



Title: On Understanding Indigenous Healing Practices

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[P3] Introduction

Interest in the healing practices and ceremonies of Native American and other indigenous peoples has increased quite dramatically in recent years. This surge in curiosity seems to be fueled by the experience that the conventional western healing paradigm frequently hits its own limit and that the spiritual connections within one's self, with community and with nature have desiccated. While this yearning for holistic healing by way of indigenous healing practices is valid and important, it raises not only ethical and political issues, but also epistemological questions: Is the euro-american way of knowing indigenous healing compatible with the native understanding and use of these practices? What are the implications if it is not? And if the euro-american way of approaching indigenous healing practices is incompatible with their ways of knowing, what is the possibility of developing a compatible approach?

I am raising these questions to promote a self-reflective look for euro-americans *from an indigenous perspective*. Born in Germany, I have been trained as a clinical psychologist in the western paradigm of research and scholarship. My experiences with Native American people have not only been humbling as to the extent of their indigenous scientific knowledge, but they have also taught me the limitations of euro-american epistemologies when it comes to the understanding of native ways of knowing, ceremonies and healing practices (Kremer, 1992a & b). As a consequence, I am trying to write this paper as an "indigenous Teuton" about the healing practices of peoples working within a related native paradigm, rather than as a Western researcher interested in what is Other. The provocative term "indigenous Teuton" signifies the problem (from the political to the very personal dimensions) as well as the potential.^[1] I hope to be able to explain how I have arrived at this stance, which satisfies my standards for intellectual consistency and, secondly, provides a credible way for me to be engaged with as well as to research indigenous healing practices, and, finally, allows for the personal, emotional resolution of historical issues (stemming from German and European history and the history of colonization [P4] and imperialism in particular). All this makes it possible for me to teach in a graduate program entitled "Traditional Knowledge" which gathers native peoples for academic study based on their own ways of knowing (interfacing with western knowledge from that perspective).

The most succinct way to describe my stance would be as follows: The exposure to indigenous healing practices should be an occasion for euro-americans to develop and remember their own indigenous healing approaches. This would lead to an exchange of

^[1] I have explored some of the political issues of this stance in Kremer (1994b).

knowledge about native healing practices within the same paradigm and based on equality. This process would include the integration of the western medical and psychological achievements *from indigenous euro-american perspectives*. While this approach may seem provocative, it is necessitated by the profound paradigmatic differences between indigenous and western sciences. Looking at my personal experience I would have to say that I was *forced* to take this stance as I have moved into a deep exploration of my own indigenous consciousness, rather than that I am *electing* to take this viewpoint.

Increasingly, scientists are stressing the importance of indigenous knowledge for the resolution of the various crises or limitations of the conventional western paradigm (for examples see Durning [1992] and Inglis [1993] for ecology; Achterberg [1985] for the healing arts, Bohm [1993] and Bohm & Edwards [1991] for social issues). This new valuation is reflected in decisions at the Earth Summit Rio Declaration (Principle 22; see Rogers [1993: 196] as well as articles 8 and 10 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and statements by the Canadian Polar Commission (Polaris Papers [1993])). Almost all of these and similar declarations are somewhat problematic from the perspective of traditional indigenous peoples (meaning: those who are not assimilated into the eurocentric world view). They commonly disregard what I have termed a deep structure of cross-cultural differences, meaning differences between all the various (sub)cultures who are or are trying to become part of the eurocentered paradigm on the one hand, and all the (sub)cultures who are struggling to maintain ancient indigenous practices on the other hand. This difference in world view seems particularly significant when native healing ways and their use of traditional ecological knowledge (including traditional medicines) are concerned. Berkes (1993: 4) has summarized the paradigmatic differences between scientific ecological knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge (including herbal knowledge) as follows:

1. TEK (traditional ecological knowledge, J.W.K.) is mainly qualitative (as opposed to quantitative);
2. TEK has an intuitive component (as opposed to being purely rational);
3. TEK is holistic (as opposed to rationalistic);
4. In TEK, mind and matter are considered together (as opposed to a separation of mind and matter);
- [P5]** 5. TEK is moral (as opposed to supposedly value-free);
6. TEK is spiritual (as opposed to mechanistic);
7. TEK is based on empirical observations and accumulations of facts by trial-and-error (as opposed to experimentation and systematic, deliberate accumulation of fact);

8. TEK is based on data generated by resource users themselves (as opposed to that by a specialized cadre of researchers);
9. TEK is based on diachronic data, i.e., long time-series on information on one locality (as opposed to synchronic data, i.e., short time-series over a large area).

This quote adequately summarizes (exceptions notwithstanding) central paradigmatic differences which, to my mind, need to be resolved if there is to be a clean break with the history of colonialism; this history, from the perspective of indigenous peoples, is continuing to this day with unrelenting force. Traditional peoples see the research of the various sciences (including anthropology and psychology) as an expression of a colonial desire, unconscious or submerged and implicit as it may be. Native peoples increasingly talk about the "extraction" of their healing and spiritual knowledge (e.g., Churchill [1992: 215-228]). "'Today,' says Adrian Esquina Lisco, spiritual chief of the National Association of Indigenous Peoples of El Salvador, 'the white world wants to understand the native cultures and extract those fragments of wisdom which extends its own dominion'" (Durning, 1992: 36). Medicine people and elders from Amazonian tribes have made equivalent statements in regards to the recent surge of interest in their traditional medicines and the swell of shamanic and eco-tourism in their lands (Dobkin de Rios, 1994). Shiva (1993) has presented a thorough critique of prevalent approaches to biodiversity and biotechnology from an ecofeminist perspective (a perspective which is in many aspects related to indigenous approaches).

If we take Lisco's statement and similar comments by other indigenous persons seriously, then - if we are sympathetic to their situation and well intentioned - what are we to do? This article attempts to address this complex issue using the following basic argument:

- If we take the resolutions from the Earth Summit (and other similar statements) about the validity and importance of indigenous knowledge seriously, then we have to reflect on the appropriate and respectful ways of doing so.

- Part of taking indigenous knowledge (including knowledge about healing and medicines) seriously is taking its ways of knowing seriously and attempting to understand them on their own terms (empathically, so to speak).

[P6] • If such an analysis shows that indigenous ways of knowing are qualitatively different, then we have to look critically at our own ways of knowing and their inherent qualities and values (provided we want to pay attention to statements by Lisco and other elders).

- If we find that the eurocentric qualities and values are inherently problematic and not or not entirely respectful of indigenous ways of knowing, then we need to find an alternate stance from which to conduct scientific inquiries.

- It is my suggestion that this alternate stance should be the recovery of indigenous roots for peoples inquiring within the framework of eurocentric paradigm(s).

- This allows the critical review and integration of past scientific accomplishments (in the broadest sense), and to approach indigenous (healing) knowledge of other peoples within a comparable epistemology and value perspective. The result would be a relationship between inquirers of a recovered indigenous framework and inquirers living now in indigenous cultures, where knowledge is explored and exchanged based on equality (rather than some (post)modern form of inherent colonialism).

This argument contains more complexities and intricacies than this paper will allow me to explore. However, I will attempt to explain it first by presenting an extensive conventional discussion based on my reading of the literature as well as exchanges with traditional people on this topic. In a second move I will try to engage the reader in a thought process which is someplace between a scholarly explication and genuine indigenous explications.

Part I: Two Perspectives on Indigenous Healing Practices

Using the language and terminology of the eurocentric paradigm, I am trying first to explain the paradigmatic differences between indigenous and western sciences and the differences between indigenous and (post)modern consciousness. I will subsequently apply these distinctions to examples from the *Diné* culture, the Native American sweatlodge and native ways of gathering medicinal herbs. The final sections of this part are dedicated to paradigmatic differences in the understanding of health and the position of the inquirer.

