."

Beyond people not understanding the importance of tradition and ceremonial integrity, Thau also recognizes the perpetually growing lack of interest in Native American culture, language, religion, and heritage by younger Native Americans. If the younger generations do not pick up these ways, then these ways will disappear. Thau always expresses a modicum of pleasure or happiness when somebody asks him about the Church or the ways, or about a song, or prayer, especially from a young person. At the same time, as will all Native American communities, "we are losing them old people.

They still know some of these old ways, and have this knowledge. But some of them are not with us anymore." As the elders become our ancestors, Thau feels the real loss of their experience and knowledge.

Thau has expressed sadness about his biological sons not taking up his Kiowa peyote ways. His eldest son died from a gunshot. His next son is incarcerated and may or may not learn these peyote church ways upon his release. His youngest son was incarcerated and was soon to be released during this field project. Thau pinned a lot of hope on his youngest son because, of all his children, the youngest seemed still to express the most interest. He was released from prison into Thau and Beverly's custody. However, he got involved with his former street buddies, partied a bit too much near downtown and central Phoenix, found more drugs, and got into trouble again. He is incarcerated again. This too, contributes to my Thau's pain and suffering. He feels the separation from his sons not only due to incarceration and the machinations of institutionalization, but also the perceived distance between these sacred ways and his own sons.

PARTING THOUGHTS

With so many sources of pain in his life, it seems almost natural to an outside observer that Waldo Daukei may be depressed. With or without depression, many Native American people continue to survive and live their lives as best they can, with all their hopes, fears, failures, mistakes, prayers and stories. My Thau is one of many "future

Native American elders" already struggling with the ideas of cultural loss and personal loss, and what these losses mean to them and their loved ones.

I do not think that my Thau's alcohol use can be reduced to mere self-medication. Nor am I convinced that Thau even has or needs a reason to drink or to continue drinking. Perhaps at this point, Thau drinks from habit and from physical dependency, as well as enjoyment and desire. I remember one hot afternoon, when Thau was sitting on the sofa. Thau trembled a bit. He tried to tense up in order to stop from shaking. But he would visibly shake a little. "Stop doing that! Don't do that. It makes me nervous" Beverly half shouted as she entered the kitchen. "I know it," Thau replied. Thau had the "shakes" that day since he had not had a drink in about two days. Thau had "sobered-up" for a meeting.

One day, Dave's sister asked me, "Do you know why Waldo drinks?" I lamely replied, "no." "It's because he's so bored. He just sits in that house all day long," she told me, "he doesn't have anything to do". Maybe boredom plays a part in my Thau's drinking? Perhaps all of these factors combine in his drinking? As noted earlier P. Spicer (1997) advocates for a complex and even contradictory view of alcohol use among Native American people, that people have positive and negative reasons to drink, with both positive and negative outcomes, simultaneously. I do not disagree with Spicer. However, Thau's current drinking, at least on the weekends that I have been with him during this project, is not social. At least not to the extent that he shared his beer with me or anybody else. Usually Beverly, Dave, Thau and myself are the main people in the house. Beverly's brother sometimes visits Thau. They are friends. They occasionally share a beer. More often they share a joint. And when my Thau spends time with his

brothers, my segi, like Mobein or his younger brother Louis, together they drink, reminisce, tell stories, and have a good time; much like I remember seeing when I was a child with my family in Texas, and like Limón (1994) describes also in Texas, among his people.

Occasionally, Thau says something about his younger days, late teens and early twenties. He mentions that he drank with his brothers, his cousins, and with friends. He mentions drinking at parties at somebody's home or in the yard or even at powwows. This type of male-bonding drinking is quite common in America including Indian Country. Beatrice Medicine in "New Roads to Coping: Siouan Sobriety" (2001 (1982)) notes this pattern of drinking behavior among Lakota men as problematizing not only alcohol use and sociability, but also alcohol use and gender identity. Medicine places the social drinking of Lakota men within the simultaneous contexts of "*kola*-hood" which can be roughly translated as "friendship group," and "*bloka*-ness," which can be roughly translated as "Lakota masculinity." Medicine uses the Lakota words *kola* and *bloka* in order to point to the cultural traditions of Lakota people. Medicine adds the English suffixes of "-hood" and "-ness" to these Lakota words in order to illustrate that participants are actively creating their social contexts through interaction with each other, also to attempt to make cultural sense of what is going on to non-Lakota readers, and to show how within the context of drinking, traditional social norms and institutions are changing and changed yet still culturally Lakota. For example, *kola*-ness in this context refers to "drinking buddies"(2001: 212), but a more traditional meaning for *kola* is "very close friend." In such drinking situations, non-drinking men could be coerced into

