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HEALTH AND BEING IN THE WORLD:

AN INTERPRETIVE WORK ON LAKOTA HEALTH

by

KATARIN (KATHLEEN ANNE) JURICH

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

in the

GRADUATE DIVISION

of the

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San Francisco

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ABSTRACT

Health and Being in the World:

An Interpretative Study of Lakota Health

by

Katarin (Kathleen Anne) Jurich

This twelve year study has been an inquiry into how a specific population of Lakota people from Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations view notions of health. The findings from this study result from a phenomenological approach to the field, a grounded theory analysis of field notes and an hermeneutic analysis of conversational texts focusing on those aspects of Lakota life that related to health. This work is an interpretive piece, one that is bound by the culture of science and the Western world, but also one that emerged from years of living in the field and gaining relationships with people whose world is the focus of this work.

For these Lakota health, is a virtue and is also a metaphor for the integrity of one's relationship to the world. The nature of being in the world of these Lakota is distinctly different from that of the western world in critical ways, even given the century of colonized life on reservations. These differences were considerable, and required, early on, an inquiry that raised critical ontological considerations of the existence of being, including the underlying assumptions about the world of science as well as the world of the Lakota. What began as a study of health became a study of life and relationships in life since, for these people, that is the meaning of health.

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The weight of history and the realities of contemporary reservation life create a formidable context for the study of Lakota health. [Fieldnotes: 1984]

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Statement of the Problem

This dissertation in the sociology of health and illness explores the nature and meanings of health among an older, more traditional, group of Lakota people who live on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian reservations in South Dakota. The pathway to that understanding was a long, winding one, spanning twelve years of fieldwork and wrestling at times with received theories, available methodologies, and conceptual frameworks that are the bedrock of various disciplinary fields. Early fieldwork experience necessitated an investigation into the ontological underpinnings of both the world of the Lakota and the world of science. Since the nature of ontological underpinnings also calls into question the practices of the research act, the methodological procedures of this research will be explored at some length. The process of this study has been one that developed from the inside out, as well as from the top down and from the ground up. This study of health takes seriously the idea that people create for themselves in their own terms the meanings of their lives and actions (James: 1963; Dewey: 1958; Mead: 1964; Blumer: 1969; Berger and Luckmann: 1967) and that those meanings and attendant practices are rooted in a culturally specific ontology that structures the possibilities for things showing up as meaningful to individual actors (Schutz: 1964; Heidegger: 1962, Godamer: 1974).

The conclusions drawn from this ten-year investigation can be best understood in the context of an elaborated Lakota ontology, a thick description of aspects of a Lakota way of being in the world and practices around what they conceptualized as health. The task of this project, then, was to discover and explicate, in terms of these Lakota, specific aspects of their lives with a focus toward those components that are considered to embody notions of health. The fundamental issues are first, delineating certain actions and practices within the Lakota social world that reflect aspects of Lakota ontology, second, pointing out those ontological underpinnings relevant to an interpretation of notions of health, and third, exploring how this divergent Lakota ontology illuminates particular theoretical, substantive, and methodological concern within the sociology of health and illness, with implications for the discipline of sociology in general.

The Lakota of this study, as can be seen clearly in their history and also available in their current social practices, construct meanings about their world that is distinct from Western practices and attendant meanings. The essential dimensions of the world of these Lakota have not emerged from the same concerns that are central to Western humanity. There exists considerable differences between these Lakota's world view and that of the Western world on essential ontological issues. For example, specific aspects of Western ontology that have emerged as particularly relevant to this research are those which reflect the Western world's notions of temporality, individualism and autonomy (freedom), hierarchical and patriarchal social order, power and authority, progress and development, the values of materialism,

accumulation, competition, and the legacy of Cartesian subject-object dualism of western epistemology (Durkheim: 1963, Weber: 1958, Parsons: 1958, Gouldner: 1971, Walsgrove: 1980; Finn: 1982; Fee: 1982; Rose: 1983; Keller: 1985). This is not to suggest that these are the only value orientations of Western society; nonetheless, these particular values and their ontological importance surfaced repeatedly in this research as formidable constraints to the pursuit of understanding a society whose nature of being supports a posture toward these fundamental issues.