[P7] Indigenous and Western Science^{2[2]}

The term 'indigenous science' has been coined by Colorado (1988, 1989) to validate the detailed and intricate knowledge which the indigenous peoples of this planet have accumulated over the millenia (see Kidwell [1991] for a summary for Native American tribes). We find extraordinary examples in Pacific navigation (Hostetter 1991;

^{2[2]} This and the following section have been taken primarily from Kremer (1995).

Kyselka 1987; cf. also Vebæk & Thirslund, 1992 for Viking navigation), archaeoastronomy (Williamson & Farrer 1992), agriculture and herbal knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge (Inglis, 1993). The construction of Stonehenge and Newgrange (Burenhult 1993, 96-97; Wernick 1973, 114-115) or the markings on Fajada Butte or the alignments of the kiva Casa Rinconada in Chaco Canyon are exquisite examples of ancient knowledge (Sofaer & Sinclair 1983; Carlson 1983; Williamson 1983). Hopi dryfarming or the survival of Australian Aborigines in areas generally consider uninhabitable are others. Canoe journeying between Tahiti and Hawaii requiring detailed navigational knowledge is another astonishing example (Kyselka 1987) which indicates why ancient indigenous knowledge should be considered on par with the scientific knowledge of the modern era; additionally, this approach avoids the continuing euro-american denigration and takes it seriously. However, the paradigmatic differences between these two forms of science are not only significant, but they are highly relevant for our topic. Let me explain the differences between indigenous science and western science, primarily with reference to the healing arts (Colorado 1988; Deloria 1993).

The *skeptical* euro-american researcher would be foremost interested in the efficacy of Native American healing and would try to isolated the elements considered efficacious or a necessary condition in healing ceremonies. The *sympathetic* researcher would also, in addition to this analytical approach, pay attention to the "set and setting" as it were, and would attempt to validate native approaches or find similarities, for example via psychotherapeutic approaches such as NLP (neurolinguistic programming) or Rogerian counseling, or via biochemical research of curative agents in herbs. The western scientific approach commonly entails a stripping away of what is considered extraneous and the isolation of what is considered effective. It is through this process that western science makes other what is essential for native understandings. (While these statements apply particularly for conventional understandings of western science, they are also applicable to alternate approaches which are on the verge of bridging to native ways of knowing. Chaos theory (Gleick, 1987), various human sciences approaches (e.g., Polkinghorne, 1983; [P 8] Giorgi, 1970), and narrative psychology (e.g., Polkinghorne, 1985; Deslauriers, 1992) are among the examples of approaches which expand the conventional paradigm without leaving it.)

Indigenous science, on the other hand, would begin with the culturally specific, ecologically and historically grounded indigenous understanding of "the good mind" (Colorado 1988: 52), a balanced way of living in community on a particular land ("balanced mind" would be an alternative term); the *Iroquois* people call this *skanagoah*, literally "the great peace." Healing is needed when the "good mind" is out of balance for

reasons which the cultural stories and myths can provide. Indigenous healing practices then are a synthetic, integral approach to what is out of balance. Native science guides the healer to the point in the fabric where it is rent and where wholeness needs to be reestablished. Indigenous ceremonies are the precise knowledge and practice designed to create balance on all levels and from all levels (within the person on the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual levels, and by doing so on the level of spirits, community and nature which hold the individual); they are indigenous science. Their efficacy comes through the integrity and the wholeness of the healing ceremony.

Colorado gives some coordinates for indigenous science:

Just like western science, indigenous science relies upon direct observation; there are tests to insure validity and data are used for forecasting and generating predictions. Individuals are trained in various specializations, for example, herbalism, weather observation, mental health and time keeping. Unlike western science, the data from indigenous science are not used to control the forces of nature, instead, the data tell us ways and means of accommodating nature. Other critical distinctions include the following:

1. The indigenous scientist is an integral part of the research process and there is a defined process for insuring this integrity.
2. All of nature is considered to be intelligent and alive, thus an active research partner.
3. The purpose of indigenous science is to maintain balance.
4. Compared to western time/space notions, indigenous science collapses time and space with the result that our fields of inquiry and participation extend into and overlap with past and present.
5. Indigenous science is concerned with relationships, we try to understand and complete our relationships with all living things.
6. Indigenous science is holistic, drawing on all the senses including the spiritual and psychic.
7. The end point of an indigenous scientific process is a known and recognized place. This point of balance, referred to by my own tribe as the Great Peace, is both peaceful and electrifyingly alive. In the joy of exact balance, creativity occurs, which is why we can think of our way of knowing as a life science.
8. When we reach the moment/place of balance we do not believe that we have transcended - we say that we are normal! Always we remain embodied in the natural world.
9. Humor is a critical ingredient of all truth seeking, even in the most powerful rituals. This is true because humor balances gravity. (Colorado, 1994: 1-2)

[P9] The different motivations for inquiry in the case of western and indigenous sciences are of note: The researches of the native healer are done to increase the integrity and wholeness of the communal fabric and to benefit the individuals that are part of it.

Western researches of native healing practices rarely seem to benefit the peoples researched directly, but they are a way to address the limitations of the western healing paradigm and to come to terms with events which western scientists commonly considered anomalous, inexplicable or nonexistent.

As the voice of the indigenous other emerges within industrialized nations - however limited and distorted - through neo-shamanic techniques and the alternative interpretations which transpersonal psychologies and holistic medical approaches have to offer, a profound question arises: *Are (post)modern people trying to heal their western, euro-american selves or are they trying to heal their indigenous selves?* This question is of utmost importance to indigenous peoples. If what they are doing is healing their euro-american selves within the existing paradigm, then iatrogenic diseases which are an expression of the continuing dissociation from holism and indigenous roots are the result (this is one of the reasons why natives are disturbed about the decontextualized use of their healing approaches). The correct technique used in a dissociated way is dangerous because it allows the appearance of a deeper healing which did not occur (individual benefits notwithstanding); natives would also talk about spiritual dangers which imperil any attempts of healing (as opposed to curing). From an indigenous perspective, if western people are healing their indigenous selves through the remembrance of native healing ways, then individual healing is also the healing of community and paradigm.^{3[3]}

Indigenous And Modern Consciousness

The discussion of differences between indigenous and western sciences is an indicator of the significant differences between indigenous and modern (or postmodern) consciousness. Without understanding these differences we cannot adequately explore the use of trance narratives. Barfield (1965) offers distinctions which are helpful for our purposes (Kremer, 1992a, b). He argues that in the subject - object interaction between human beings and the 'out there' (external reality, the unrepresented), they may participate in what they consider phenomena in radically different ways.^{4[4]}

Barfield distinguishes three major types of participation which are of epistemological relevance for euro-american traditions: 1) original participation, 2) the loss of or the unconscious [P10] participation of modernity, and 3) final participation. I call these three types of participation 1) indigenous consciousness or mind, 2) modern /

^{3[3]} I have discussed the historical changes in the relationship between the western paradigm and indigenous consciousness in Kremer (1995) based on McGrane (1989).

^{4[4]} I am amending Barfield's descriptions by deleting eurocentered prejudices in my summaries of his work.

postmodern consciousness, and 3) recovered, remembered or retribalized indigenous mind. I am using these distinctions outside of the evolutionary scheme which Barfield represents (his linear, monocausal approach to evolution is quite contrary to indigenous perspectives).

Indigenous consciousness: In what Barfield calls 'original participation' (the interaction with the phenomena in shamanic hunter-gatherer societies, in particular), the embeddedness of human consciousness in nature is experienced and lived in a direct with very permeable boundaries between self and phenomena, and with a language structure and narrative reflectiveness which expresses this engagement with reality (Müller, 1981: 241ff.^{5[5]}). Precise observation and accurate visual descriptions are usually of utmost importance. This synthetic type of consciousness allows an experience of a systemic connection with nature and here perception is integrated into the whole. Thinking occurs more in images than concepts.