drinking by others though the mechanism of impugning or challenging one's masculinity, "'*Ni bloka he?'* (Are you a male?)" (213). Medicine also hints at the coercive social power of homophobia in such instances; a brilliant insight for an article first published in 1982, years before any "anti-homophobia" campaigns of the post-AIDS crisis of the mid-1980's.

In Medicine's article "New Roads to Coping: Siouan Sobriety" I believe that she illustrates the complex socially integrative and disintegrative effects of alcohol use among Lakota people that P. Spicer called for many years later. Interestingly, P. Spicer (1997) does not cite Medicine. However, both authors do note along with others such as Waddell (1975, 1980) and Kunitz and Levy (1972, 1994) that there are powerful social contexts to Native American use of alcohol that cannot be ignored. P. Spicer goes so far as to say, based upon his interviews with urban Anishanabe drinkers in Minneapolis, that to stop drinking would mean loosing friends, a price sometimes far too terrible to pay, something that Gretchen Lang also noticed (1979). But that is too much an economic metaphor. To stop drinking would be to lose friends. And that is a pain far too great to bear. And to the extent that one's friends and relatives are living lives together, such a loss can also impact upon one's sense of self or identity.

At this time, my Thau would not lose many drinking buddies if he gave up drinking. Perhaps at other times in his past, he may have. And perhaps the residual fear of such a loss still lives with my Thau. Also, experiences of drinking buddies and with relatives who drank, I assume, had something to do with forming the context in which my Thau learned to consume alcohol. In short, Alcohol was a presence in his life from an

early age, as it was in my life also. And as alcohol has been a part of life for so long, alcohol has also been a part of the relationships and decisions in that life. And beyond that, people in my life and in my Thau's life have their own ideas, feelings, and history of alcohol use or non-use. This too becomes a part of their relationships with other people including my Thau. In this way, alcohol touches the lives of many people. In this way, many, many Native American people are touched by alcohol, if not by personal experience, then by the experiences of loved ones, relatives, and friends. This too adds to the complexity of alcohol use.

I once heard that Native people loose their soul in that bottle. This was said to me by a friend of mine, a young Hopi woman, when speaking about her pain that several of her relatives were so disrupted by their alcohol use. Perhaps, this is one of the powers of alcohol, to be able to suck out a person's soul as the person is sucking in the alcohol. It seems that one of the things that many people agree upon is the potency of alcohol, its insistence, its effectiveness, its contemporary ubiquity, its desirability. With my Thau's drinking, I have found that I relate to him inebriated or sober or anywhere in between. Drinking or not, we continue to acknowledge each other respectively as thau and bo.

As with many people our relatives are still our relatives whether they are drunk or sober or stoned. And when spending time together, perhaps some of the rhetorics and discourses of morality or spirituality or responsibility fade away just a bit. Perhaps, relatives continue to be relatives, continue to tell stories, continue to share life with the other, despite frictions of economy or hurt feelings or sentiments. This is not to say that boundaries are not crossed at times, that transgressions may occur. Then boundaries are

restored and sometimes renegotiated. But what is more important, the definition and maintenance of boundaries, or the maintenance of relationships? If who we are is very much a matter of who we are in relationship with all of our relatives around us, if who we are is not just our personal perspective on our individual self, but rather the continuing processing of sharing life and relationships with everyone and everything around us, then choosing another human being, and the relationship that is shared between them makes sense. It makes more sense than choosing to separate or end. Furthermore, to focus upon a single "issue" such as substance use, then to choose to reject or to accept a relative based upon the single "issue" does not take into account the fullness of the person and people involved in the interrelationships. Each person is much more than any particular issue deemed a problem. So, perhaps people who wish to maintain relationships with their relatives choose to accept them whole and entire as best they can.