The ontological underpinnings of the Lakota of this study, though certainly altered through contact with and colonization by Western society, arise from a world rooted in a set of values and attendant practices which emerge from their particular social, political and economic history. Coextensive relationships, cooperation, nonpermanency, expansive and quasi-boundless and non-linear temporality, social cohesiveness, group primacy, individual responsibility, diversity, generosity, bravery, fortitude and wisdom are central to their value orientation (Mirsky: 1937, Mackeel: 1943, Prucha: 1973, Lee: 1959, E. Deloria: 1944, 1990, V. Deloria, Jr.: 1969, Miller: 1980; Walker: 1980, 1982).

The dilemmas and challenges of identifying, negotiating and bridging these disparate ontological positions comprise an important part of the dissertation work. At times it seemed as though the worlds were so incommensurate as to render meaningful interpretation illusory. Over time, and with continued centrality of ontology, important issues have emerged.

The understanding of ontology and its relationship of that to epistemology needed to be explored, and were the focus of directed inquiry over two years. This research also has required the bracketing (Schutz: 1966) of several dearly held theoretical positions, well-formulated concepts, and legitimate methodological protocols. It has required an inquiry into the important world-taken-for-granted (Schutz: 1967) notions of temporality and spaciality. An overview of these aspects of the unfolding process of this ten year endeavor will highlight the critical nature of temporality and spaciality as a research issues, as well as point to important underlying ontological considerations.

Temporality, spaciality, and process

The use of the term temporality relies on the interpretive works of Godamer (1974), Taylor (1987), Darrouch (1982) and Falcouner and Williams (1985), and is considered a process of the past unfolding in the present which opens opportunities for what is to come. It breaks from the more common notions of time as a linear segmental construct. As such, this period of research was a constant flow of what went before informing what was currently at hand, and anticipating what was to come. There was and is no uniform nature or regular sequence to that phenomenon. It might seem helpful to be able to say, "first I did this and saw that, and wrote this and then...." However, the temporal nature of the work does not yield to such organization of time. Initially the past that kept encroaching on the ongoing present of fieldwork was greatly influenced by the positivist public health knowledge and

experiences of my own past that went to the field with me. The nature of moving beyond the influence of positivism was a long unfolding process often requiring conscious reflective effort along the way to break from these familiar perspectives and paradigms. This was then influenced by the developing understanding of and differing theoretical frameworks. Nonetheless, these various epistemological formulations seemed to create a veil, and I wanted — not really wanted by was driven out of frustration — to get beyond the veil (Nelson and Olesen: 1977). The language of theory influenced the nature of the field, and the experience of the field required a serious revisiting of the nature of theory development, particularly the ontological underpinnings of various theoretical frameworks.

The field experience forced a movement beyond epistemology to the centrality of ontology through a grounded theory analysis of early fieldnotes (Glaser and Strauss: 1967). Subsequently, the introduction to ontological considerations was through Heidegger, then through revisiting James and Dewey for ontological underpinnings of symbolic interactionism, as well as other areas of philosophy to understand the dilemmas of dualism, the contributions from pragmatism, phenomenology and hermeneutics. This process of inquiry was not a linear one, and time, though it can be considered a twelve year effort, has been an excursion in which the events of the early field reappear in the later experiences, and later experiences help rediscover meanings of the earlier events.

In the meantime, particularly over the past few years, many of the issues I have been struggling with have surfaced as central concerns within the history and

sociology of science (Foucault: 1987; Latour: 1988; Woolgar: 1988; Alexander: 1991), within feminism (Haraway: 1988; Gergen: 1988; Harding: 1986) and within anthropology (Clifford: 1986; Rabinow: 1986; Bieder: 1986; Marcus and Fischer: 1986; Rosaldo: 1989). For the major duration of this research, though, those literatures were unavailable. Nonetheless, the experience in the field pointed to many of the debates now considered to be on the cutting edge of postmodernism and postconstructionism. The field experience, particularly early on necessitated, if not the recreating of the wheel, a circumspect questioning of available maps, the charting of new courses, the designing of alternative methods and the developing of a language to convey the experience and meanings both of the fieldwork and of the outcomes of that endeavor.