Barfield's descriptions are not free from the prejudices which his inspirateurs Lévy-Bruhl and Durkheim espoused. The archaeoastronomical, navigational, agricultural and healing knowledge of native peoples indicates the level of cognitive functioning they have been capable of for millenia. Spirit is part of the considerations of indigenous science. Indigenous consciousness or original participation defines itself at the intersection of the seasonal and astronomical cycles, the ecology, the ancestral heritage, the community and the gifts or medicine of the individual (these are *necessary* conditions for the presence of indigenous mind). Trance narratives are particularly relevant in this cultural context for the understanding of personal medicine or gifts and healing. The individual narratives are contextualized within tribal stories, ceremonial structures and communal interpretations (with the guidance of elders and shamans). Prime examples of such oral cultures could and can be found among the egalitarian hunter-gatherers (Lerner 1986: 15-53; Mason 1993: 50-90). *Napaljarri*, a clan elder of the Australian *Warlpiri*, describes this consciousness as follows: "Each person is related to other people, to their *jukurrpa* [dreamtime, J.W.K.] ancestors, to the places they own and are responsible for, to the narratives and songs concerning the places and ancestors, and to the gestures, dances and designs that belong to the places" (Napaljarri & Cataldi 1994, xix).

While it is true that individuals are (or are not) in their indigenous minds, it is also true that the indigenous mind is not individual. Individuals are in their indigenous minds

^{5[5]} Halifax, Lomax and Arensburg came to similar conclusions about thirty years ago at Columbia University, NY; Halifax (1994: n.p.).

if they [P11] understand how they stand in the weave of their ancestry, community, nature, spirit(s) and cycles. The individual gift from spirit(s) (medicine, endowment) of a person comes to life if, and only if s/he recognizes where s/he stands in this weave. Individuals embody the indigenous mind, which encompasses more than their individual self. Indigenous consciousness is participatory in reality. Reality is not out there and opposed to the individual, they are part of each other and each individual is challenged to maintain balance and harmony in this weave. It is important to emphasize that the indigenous mind is thus grounded both in spirit and matter. While it is a potential for every human being, this potential can only be realized if it is specifically grounded in the necessary conditions just mentioned (which means that it, ultimately, cannot be realized in an individualistic paradigm).

My previous descriptions and quotes have focused on describing indigenous science using euro-american coordinates. From an indigenous or native perspective it is often understood through the imagery of the tree, is holistic. Through spiritual processes, it synthesizes information from the mental, physical, social and cultural/historical realms. Like a tree, the roots of Native science go deep into the history, body and blood of the land. The tree collects, stores and exchanges energy. It breathes with the winds, which tumble and churn through greenery exquisitely fashioned to purify, codify and imprint life in successive concentric rings - the generations. Why and how the tree does this is a mystery, but the Indian observes the tree emulate, complement and understand his or her relationship to this beautiful life-enhancing process (Colorado 1988, 50).

The language of this quote reflects indigenous mind more accurately than the descriptions which may be more accessible and palatable for western scientists.

Let me emphasize two presuppositions about original participation or indigenous consciousness which are of tantamount importance for our contemporary situation:

1) The indigenous mind is a human potential which can be actualized by anybody and everybody - past, present and future.

2) The indigenous mind is not something of the past, but a consciousness present among various contemporary indigenous peoples.

Indigenous mind is thus understood as a human potential for all and everybody, and it is also understood as a world view, or rather a particular way to participate in the world and to experience reality. The indigenous mind as a world view does not so much signify a particular set of beliefs as it refers to a pragmatically, experientially grounded and validated way of being in the world. While this mind appears to rest in individuals (and needs their intentionality to be present), [P12] it only emerges when the individual rests in the weave of the ancestral heritage, the community, nature and spirit(s).

Modern and postmodern consciousness: According to Barfield, by the seventeenth century the center of perception and thinking had changed in Europe from the phenomena to the self, with the mind moving outward toward the unrepresented and the phenomena (rather than from the phenomena inward) -- thus the mind had severed itself from its connection with nature. This second epistemologically relevant process internalizes meaning and treats the phenomena as existing independently. "... A representation, which is collectively mistaken for an ultimate -- ought not to be called a representation. It is an idol. Thus the phenomena themselves are idols, when they are imagined as enjoying independence of human perception, which can in fact only pertain to the unrepresented" (Barfield, 1965, 62). This is why his book title calls out to save the appearances from the idolatry of modernity during the next process.

The underlying drive of modernity (with the beginning of the Enlightenment) is the creation of a tight mindweave (shrinkwrap) of control over all which is not considered part of the rationalistic aspects of mind. I have termed this dis-ease process in the knowing of Eurocentric cultures 'dissociative schismogenesis' (Kremer, 1994d); this process is the abstract core of the empiricist and rationalistic world view, which is an attempt to align the world to *man's* will (needless to say, an imperialistic endeavor on all counts) and an increasing split from its origins. The consciousness process of the modern mind is thus labeled as an escalating process, which not only will lead to intolerable stress, but because it has continued relatively unchecked, to the possibility of cultural breakdown (cf. Bateson, 1958/1972, 171ff.). This whole process of dissociation could also be interpreted as the eradication of indigenous consciousness in people subscribing to the modernist paradigm of progress. Dissociative schismogenesis is the stilling and killing of those aspects of being human which an indigenous person would consider necessary in order to be whole or in balance. The modern scientist frames healing primarily in terms of disease control (rather than the maintenance of balance) while trances and other altered states are likely to find themselves in the company of psychopathological descriptions. Dissociative schismogenesis is the increasing unconsciousness of human participation in the perceived phenomena. The search for universal, abstract concepts (even when used in the context of cultural relativism) is part of this external (other cultures and nature) and internal (the body, the unconscious, the feminine, etc.) scientific colonization. All this indicates how the history of colonialism and the history of modernity and science are intertwined not only on the obvious, crude and cruel levels, but also on [P13] subtle levels which affect our understandings to this day. (Cf. Ani, 1994 for a comprehensive indigenous African discussion of these issues.)

Postmodernism can be seen as the chaotic breakup of this shrinkwrap or net of control (unsuccessful as it may have been). The emergence of an increasing interest in trance experiences and narratives, indigenous modes of healing, mythology, goddess cultures, archetypes and symbols appear to be a part of this epistemological crisis as the euro-american cultures are searching for what Spretnak has called ecological postmodernism (1991) or what Swimme and Berry (1992) have described as the emergence of ecozoic consciousness. Postmodernity and deconstructionism establish the possibility of ending the idolatry of representations.

Recovery of indigenous consciousness is what Barfield terms 'final participation' (and what I have called also 'future participation', Kremer 1991, 4). I view neo-shamanism as an indication of the desire for the recovery of indigenous ways of knowing within (post)modern societies. Such recovery would reconnect modern consciousness to the seasonal and astronomical cycles, specific ecologies, the remembered ancestral heritage, community and the individual's medicine. Then spirit would be, once again, part of science (see especially Spretnak, 1991, 196ff.). (See Kremer (1993 & 1995) for important distinctions between tribal shamanism and neoshamanism.)

Even this very brief discussion should make the answer to the following question obvious: "If the indigenous mind is lost - can it be recovered?" *From an indigenous perspective* the answer to this question is an emphatic "yes!" The reasons for the possibility of the recovery of the indigenous mind can be grouped in five major dimensions of 1) the continued presence of cycles, 2) the continued presence of ancestral spirit(s), 3) the presence of artefacts and spiritually significant places, 4) the continued presence of nature, and 5) the psychological capabilities of the individual human mind:

Barfield thus describes the rise of Western consciousness as the rise of human consciousness from nature leading to high levels of conceptual reasoning and reflections without conscious participation in the phenomena, even with the denial of the involvement in them. This is also the masculinization of the phenomena. This process can be seen as an explanation why it is so easy to deny nature in human consciousness. This antithetical, dissociative process between human beings and the phenomena has found its acme in the Western enlightenment movement. It is out of the dark night of the masculinized scholar that a future and new type of participation may arise through the use of trance narratives in modernist societies. For indigenous peoples this would be the end of the Dark Sun era (according to Mexican prophecies; Colorado, 1991, 22), or **[P14]** the time when, according to the Kogi prophecies, younger brother has remembered who he is (Ereira, 1992, 113-114).