I find an even greater complexity than perhaps P. Spicer was hinting. If the issue of alcohol use has both functional and dysfunctional social implications, repercussions, and dynamics, then we can see that these are occurring not just simultaneously in the lives of the drinkers, but also in the lives of their relatives. Drinking may bring drinkers closer to some relatives and drive them further from other relatives and relationships, but sometimes it does both with the same relatives. Sometimes these forces of pulling together or pulling apart oscillate not only in communities but also between people in community, moving through time, together, apart, together again, maybe in the course of a single weekend, or day. It is not just the drinking functioning to bring together or pull

apart. All the ties that bind may be touched by it, but certainly not all the ties will be broken, at least, not all at once.

CONCLUSION

OR RATHER, "SO LONG" FOR THE TIME BEING

> *We Americans place so much faith in the boundary drawn by our skin, that thin physical membrane, that we build our whole concept of personhood there. Most Indians, as we have known for a long time, do not, so they seem strange to us. Because, for them, their living within one another is a concrete, physical fact, we cannot grasp what they are to themselves. We try to enskin them, "encompass" them, pin them down and control them with our theories. The more we fail to face their ambiguity, the ultimate unboundedness of their being, the less we are able to see them. Margaret Trawick (1990:252).*

My Thau has been a good thau to me. Thau has been a good thau to me in several ways. Most pertinent to this particular project is creating the opportunity for this project in the first place. As mentioned in the introduction, my Thau volunteered to be interviewed by me, to participate with me, to share this project with me. Without his cooperation, I would not have been able to write this dissertation. The reason why my Thau agreed to do this is quite simple, to help me complete my degree program, to help me graduate. As my father, this is a way to contribute to my education process, consequently, which will lead to supporting my future career. This is my Thau being generous, especially towards his son, or any of his children or grandchildren. I did not

have to convince my Thau to help me, or cajole, beg, recruit. Though there were particular moments during the process of fieldwork where my Thau was less willing or able to participate fully, on the whole, he has been generous with his time and his knowledge. This is also what fathers are supposed to do; to support, to teach, to help their children.

Within and through all these stories and all this time, my Thau has been sharing knowledge with me. This is knowledge about being a good relative, a good person, even a good Kiowa, as well as what it means to be a good roadman. And in so doing, he continually passes along Knowledge to the next generation, just as Knowledge was passed to him. Though I will not succeed my Thau as a roadman in the Native American Church, Thau is still passing along information and stories and knowledge about the church and its ways. And my Thau is also passing along knowledge about life in general, his life, the lives of his relatives and loved ones, life as it is, and life as it could be, sometimes, perhaps as it should be.

Perhaps some of the most important knowledge that I have received from Thau is knowledge about who our relatives are, who our people are, and who we are. To know who your relatives are is to know who you are. I would not be a very good son, if I do not know who my relatives are, who my Thau's relatives are. The same holds true for my bro, DaveRay. Thau and DaveRay met when DaveRay was still a teenager. They met at an NAC meeting. They took each other for relatives. And Thau, over many years continues to tell DaveRay, and now myself, stories about his life, our relatives, this

medicine, and this church. And as many relatives do, now we all share stories and time with each other and other relatives as well.

Gus Palmer notes that, “Kiowa are so very proud of their relatives, especially the young” (2003: 77). And in our case, my Thau has told me that he is very glad that I call him “dad.” I think that my Thau grabs on to anything remarkable about any particular relative, and talks about it, emphasizes it, makes it known. It is how I know that my Khön, my Thau’s thau, was the most powerful Kiowa doctor of his day. It is how I know that our relatives have always been roadmen and leaders in the Native American Church. It is how I know that my Thau’s Kiowa heritage comes from Kiowa people of power, from Kiowa medicine people. It is also how I hear stories about various relatives that may have run a meeting for a sick person and that person got well. It takes the form of a story how one of my Thau’s sons took on three rival gang members and beat them all, three against one. And it can even be a moment when my Thau tells me how proud he is of his oldest daughter, even though he is estranged from her, because she has a good life, is healthy and responsible, and can speak her mother’s language. I think that my Thau is proud of me in that I am pursuing my education and that I wish to teach. The extent that he can help me do this, through story, knowledge, and prayer is his gift to me. It is his pride, care, duty, and love.