Barfield's most important point is that the *worlds* of the indigenous mind (original participation), the loss of participation of the modern Western mind and future participation (recovery of indigenous origins) are different. It is not just that humans see things differently in each of these worlds - but the worlds *are* different.

The Sami people of Norway, Sweden and Finland are a good example for the changes from indigenous to modern consciousness. The follow quote gives a clear illustration of the perils of linear progress thinking. The hunting and fishing Sami of old clearly fit the descriptions for indigenous mind.

The traditional Sami order makes clear the culturally provisional nature of an active self in the contextually shifting references of the crucial term *siida*. In every situation, from the most "everyday" organizations of domestic life and productive activities to the most "extradordinary" occasions of ritual sacrifice, the term *siida* refers to a diffuse unity of humans, animals, and the land. Traditional Sami believed that at the birth of a child, a new *siida* was created. This unit consisted of the human child, its particular "animal guardian spirit," and a particular "land spirit" (represented by the "birth stick" that marked the spot where the placenta was buried). A higher-level *siida* unit, foregrounded in the summer months of intense productive activity, included the separate domestic household (usually all those living in one tent), its summer territory, and the animals within that territory. Still more generalized was the winter *siida* assembly, including the entire human community, the total band territory, and all the animals. ... The most general *siida* unit - operative only in the most important and carefully controlled ritual contexts - consisted of both this world and the other world of the gods, the dead, and the generalized animal guardians. At this level, the *siida* was identical to the all-encompassing female earth god, the Stem-Mother (*Maddarakka*, J.W.K.) (Stephens, 1986, 212-213).

This world was reflected on the traditional Sami drum of these times, which allowed the shaman or *noaidi* to shift their attention to the higher level *siida*. However, "the drum's cosmic map was not simply a picture of the universe as it existed at any given time. Rather, drumming could effect transformations in *siida* levels and corresponding changes in *siida* actors and their objects" (Stephens, 1986, 217; cf. Pentikäinen, 1984, 144-145, 147). Growing older meant acquiring the capacity through transformative learning to stay at the center of increasingly generalized *siida* units.

All this changed significantly with the advent of pastoralism and the migrations with the herds of domesticated reindeer (after about 1600C.E.): *Maddarakka* becomes a minor deity and the male gods are seen as "controlling the powers and actions of their female consorts in order to [P15] prevent any far-reaching female transformations of the existing order" (Stephens, 1986, 219). The *siida* units are given a more restrictive and

more clearly bounded meaning, and linearity enters the migration pattern (substituting for the clover leaf like traditional four-directional pattern). The drum now shows a linearly layered world instead of the ovoid world outlined around the central goddess *Maddarakka* (Ahlbäck & Bergman, 1991; Kjellström & Rydving, 1993 for clear illustrations; also Lommel, 1965). Previously the drum had been an instrument by means of which the Sami participated in the ongoing creation of the universe, now it has become a picture of a certain cosmic order. The journey to the more generalized *siida* units becomes increasingly a matter of specialists and the boundaries between *siida* units become more impermeable. The relationship to the divine is now defined by sacrifices governing the symmetrical exchanges between male gods and men (cf. Bäckman & Hultkrantz, 1985). A process of dissociative schismogenesis from the loom of life has set in with the consequences of a threatening ecological catastrophe. What once was a concern with a continuing balance becomes part of a linear model of progress. The *Warlpiri* people of Australia talk about this same shift, which came with the arrival of the Europeans, as "the end of the *Jukurra*" (Napaljarri & Cataldi, 1994, xx), the end of the dreamtime.

Understanding Native American Healing Ways (Examples)

Let me explain the differences in paradigm a little further through the use of an example from the *Diné* people (Navajo).⁶⁶¹ I am choosing this example not because they may be the most popularized native tribe of this continent or because of the beautiful drypaintings which have drawn attention to their healing ceremonies (such as *ma'iijí hatáál* or *Coyoteway*, Luckert 1979) have been widely heard of because of the drypaintings. I am using this example because the *Diné* people seem to have exchanged knowledge with nordic tribes during ancient migrations west (Ashley, 1993). It is in this context of relationship that I as an indigenous Teuton have sought to learn from *Diné* traditions.

Whether an image in a sandpainting is perceived as symbol or as spirit marks the difference between *Diné* knowing and euro-american knowing.⁷⁷¹ The drypaintings show beings which are significant in the world of the *Diné* people. The western mind

⁶⁶¹ A more extensive discussion of differences between the *Diné* and euro-centric worldview can be found in Kremer (1995).

⁷⁷¹ I would like to acknowledge the helpful discussions with Hanson Ashley, David Begay, Avery Denny, Jim Faris, Nancy Marybody and others on these issues. I have tried to represent the *Diné* perspective as accurately as I can, any misrepresentations should be attributed to me.

understands them as an assemblage of *symbols* which *represent* certain beings [P16] which are significant in the *Diné* world; they are commonly seen as 'symbols of healing', where each piece of the sandpainting stands for something else. This interpretation reflects the split in the dissociative western mind: the different parts of the sandpainting point to something which is elsewhere, outside of the representation. The participatory tribal mind relates entirely differently to the sandpainting: The deities and other beings (*ye'ii*) *are* in the sandpainting. The making of the sandpainting is the creation of the presence of the beings. The beings are not at all separate from what the sand looks like. Once the sandpainting is there, they are there. This simple distinction marks worlds of differences: Whether a sandpainting is a symbol for something or whether it *is* a certain being indicates the consciousness process we are engaged in. In one case we have symbolic healing, in the other spirit heals. There is no simple technique which can bridge this difference. Each understanding reflects a different way of being in the world. There is no such thing as a simple switch from one to the other. Whether we use trances for symbolic work or to seek healing with and from spirit(s) is an indication of the consciousness and reality in which we are participating.

Jungian interpretations of tribal sandpaintings, myths or healings (see Sandner [1979] for an example) do *not* reflect tribal mind. They reflect the process of the western mind. Jungian psychology and related transpersonal approaches are certainly the closest to indigenous ways of being in that they validate the seminal importance of *participation mystique* and spiritual experiences. However, they are only accurate as long as they deal with the *western* mind. There they can be very helpful. If such a psychology gets projected onto indigenous peoples, then grave misunderstandings result. What may be a good starting point for the western mind means engaging the indigenous mind in a process of splitting and dissociation (amounting to psychologizing spirit, McNeill 1993). Faris (1990: 12) has made a pertinent summarizing statement about Jungian interpretations of Navajo traditions:

Such motions ... are still popular and continue to be attractive to both romantics and humanists who seem interested in fitting Navajo belief into some variety of universal schema - reducing its own rich logic to but variation and fodder for a truth derived from Western arrogances - even if their motivations are to elevate it. And thus, while often paraphrased in terms of a challenge to Western scientific tradition (Sandner, 1979), these motions nevertheless maintain the "classic ratio" (Foucault, 1973) with such traditions by its interpretation rather than acceptance of Navajo truths at face value.

Now we can make further distinctions not only in the research of, but also the use of Native American healing approaches in a euro-american framework. Sweatlodges are a well-[P17]known healing approach also used by non-indigenous people. The western mind can easily grasp the benefits of the sweat experience via the knowledge about saunas, for example (the effects of the heat on the immune system, etc.). Achterberg (1985) summarizes as follows:

The sweat lodge or saunalike structure is a commonly used vehicle for inducing an altered state of consciousness. ... A sweat lodge without ritual is just hot; but even with ritual, it can induce a masive systemic effect that includes rapidly increased pulse rate, nausea, dizziness, and syncope (fainting) - in short, the warning signs of the impending medical condition we call heat stroke. ... From a physical standpoint, there is a biochemical component of high body temperatures during fevers that reflects the natural reactions to toxins, and is correlated to the immune system in action. The artificially induced high temperatures of the sauna may mimic or induce this activity (as does sustained aerobic exercise). Furthermore, the sweat or sauna may act as a sterilization procedure, killing bacteria, viruses and other organisms that thrive at body temperature, but are susceptible to heat. The growth of tumors may also be inhibited when core body temperature is significantly elevated. (pp. 33-34)

However, the name 'sweatlodge' was coined by euro-americans; each tribe has its own specific name for this ceremony which embeds it in the deep structure of the specific culture (such as *inipi* among the Lakota). It is certainly true that many westerners have received tremendous benefits from sweatlodge experiences. And it is also true that their healing is not the same as a sweat lodge healing for a tribal person. The healing which the symbolic journey into the womb of the Mother Earth affords (as many euro-americans have described it) is different from the healing which a native person might receive through the encounter with spirit during these ceremonies. Decontextualized healing continues our cultural malaise of dissociation from interconnectedness and spirit; if we begin to remember our own indigenous minds, then we can understand the indigenous science which went into making of these exquisite healing ceremonies. The usefulness of the sweating technique is different from the integral balancing within self, community, nature and spirit which a traditional native person would expect.

The rite of the *onikare* (sweat lodge) utilizes all the Powers of the universe: earth, and the things which grow from the earth, water, fire and air. The water represents the Thunder-beings who come fearfully but bring goodness, for the steam which comes from the

rocks, within which is the fire, is frightening, but it purifies us so that we may live as *Wakan-Tanka* wills, and He may even send to us a vision if we become very pure. (...)

When we leave the sweat lodge we are as the souls which are kept, as I have described, and which return to *Wakan-Tanka* after they have been purified; for we, too, leave behind in the *Inipi* lodge all that is impure, that we may live as the Great Spirit wishes, and that we may know something [P18] of that real world of the Spirit, which is behind this one. (Black Elk, 1971, 31 & 43)

The contrast between Achterberg's summary and Black Elk's descriptions is instructive and illustrates the paradigmatic differences. Most recently, Krippner (1995) has advocated to take indigenous narratives about their ceremonial endeavors more seriously. The depth of native descriptions of sweat lodge and other experiences is commonly at least partially obscured by the filter which (post)modern consciousness represents; it is also, most obviously, obscured by the understandable native distrust of researchers who are approaching them from within a different paradigm (this affects the type and quality of information communicated). The recovery of indigenous consciousness (plural) among eurocentric peoples would create a different relationship between current scientific knowledge (as represented by the Achterberg quote) and native narratives from other cultures.

Within the western paradigm we pick an herb for its curative properties known to relieve a certain ailment. Herb collection is an entirely different event within a native context. Here it is a ceremonial event which involves spirit and, especially the spirits of the plant to be collected. It is a participatory event with the plant relations which presupposes detailed knowledge, including knowledge of their language; it requires knowledge of cycles and the preparations necessary for gathering. It means understanding plants like any other intelligent people. This is no longer the collection of an herb, but an engagement and appointment with spirit to help heal. What heals is more than the beneficial chemical ingredient in the herb. But in order for such healing to occur a certain protocol (which is expressive of the traditional ecological knowledge of a particular healer and tribal tradition) needs to be observed:

Prayer accompanies all plant use on the Navajo Reservation. Prayers are said when Rocky Mountain bee plant (*Cleome serrulata*) is gathered for stew, when yarrow (*Achillea lanulosa*) is picked to cure skin disease, when a sacred plant is gathered to treat a horse's sore leg, when a variety of plants are picked to make a rainbow of soft, long-lasting wool dyes.

Plants are not picked randomly or wastefully. Rather, they are picked as needed, and then, no more than are necessary.

An herbalist finds two of a particular species that she wishes to pick. To the largest and healthiest plant, she says a prayer and explains why she must pick its neighbor. An offering of shell, pollen, or other sacred material is deposited with the first plant. Then she picks what she needs. Afterward, the plant remains are buried with a final prayer. (Mayes & Lacy, 1989: 2-3)

Lake, a northwest California native expresses the indigenous relationship between healer and healing plants as follows:

Plants are "people" in the same ways we are people. They are born into certain families; they have extended families, tribes, and nations; they also [P19] have friends and even enemies. Some work individually, but most prefer to work cooperatively. They have individual personalities which are influenced by physical chemistry and mental-spiritual thinking. A happy plant is a healthy plant. A plant in its indigenous source of power is more potent and "powerful" than a domesticated species that has been cultivated. A natural plant gathered from its natural environment is more powerful in healing, especially if it is gathered in the right and proper way and at the right and proper time. Harvesting plants with prayer, ritual, and knowledge (communication formulas) will insure that the spirit of the plant stays with the body of the plant, and the plant will also be more effective in treatment for an illness. (Lake, 1991: 147)

The detailed herbal knowledge of Native American tribes has been collected in various publications of differing quality (e.g., Balls [1962], Chesnut [1902], Densmore [1928], Jones [1972], Mayes & Lacy [1989], Weiner [1972], Stammel [1986], Hutchens [1969]). Of course, related publications, some of them more reliable and less fanciful than others, about old plant knowledge can also be found in Europe (examples are: Grimm [1966/1888], vol.III; Golowin [1973]; Thiselton-Dyer [1889]).

Knowing the medical benefits of a sweat lodge purification or the effective chemical agents in an healing herb is certainly useful. But if this knowledge is not integrated into an indigenous science framework, then we fail to understand indigenous approaches to healing.

Healing Means "Nothing Less Than Manipulating the Full Structure of the Cosmos"

Within the conventional western medical paradigm, as indicated earlier, the therapeutic focus is on a clear identification of the symptom and the monocausal, linear analysis of its cause. Holistic medical approaches have expanded this approach to include a systemic understanding of causes as well as spiritual dimensions (beyond the emotional dimensions added by health psychology approaches). The conventional paradigm focuses on pathology, while the holistic medical approaches begin to focus more around notions of health (Kremer, 1982), thus putting themselves closer to indigenous sciences (on the far end of modern approaches, so to speak, but without truly bridging the deep structure of cross-cultural differences defined above). From my survey of the literature it seems accurate - albeit dangerous in this generalizing language - to say that indigenous peoples understand illness and healing in a cultural context which calls for a balancing of afflicted persons within their own cultural universe. Different indigenous cultures use different valid stories to explain the incident of illness; they address all aspects of the ill person (mental, emotional, physical, spiritual as well as communal), and they use a multifaceted approach in order to re-balance the sick within the indigenous cosmos. Indigenous approaches to [P20] healing imply a quality of control (i.e., balancing) different from the western monocausal, linear model of control. Let me use the *Diné* chantways as an exemplar for what I am talking about (without making the case why chantways are appropriate as exemplars).

The various chantways (Water Way, Coyote Way, Great Star Chant, Night Way, Mountaintop Way, Wind Way, Flint Way, etc.; cf. Wyman 1983a, b) use singing, praying, sweating, herbs, impersonation, bathing, sandpainting, etc. among their components (the ceremonies last up to nine days). Each of the chantways connect the healee to the *Diné* creation story, also commonly giving the origin of the chantway in use (Spencer, 1957). Thus the healees can be balanced within the *Navajo* world by being put, literally (not metaphorically or symbolically) at that point in the universe where balancing (healing) becomes possible. This place of balance is defined by an intricate system of diagnosis, the understanding of the creation story, and various detailed procedures. Accomplishing all this requires extensive ceremonial knowledge. The complexity of these chantways and their use is such that their learning can easily be compared to the acquisition of one PhD per chantway. They reflect a very detailed understanding of the world the *Diné* live in. Much of what is recorded in anthropological texts has little to do with Navajo practice and philosophy; when *Diné* practitioners share with other indigenous people facets of their world emerge which anthropology, in

particular, has misrepresented or failed to fathom. Faris (1990: 13) criticizes anthropological understandings of "how Navajo belief works: that it reflects and symbolizes rather than constitutes, that actions "express," that illness is cured "through symbolic manipulation." Anthropologists are still "interpreting ritual." Faris (not a Navajo himself) describes his understanding of *Diné* causality in relation to illness as follows:

From my conversations with Nightway medicine men there has emerged a distinct concept of Navajo command over their universe - a personal and individual responsibility which, certainly in Nightway causality in any case, is not explained by the productions of the 'natural world' or events external to human agencies. Indeed, all 'natural' phenomena (lightning, fire, snakes, and so on) are only dangerous *if* there is a sacrilegious attitude toward them, or mistreatment of them, or in failing to observe the proper relationship toward them. (...)