In our case, on the whole, we enjoy each other’s company. And my Thau has told me, “Sonny Boy, you’re always welcome here. Come and visit! I always appreciate it when you visit.” This is what is important, what is central, what is primary, and what is

proper. A particular passage that my Segi, Gus Palmer, Jr., wrote in his book that I continue to reflect upon and will continue to remember for a very long time follows:

> In the final analysis, it probably didn't matter. I think he just provided a way for us to be closer as Kiowa kinsman, whether I understood or not. His was in large measure a Kiowa gesture, what my mother deemed "the right Kiowa thing to do." All during my work with him and other Kiowa consultants there were occasions when this kinship bonding occurred. It was part ritual part casual. The fact of the matter is I felt more and more Kiowa each time I met with one of my consultants, and we all developed a very close relationship during those months (2003:42-43).

Maybe it does not matter that I may not fully comprehend all of my Thau's stories, nor that I become a roadman and carry this fireplace. In light of Palmer's insights, what is most important is the sharing of kinship, of relationships and the time and the care necessary to have this sharing. In my case, I was not born Kiowa. But I do feel more and more close to my Thau and what "being Kiowa" means to him, each time we visit and share life and time with story. I have a better understanding of what it means to become more Kiowa, less non-Kiowa in relation to my Thau.

As Palmer and others may have pointed out, people create the context for telling stories, but let us not forget that stories also provide the contexts for being people, for being human, for being related and therefore human together. Among the many goals of research or of ethnography, there may be the goal to record stories, to describe conditions, to figure how a group under study came to be studied. In Palmer's case, in my case, as we conducted research among our relatives, it is not the research or ethnography

that was so important or central to the interactions of "researcher" and "researched" AS "researcher/researched." No. What is central is simply this: the intimate human interaction of relatives, for whatever reason, under any circumstance, for any excuse. It is a chance, an occasion, for I do not want to use so economic a metaphor as "opportunity," to be together, to know one another, to entertain and enjoy the company of others, to literally "be" together, as relatives, no matter the "level" or "rank" of relative, from parent to child, to spouse, to sibling, to friend.

I am awed again and again when interacting with my Native American and indigenous friends and relatives, how important it is to understand how one is related to someone or to something else. Why should it be so important? Because it contributes to knowing who "we" are, simultaneously, and not separate from knowing who "I" am. Moreover in such a universe or cosmos of relatives, when it seems that someone is truly orphaned, i.e. without relatives, the most terrible and extreme from of poverty, or less frightening, when one simply does not know from whence they came, it becomes incumbent upon true human beings either to discover one's true relatives or more drastically, yet still logically, to create the relationships that will (re-)create the orphaned as relative, a proto-human as it were into a full human, a human now with relatives, and potentially with community. Living communities of true human beings can do this. They can create human beings into their community. Is this not the true power of "adoption?" I use the word adoption here to mean the human commitment to recognizing other human beings as relatives in the absence of a previous connection through birth or marriage. I do not mean the "legal," State-centric, definition of "adoption." Theoretically, individuals

may adopt one another, but to the extent that they belong to a community in whatever form, the community recognizes the commitment that individuals may have made with one another. Thereafter, the one adopted is "real" and not "fictive" kin.

Specifically in my Thau's cosmos, I have found two very important ways to express adoption, though I do not find these to be mutually exclusive or even completely distinct. One expression is to simply call each other by the respective kinship term and therefore, behave as such kin would/should behave to one another, however, flexible such behavior may be in practice. The other is to call somebody, who has been adopted by one of your relatives by a respective kinship term according to how the adopted person would be related to you as if the adopted person had been born into that particular kinship relationship. All of this can happen in quotidian life and in ceremonial life also. To remember the NAC, my Thau says, "be careful what you say in there, Sonny Boy, what you say in front of that Fire and that Medicine. Because, how you say it in there, you have to live it out here."

If you call someone a relative in the ritual of a Native American Church meeting, then it is real, they have a relationship with you according to kind of relationship, be it sibling, parent, or even close friend. Though Waldo and Christopher were already calling each other by their respective kinship terms outside of the tipi, although a relationship was already established and continuing, the ritual of the NAC provided the sacred and ceremonial space to express and therefore sanction the relationship as real, in a community. It is the same sacred and communal context that recognizes the relationship

between people and their Creator, between people and their "grandfather" the medicine, or in the case of most Diné, "my mother" medicine.