Thus, Holy People do not themselves 'cause' illness.[The Holy People are no more 'supernatural' than rocks or trees - they are simply invisible to humans. {p. 23}] It is violation *by* humans of prescribed order and proper ceremonial observances and attitudes, conditions of balance, beauty, harmony, and peace that brings about illness. This order, these ceremonial observances, these proper social relations have been set down by the Holy People in Navajo history. Illness is disorder, unbalance, ugliness. Violations may, of course, sometimes be unintentional or committed through ignorance; re-balance and re-order come through appropriate and proper [P21] appeal to the Holy People. In the attempts to re-order, there are supplicating features addressed to Holy People, of course, but their attendance at the healing ceremonies is, if such ceremonies are done properly, very compelling - indeed, they cannot resist attending. And if all is done properly, this attendance and this healing and this blessing and these offerings and these expressions of rigid propriety, beauty, and order bring about and restore a condition of *hózhó*, literally, holiness that is the harmony sought - a beauty, a balance in an order set out in Navajo history and recapitulated in ceremony. (...)

This detailed command, so overwhelmingly impressive in its intricacies, say, of a nine-night Nightway, *is* what attracts holiness, what commands the attendance of the Holy People, and what balances. Indeed, it is only in observing such details, that one comes to see how sketchy, in fact, are the very best of accounts...(Faris, 1990: 14-15)

The reader may think that this perspective is entirely alien to the eurocentric cultural worlds. But this is only the case as long as we restrict our glance to contemporary

medical practices. Once we go back only one hundred years, we find traces and tracks of a very similar cultural understanding of healing, health and illness in the older indo-european cultures (the very cultures which developed later on a dissociative approach to these issues). A review of the pertinent literature (which I began just recently) yields data, which quickly guide us toward the older indo-european and even pre-indoeuropean understanding of health and balance (see below for a number of references). Additionally, the continued existence of indigenous people culturally relevant for the indigenous roots of German and Scandinavian peoples, for example, easily adds to the possibility of recovery indigenous roots (the Saami people in the northern Scandinavian countries and the Kola Peninsula, and the various Siberian cultures, so far as they have survived Soviet oppression).

The following quote is an indication of the richness of information which can guide the development of a new relationship to indigenous peoples - neither based on the dominant eurocentric paradigm nor New Age or other fantasies, but based on a thorough personal and scholarly examination of what already is and what can be known. The *Diné* still practice an extraordinary healing system. But their practices and understandings are not alien to an older indo-european understanding of healing:

The nature of the order a healer established is also spelled out in the semantics of another verb applied to the art of healing, particularly within the Germanic languages: IE **kai-lo-*, which occurs in Goth *hailjan*, OE *hælan*, OHG *heilen*, and OBulg *celjo*, all of which mean "to heal." What is expressed most directly through these terms, however, is not just the [P22] establishment of a vague state of "health" or "well-being" but more precisely a state of "wholeness, totality, completion," ...

It now become apparent just how awesome a task the production or restoration of such integrity must be, for it is not just a damaged body that one restores to wholeness and health, but the very universe itself. ... The full extent of such knowledge is now revealed in all its grandeur: the healer must understand and be prepared to manipulate nothing less than the full structure of the cosmos. (Lincoln, 1986: 100, 117-118)

Some of the parallels with *Diné* culture should be all too apparent. Pieces of knowledge like this represent a spark of hope for traditional indigenous peoples who live in continuing fear of genocide and the total loss of their culture. They represent the possibility of recovery of indigenous roots for people living in the eurocentric paradigm.

Who are you?

To traditional people western researchers commonly look very lost, "they don't know who they are." When indigenous peoples ask the question, "Who are you?", then they are seeking to understanding a person's place in the weave of blood relationships, ancestry, traditions, place, etc. The significance of this question is difficult to overestimate. If there is to be a relationship of equality between inquirers and indigenous peoples, then it needs be answered in depth and to the satisfaction of the traditionalists. The challenge is that a satisfactory answer has indigenous consciousness as a prerequisite. Seeking the answer leads back to indigenous mind. One of the requirements during this process is a deep look at the history of imperialism.

If indigenous healing occurs in the context of a complex cultural weave, then we need to know where we stand in our own weave and in relation to the other weave we are approaching - provided we want to do so with respect. Answering the question "who are you?" in all its depth opens the possibility to step out of colonial relationships. Until such time, colonialism is the frame for the knowledge given and the knowledge received; this means that the western sciences commonly define for indigenous peoples what is reality and which aspects of their "purported reality" are valid and significant. Of course, it is by now well known that many inquirers have taken answers seriously which were, in fact, given to distract and protect knowledge from the intrusive eye of western science (joking, teasing, and entertaining stories are part of this). Colonialism, of course, is a context of utter inequality, where internalized colonialism plays as much a significant part as the contemporary cultural threats: Indigenous knowledge (*if* it is shared) is commonly given based on the assumption of cultural and personal inferiority, a consequence of the relentless onslaught of the dominant paradigm. Because of all this the quality [P23] of eurocentric knowledge is seriously questioned (not to speak of the ethics and politics of all this).

When indigenous peoples meet they commonly introduce themselves by stating their kinship affiliations (in the broadest sense) in one form or another. The Australian aboriginal *Warlpiri* social arrangement may illustrate this:

This kinship system relates the people to each other, but its central importance for the Warlpiri world view is that it also relates the people to the Jukurrpa (the Dreaming, J. W. K.) and the land. That is, for Warlpiri people the relationship between each person and the world is mediated by their kinship subsection. Each jukurrpa, and each place, belongs to one (or possibly two) of four pairs, Jupurrurla-Jakamarra, Jungarryi-Japaljarri, Jangala-Jampijinpa, Japangardi-Japanangka, and the female counterparts. These pairs also mark the relationship of father and son. That is, through their particular subsection, each person is related to other people, to

their jukurrpa ancestors, to the places they own and are responsible for, to the narratives and songs concerning the places and ancestors, and to the gestures and designs that belong to the places. (Napaljarri & Cataldi, 1994: xix)

Understanding indigenous healing sufficiently can only occur in this context. In order to enter this context, the inquirers need to know who they are, which then puts them in relation to the indigenous culture they are visiting; the context of the visit now is not colonialism, but a shared way of knowing. The following, more personal statement gives a tiny slice of my own process of addressing the question "who are you?"

Part II: Struggling to recover indigenous roots

Although the format of this part II reflects indigenous thinking to the extent that it emphasizes a process orientation and has a certain circularity, it nevertheless presents a compromise: Euro-american scholarly discourse shapes the way thinking and writing are framed. The hearing of the indigenous voice depends on finding a way to speak through the dominant discourse - and in spite of it. Thus it is most important to remember that this paper is not written in an indigenous language.

The best approach to reading the following paragraphs may be that of an initiation: I am asking the reader to engage with patterns of thought which are contrary to habit. The intention is, literally, to boggle the mind. This may lead to confusion and dark night experiences along the way. However, it is hoped that this initiatory journey ends in a place where all the threads may come together in a new weave, maybe a new approach to native healing ways.