Returning to other themes within the knowledge of the Native American Church, from what I have learned from my Thau about this Native American Church, to carry a fireplace, to have the right to lead a tipi meeting, is very important. The proper way to receive a fireplace is to learn the ritual and its teachings from a particular person, and to learn it as best as possible. In my Thau's case, he received his fireplace form his Thau, my Khön. And my Thau has given his fireplace to a couple men that I know of, one of which Thau calls "brother." The passing of a fireplace, in my Thau's life occurs between relatives, by birth or adoption. Without an intimate connection, it seems that such important cultural learning may not take place. And if somebody claims to carry a particular fireplace, then this implies that this somebody has a close and important relationship with the person who gave the fireplace that this somebody now carries. Not to completely beat a dead horse, but as I have repeated more than once, it is all about relationships.

Sergei Kan (ed. 2001) brings into focus many different ways anthropologist have been incorporated, enculturated, and adopted by the indigenous communities studied. In Kan's edited volume *Strangers to Relatives: The Adoption and Naming of Anthropologists in Native North America*, I am quite moved by William and Marla Powers' story about living with Lakota people. Interestingly, W. Powers had begun spending time with Lakota peoples from a very early age, experiencing several forms and occasions of formal and informal naming and adoption into Lakota community. When he

married, his wife Marla was also brought into community. From my experience adoption in the many Native American communities and families is real. Real relationships are formed. Adoption is real.

I am quite happy that anthropology is thinking about and writing about becoming relatives within the context of the indigenous communities from which they learn so much. As much as I enjoy this book and its stories, I still feel that a bit of reorientation is still needed. To envision the "anthropologist" as outsider requires that the community choose to incorporate and assimilate the anthropologist. Certainly in the case of William Powers, he was incorporated and adopted before he became an "official" anthropologist. However, if we create the "identity" of an "anthropologist" one could postulate that Powers was already an anthropologist when he first met the Lakota. To interpret anthropology as the "handmaiden of colonialism" after Edward Said (1993), would place the colonizing culture in the position of eternal anthropologist in its relation to learning about colonized cultures. How do we proceed when an indigenous person is educated (a.k.a. brainwashed) and trained as an "anthropologist?" Is "anthropologist" merely and occupation, or an identity? These are certainly questions that I will continue to think about in the future. If we think of "anthropologist" as occupation, much as "bricklayer" or "janitor," then, it is not an "anthropologist" that is being adopted. People adopt people, not occupations.

As for now, I too reflect upon myself as quite an odd case. Though I am "indigenous" after a sort, I certainly was not born or raised Kiowa or Cheyenne or in the Native American Church. From this perspective, I am just as adopted anthropologist as

William Powers. Unlike Linda Tuhiwai Smith, unlike Vine, unlike Bob, unlike Bea, unlike Tom, I was not born into their respective communities of study. However, from another perspective, my relationships with my Thau and our relatives were formed outside of the "academy," away from "anthropology." I do not carry the identity of "anthropologist" among my indigenous relatives. But I do work with, and sometimes around, anthropology. In this sense, I was not adopted by my Thau as an anthropologist. I was adopted as a son; thus returning to an idea I floated in the "Introduction," anthropology is not primary. Ethnography is not the central focus of the shared relationship with my Thau, nor with DaveRay, nor with Beverly, nor this Medicine, who was my grandfather before I was even born. Far more important collectively to all of us, is being relatives, family.

What may all of this have to do with reinterpreting what "identity" may be? I am inspired by Carolyn Epple (1997) on continuing this reinterpretation. By presenting a perspective and even the voices of Diné *nadleehi* within the indigenous Diné worldview of *sa'ah naaghai bikeh hozho* (SNBH), Epple challenges Western and academic anthropological categories and assumptions that are used to create knowledge about gender identity (and identity by implication). Epple learns from her cultural teachers that everything in the universe is SNBH, is an expression of SNBH, and that everything in the universe is interconnected and interrelated and interbecoming everything else in the universe. The fullness of an individual's identity is the expression of all the interconnections of this individual with everything and everyone else in the universe. To focus upon so small an aspect or facet of a person's life, such as how one dresses, or with

whom one sleeps, is insignificant in understanding the fullness of who that person truly is. A further implication is that Diné identity is dynamic process as a person is SNBH, whether male, female, or *nadle.* I interpret Epple's challenge, in the light of what I have learned from Bob Thomas and from my relatives, that the discourse of identity can be dislodged from a the "individual" and recentered onto a discourse of what is between people, the relationship(s) that is(are) shared. Not "I think therefore I am" but "we are our relatives, and I am related to them." Who I am is not merely who I think I am, but who I am is rather who I am with each other relative of mine, and who I am to/with/for/near/around all of them, and vice versa. I am my Thau's son. I am my brother's brother. I am my Segi's segi. I am this medicine's grandchild. I am my teacher's student. And I am of my people, who ever my people are.