[P24] Writing about indigenous healing practices is always situated in a specific socio-cultural, ecological, historical, gendered and autobiographical context. This is asserted in the face of those euro-american schools of thought which give us ways to think otherwise; from an indigenous perspective these need to be understood as routes of denial. I am voicing what is commonly considered "OTHER" - outside the shrinkwrapping strictures of the dominant euro-american conversations and discourses. OTHER is defined by the rationalistic discourse. OTHER is what the splitting from our indigenous origins is continuing to colonize and control in a rationalistic paradigm of dissociation: the beingknowing of the body; creative, artistic, crafting beingknowing; emotional beingknowing; spirit and spiritual beingknowing; nature, wilderness, environmental, ecological beingknowing; the beingknowing of all that which is commonly labelled feminine or female or woman; cyclical beingknowing; narrative, storied, integral beingknowing; the beingknowing of community. OTHER has always

been systemic and understood itself as systemic in nature. Speaking, writing from OTHER (and as OTHER) I voice my beingknowing not in any of these categories, but I am trying to weave myself being woven into a fabric which is refusing such seductive categories as epistemology or ontology.

In the indigenous voice it is illegitimate to split knowing from being - thus 'beingknowing'. I OTHER am playing with the language in order to create a fluid fuzziness which is illuminating about transforming learning transforming processes of indigenous minds. By twisting conventions of grammar and vocabulary I allow myself to say things more precisely and genuinely than I could otherwise (hoping that the reader will gradually relax into the flow of consciousness of indigenous beingknowing). I am running words together, weaving them into a process which should not be thought asunder.

Odin's sacrifice on the tree (as described in the Elder Edda) was a fast for words and deeds, beingknowing, for chants which would put him at the center of beingknowing, becoming the tree of life himself, drinking from the Source (Urd, Wyrð), knowing the fateful runes of his life, thus he became empowered. "I know that I hung in the windtorn tree // Nine whole nights, spear-pierced, // Consecrated to Odin, myself to my Self above me in the tree, // Whose root no one knows whence it sprang. // None brought me bread, none served me drink; // I searched the depths, spied runes of wisdom; // Raised them with song, and fell once more thence" (Tichtenell, 1985: 126). It is not easy to quote these powerful stanzas, since they so clearly represent the Nordic worldview after the invasions of the indo-europeans. Odin is the grand patriarch who sees himself as the center who contains everything. But the Eddic poetry can be used to discover older layers hidden in them. It has been said that "most egalitarian societies are to be found among [P25] hunting/gathering tribes, which are characterized by economic interdependency. ... Most evidence for female equality in societies derives from matrilineal, matrilineal societies" (Lerner, 1986, 29 & 30). Understanding the indigenous mind and its relationship to transformative learning and healing in a context of equality thus requires that we look *through* what Odin is trying to make us believe. The tree of life was female before the Kurgan invasions (Gimbutas, 1991). But even in the later Eddic texts we find the female spirits, the *norns*, by the names Origin, Becoming and Debt spinning fates with their waters under the tree. These waters nourish the tree of life, which is also the human being. Its guardians are feminine spirits, *disir*. Indigenous peoples know how words create worlds, words are a weave. They often have clear guidelines on when to say and when not to say certain things (Witherspoon, 1977, 1987). They are unhappy with the

language pollution the dominant cultures foist upon them; for them the indo-european languages create careless worlds which are out of balance.

Healing is transforming, and the learning of transforming healing is an aspect of transforming learning transforming. If I were to write about healing solely within the common discourse of modernity, then I would leave parts of my indigenous mind behind in order to join the dominant discourse (an easy and safe move, given my academic training). In writing about healing from an indigenous perspective I am struggling to be true to a process of consciousness, a process of community and a process of beingknowing which is a potential for all humans. It is not just that the surviving indigenous peoples have access to this process, but all euro-americans have potential access to this. While I am struggling to keep communicative doorways to the dominant discourse open, my primary concern is voicing my indigenous mind. As I am standing in a communal circle of people who are fighting to live, know, and speak the indigenous minds of their endangered traditions, the only honorable thing I can do is living, knowing, and speaking my ancestral indigenous mind - a mindprocess rejected, "for good", a very long time ago. "Indigenous Teuton" seems a surefire provocative term, since it posits the possibility of indigenous beingknowing for a contemporary German living in the United States, and since it evokes a mythological realm which is part of the history of genocide and continues to be used for anti-indigenous ends. In choosing between dissociating from what is a living history and my ancestral roots or living in and acknowledging an indigenous mind which weaves me into the spirits of my ancestral lands, the spirits of the place where I am living now (California), the large cycles of the earth, my current community and family - in choosing between these two alternatives I am left with no real choice. In seeing the alternatives the choice is made. In seeing the alternative my fate becomes transparent and the only honor I have is to be true to that fate.

[P26] For every German the gateway to the indigenous mindprocess is a concentration camp. Hitler's barbaric abuses of Teutonic mythology have made this entry to the old indigenous mind of Northern Europe unavoidable. Without taking this painful walk understanding my fate is relegated to shadow material and my indigenous mind would contain wishful fantasy and perpetrate an unhealthy split. Fate was a central coordinate for the Nordic peoples (Bonney, 1993b). They dedicated their children to the *dísir*, the female guardian spirits connected with the land, the powers of fate which determined their individual *máttir ok megin*, their personal capacity and possibility of success. Thus they dedicated to the source and the Yggdrasils - springs and trees being so important for them. Rites of passage later on allowed for a conscious dedication and

commitment to this destiny. It was the work of the mature adult. It is my work as I speak my indigenous mind. Walking through the gateway of the German holocaust is one of my rites of passage. I was born German, I grew up in Germany shortly after the Second World War and I left - or fled - the Federal Republic of Germany to live in the United States of America. Contained in this is, no doubt, my destiny, my *mátr ok megin*. My torment has been the realization that I personally could only recover by delving into my feelings of shame and by walking through Auschwitz past Hitler, past Neonazis, past Wotan, past Heidegger, past Jung, past Christianization to whatever lies beyond. My feminine *dísir* has helped me many times in my transforming learning transforming. *Mátr ok megin* is not an abstract category, it is my story weaving amidst the stories from the past into the German story of the present into the genocide on this land into the stories of different indigenous minds. For the old Nordic peoples sacredness was experienced in the certainty of their destined endowment; this notion has since been thoroughly perverted by the Nazis. Part of my fateful challenge has been to build an internal (if not external) bridge from Northern Germany to the United States, especially California, and to its native cultures. Part of my fate and challenge has been to be in my indigenous mind when with people who are commonly called 'tribal.'

'Honor' is a word that is almost inextricably tied to the masculine. The German *Ehre* is etymologically connected to grace and gift (Mitzka, 1960). The old Norse folks called their feeling of connectedness to the sacred and the certainty of their endowment honor. They took pride in justifying their destiny, made it known, and wished to be recognized by it. This meant that they had to know and accept themselves with their destiny and that they would work to manifest the nature of what they understood their fate to be. (Self-acceptance, when not balanced, may result in feminized or masculinized narcissistic inflations, with the Vikings representing a masculinized heroic inflation.) Thus they would commune with the sacred. The rite of passage [P27] during adolescence would strengthen the commitment to their fateful endowments (German *Schicksal*, a late Christian word; the old words are *wurd*, *wyrd*, *weird* and *urdr*). The fates of the tribe would be the weave of the individual fates. One would honor one's tribe by honoring one's individual destiny. I cannot but write as a German. As such I am also writing for Germany. In order to reestablish my personal honor I need to recover my feeling of sacred connectedness and destiny. To live on this land honorably means being knowing my indigenous mind. Honor and integrity means struggling not to create OTHER inside and outside.