OTHER ROADS OF RESEARCH

> *"To know the whole of a person is a very difficult thing," he said. "All we can really know of a person is out relationship with them. We make a mistake is we think that is all there is." Margaret Trawick quoting her Tamil relative and cultural teacher, Ayya (1990:256).*

I do not feel that I have exhausted all the possible paths of research on my Thau, our relatives or the Native American Church. I do feel that this dissertation is merely a first step on a potentially long journey. And even as time goes on, and I share more time

with my relatives, it is safe to assume that more stories will be told, heard, shared, and created.

Certainly, I wish to hear more stories from my Thau, especially about his father and grandfather. Plus, I would like to continue researching among Kiowa people in Oklahoma and listen to their stories about the Native American Church, with an emphasis on who passes on their fireplace and teachings and to whom.

Among other stories to research, are stories about Jesus and his involvement in the Native American Church. I have been told that there are many stories about Jesus going to a Native American Church meeting or Jesus appearing to NAC participants. Exploring more of these stories and what these stories mean to their tellers would be fascinating.

Also, among my Thau's Cheyenne relatives, I wish to hear more recollections about Dog Woman, the second wife of my Thau's grandfather John Turtle, who ran a tipi meeting. What also is fascinating to me would be what contemporary members of the NAC feel about the possibility of women leading a tipi meeting. Perhaps in the future, a research project with a female researcher could reveal more about contemporary women's participation, ideas and beliefs in the Native American Church. Also, I am curious if there is a perceived change in women's participation in the all-night meeting, and if some communities perceive a difference in women's participation based on their tribal affiliation.

One of my big questions is this, have tipi meetings been led by roadmen who may have male life partners, or who may identify as "gay." My own experiences with the

NAC seem to lead me to think that people of gender or sexual "queerness" are accepted in the church. However, I do not assume that this is universal in the church in all tribes or in all communities. No research has yet been done on this particular issue.

Beyond this there are other roads of inquiry and of writing about identity and personhood at the intersections of anthropology and philosophy. I think that the academic disciplines of anthropology and philosophy have much to say to each other. Charles Taylor (1985, 1989, 1994), as just one example, certainly probes this intersection thinking about issues of identity and the nature of modern identity as created through the intellectual traditions of Western Europe and "Western Civilization." And Taylor (1994) also interrogates the liberal traditions of political philosophy as it relates to creating multicultural societies within the nation-state. He observes that this possibility, the multicultural state, requires the liberal political philosophies now ascendant in Western Civilization. Taylor's work is impressive to be sure. However, as these historically constructed traditions of understanding "identity" are dependent upon their intellectual roots, so too are indigenous philosophies, and the personhoods they create dependent upon their own roots. These intellectual intersections are just barely opening up after 500 years of (continuing) colonial genocide in this hemisphere, as the inheritors of the colonial mind are beginning to listen to the voices of the indigenous who have never been silent these five centuries. Native American philosophies also produce through their communities, ideas about who a person is, and how people are related to each other and their communities and their respective cosmos. Would it not be grand, for such conversations, emerging through perfect and real mutual respect, to continue from our

time forward? How exciting, how joyous it can be, to attempt fully to face our and their ambiguities, the ultimate unboundedness of our and their beings, to be better able to see ourselves and them, to paraphrase and revise Trawick (1990:252).

PARTING THOUGHTS

Through this research my Thau and I were able to become closer relatives, just like Uncle Gus says. And, as the junior (son) in this relationship, I acknowledge that I have learned quite a bit from my senior (father). Most likely, I have learned more than what I have been able to express in writing this dissertation. My Thau has also learned, though I am not sure what he has learned from being around me. You would have to ask him. Over this time, I have told you this story. I hope that you now know more about me and about my relatives and about who we are. I hope that you remember these stories. In many ways, now these stories are yours also. Maybe, these stories will bring us all together with a good thought.

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