Germany and the Nordic heritage lost its honor during the Third Reich. The understanding of fate and destiny was perverted. The honor of Germany can only be

reestablished through a profound connection with the sacred weave of its ecology. This is not a grandiose act; it is a humbling confrontation with the ashes of burnt people. I have an obligation to honor my personal destiny in order to reestablish my personal connection with the sacred. In so doing I am also confronted with a tribal obligation, "the honor of Germany." This is as disgusting a thought as it is inevitable. Honor has been masculinized - men are concerned with their honor. This is alien for most women who view life fundamentally from a relational perspective. The honor of old may have been just like that: I honor the land because I understand my relationship to her; I honor my community because I see how I am part of its weave and story; I honor my friends because I affirm their destiny; I honor my destiny, and thus I affirm my relationship with the sacred. Maybe honor was never this; but maybe it was at one time affirmative, relational and connected to love and self-love. Willy Brandt was in his woman when he fell to his knees in Warsaw; he honored relationship. The female side of honor would mean that it is honorable to cherish the feminine and nature. My honor is my connectedness. I have no honor without wholeness. Honor is in walking in Dachau and Neuengamme. Dishonor is walking around these places of pain, grief and shame. The ancient ones can only speak again once we have listened to them there. Honor is in facing the torture of the Jewish, gay and gypsy spirit. Honor is in transforming learning transforming in the indigenous mind.

Over the painful process of the recovery of my indigenous roots circles the raven; it goes by the name of Munin, memory. In one of the Eddic poems Odin, oftentimes pictured with two ravens on his shoulders, remarks how he fears more for Munin than for Hugin, the raven of intentionality and consciousness. Maybe this reflects an old, prescient knowing about the difficulties indigenous minds would have in the future, our contemporary struggle. But then, recovery of indigenous roots and the validation of this knowledge works in curious ways: I recently received an article by Kenin-Lopsan (1995) from the Republic of Tuva for a journal [P28] issue I am editing. In it he wrote about *kuskun*, the raven: "The raven was the shaman's faithful and favorite informant. The raven was always attributed with a magical quality. Wooden figures were often carved of the black raven. As a rule, shamans wore two figures of ravens on their shoulders, due to the bird's vigilance, keenness, and wisdom" (p. 2). (An initial survey of the literature on Siberian shamanism has yielded many surprising, and oftentimes very specific parallels with the Nordic literature, an article waiting to be written.)

My personal need for transforming learning transforming is constellated by the necessity for further rites of passage and ceremonies of healing my indigenous mind; the destructions of the San Francisco Bay Area ecosystem and the near extinction of its first

peoples; my grieving remembering of the Nordic fabric before herding patriarchs, Vikings, Christianity, witchhunts and Nazi perversions; my confrontations with the genocidal histories of this and other continents.

Indigenous consciousness is specifically grounded in a story of pastpresentfuture which aligns the people in the seasonal and larger cycles while grounded in a particular environment and spiritual life. For me it is grounded in the source of the shamanic tree Yggdrasil. If this is indeed a story woven in balance, then it affords the possibility of comprehending not just the deep story of the particular community, but consciousness of other communities, Mother Earth consciousness and questions of origin and indigenous science way beyond what the euro-american dissociative narrative would acknowledge. There are many examples of this. Among the popularized ones are the Hopi prophecies (Kaiser 1991) and the Kogi prophecies (Ereira, 1992), which represent an uncanny knowledge of the dynamics of European history.

'To heal' is etymologically connected, as mentioned earlier, with the German *heilen* and the indo-european root **kailo-*, referring to a state and process of wholeness. But to heal is also connected to holy (as is *heilen* to *heilig*), which gives an ancient root to the reemergent wholistic and transpersonal perspective on healing (needless to say, 'whole' is also related to **kailo-*). In order to stay healthy (whole, holy) we need to learn how to transform ourselves continuously so that we renew our place in the weave (Mitzka, 1960; Shipley, 1984).

'To learn' is connected with the German *lernen*, and, further back, with the Sanskrit root *leis*, meaning track, footprint or furrow (Shipley, 1984). 'Track' and 'footprint' would seem to be the older meaning given that 'furrow' would require the existence of agriculture and domesticated farm animals (thus the root *leis* could thus be seen to hold both, the older connections with foraging gatherer and hunting communities as well as the new agricultural societies). Learning is tracking - the wild animal, the stars, the cycles of the seasons, etc. In order to track we have to [P29] know our natural environment. If we can't track natural events, then we don't learn. If we can't track, then we don't stay whole and fail to honor what is holy - we loose our health.

'Transforming' is connected to the Sanskrit root *merbh*, to shine, appear or take shape (which becomes the Latin *forma* and the Greek μορφή, 'morph'); the water emerges from the source and takes shape as it moves from stream to creek to river. Μορφή implies not just any form, but a form which is free from the accidental and incomplete; it alludes to beauty and grace, to harmony and balance. By changing form we presumably change toward something which reflects a process of greater balance (although the direction of transformation is never assured).

The Kogi Indians of Colombia have an understanding of their craft of the loom which pertains. As the Kogi Indian works on his loom, he works the loom of life; spinning is thinking and thoughts are threads, and by weaving he interlaces individual thoughts with the social web. When the heart thinks, it weaves. Thoughts make a blanket. The fabric of life is a garment, a web of knowledge made of thoughts. It is life's wisdom that envelops us like a cloth. The earth is a loom on which the sun weaves the fabric of life. The loom is the person, with different parts of it corresponding to human anatomy. The loom is also the ecology in which the Kogi live as well as the different ceremonial centers as well as different spirits. A garment woven on such a loom is more than the garment which meets the euro-american eye (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1978). In the northern European countries, it is the fabric which the norms weave from Urd under the tree of life, which contains the destiny of people. Knowing the weaving is knowing the thought of spirit. The craft (*die Kraft*, power) of weaving is a spiritual practice which requires a particular moral stance (Kremer & White, 1989). Odin fasts for nine days and becomes the tree of life; through this act he looks deeply into the mystery of Source where his roots lead. If I fast and honor the tree which I am, then I see the pattern into which the women at the Source are weaving me (Bauschatz, 1982). In indigenous consciousness these correspondences are neither just metaphorical nor idle word play: They reflect the awareness of us weaving being woven on earth as our individually and communally destined lives.

If we are to ask *what* is being healed or transformed, then the answer is: It is the transforming of a smaller or larger part of the weaving; what is transforming is relationship. The weave is always changing. We are always changing. Where we are in the weave is always changing. Transforming learning transforming is how we live and experience ourselves in the changing weave as part of the weave being woven. It is knowing where we stand so that we can be properly woven - which is the illusion of weaving. It means tracking the weaving of the system and knowing when transforming is needed. I have the option of dropping out of the **[P30]** ongoing process of staying healthy (or transforming learning), in which case I will become increasingly out of balance with the possible consequences of ill health, misguided ratiocinations, dysfunctional emotional patterns, denial of the spirit of the weave and various other dissociative pathologies. If I remain true to the capacities for tracking then my form of balance will continuously transform itself into new forms of weaving being woven in the fabric.

As an indigenous Teuton I can understand the healing ceremonies of indigenous peoples from the perspective of the tree of life Yggdrasil which is so central not only in the nordic traditions, but also in many Asian shamanic traditions (Davidson, 1993;

Bonnefoy 1993a, b). Knowing the trunk, the roots, the branches and the leaves of this tree teaches me about balance. The descriptions are precise in that they reflect a way of balance which the indigenous peoples of northern Europe had come to. Yggdrasil teaches about relations and healing. Using my indigenous science I can approach the indigenous science which, say, the Native Americans of this continent have developed in their healing practices. What I learn now is different from what I learn when I do western science. (It also gives me a way to review and integrate the results of the western sciences in a new way.) What I try to heal now is not my euro-american self, but my indigenous self.

This perspective is the result of 25 years of personal and academic work (Kremer, 1994b)⁸¹⁸. One way of labeling this would be to call it a re-socialization. The shift in consciousness and paradigm which I have alluded to in this paper consists not in the use of various tribal or shamanic techniques, but in the labor to make the world appear differently before my eyes - a process far from closure.

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⁸¹⁸ Intense grief work is part and parcel of undergoing such a process; see Kremer (1995) for a discussion.

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