There is another interesting aspect of the temporality of this work that has to do with duration and space. Spaciality had a particular aspect in that during the first segment of my work I was being on reservation but being in school. Then, when I returned to campus, I was being in school but also in many senses, being on reservation. Place is not only geographic, but encompasses the ideological, cultural, and material world as well as the practices in each. On reservation, some of my personal interactional rituals reflected the student; at school, the vernacular of reservation life became part of classroom discussion, altering the nature of discourse. Conversations in one place reemerge in the other, so that space at times seems to be an illusion, and one can get the sense of talking in two places at the same time, translating back and forth, getting direction, refining questions, re-checking. There

were times in both places where others were speaking through me as I spoke their words, took their place, they took mine, rewording my concerns and interests in the everyday language of conversations on reservation. This process was a subtle but important aspect of the redefinition of the area of study and the reformulation along lines that were proximate to the world of these Lakota.

These intersecting themes of time and space were ongoing concerns of the process of fieldwork and the work of analysis and interpretation. The length of time of this process has been both a requisite and a challenge. Revisiting early fieldnotes, with greater interpretive integrity could only be possible through time and the acquisition of greater skills and knowledge. Interpretive work, particularly in this context, could not have been as successful in a much shorter time frame. As for the spaciality of this work, as I write I write not only with the concerns of the discipline and of completing a dissertation, but in my mind I have the concerns and voices of the many people whose words have become the essence of this work. Time and space have a particularly encompassing and ongoing influence as this project continues to unfold.

Ontology and Epistemology

It is beyond the scope of any dissertation such as this to delve too deeply into the massive literature on theories of ontology and the related field of epistemology. However, it was my early findings from the field that indicated the important explanatory power of these concepts for this research. Because of this, it is important

to define the terms ontology and epistemology as they are used here and connect this interpretation to the larger field of sociology and to parts of philosophy.

Ontology and epistemology are elaborate and complex concepts, having held the attention of major scholars throughout history who have focused their lives' work on questioning and exploring the nature of being and the nature of knowing. It will be helpful to define these terms and then to distinguish them by tying them to sociology and my sociological efforts. Simply put, ontology is a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of being. Epistemology, on the other hand, is a division of philosophy that investigates the nature and origins of knowledge. It should be noted that these terms, although , are so closely related and intertwined that philosophical discussions of their distinctions requires years of disciplined study.

The sociology of knowledge takes as its major focus the analysis of knowledge, how it is constructed, altered, maintained, utilized for political purposes including oppression. There is no corollary field within sociology that addresses ontology in as direct or thorough a fashion. Marx's developments of ideology blur some of the distinctions between the two in his tying notions of ideas to underlying economic and historic factors which he sometime ties to more fundamental ontological postures of materialism, specifically capitalism. In phenomenology, particularly Schutz (1967), as well as the ethnomethodology of Cicourel (1974, 1964) and Garfinkel (1967), one will find discussions of the ontological nature of social sciences and their particular interpretation of the linkages between scientific work and underlying ontological postures. Most frequently, however, the issue remains within

the field of philosophy and when discussed gets relegated to the somewhat stigmatized nebulous arena of "metaphysics."

The intermittent and, by comparison to other substantive issues, minimal attention to the issue of ontology reflects other larger dilemmas and heated discussion within the social sciences, not only sociology. The centuries-old debate that has been cast between empiricism and subjectivism continues to point out the fundamental Janus faced nature of theory and method within the social sciences - a clear symbol of the overall imbeddedness in the ontology of dualism. It is not the purpose of this dissertation to review that history of science. Nonetheless, theory development within social sciences is bound by a culture of science. This implies ontological underpinnings that inform the way of being in the world practicing science. Perhaps part of the difficulty in moving beyond many of the early dilemmas will be resolved with the growing concerns in the social studies of science as they move forward in the analysis of a critical ontology of science (Latour: 1988; Woolgar and Pawluch: 1988; Fujimura: 1990, Starr: 1991).

The purpose here is to delineate the concepts of ontology and epistemology and the relevance of these emergent categories of significance to this particular research.

Merleau-Ponty's (1963) statement that "man is a social being and he is also a social being" is instructive in underscoring the difference between epistemology and ontology and in highlighting the two foci of this dissertation. The first reference is to the social, to the human intersubjectively structured reality - that which is known

through social construction. The second is a statement that directs attention to a mode of being - that humans are creatures who have "beingness," who participate in that beingness and whose existence is a mode of being, whose knowledge is an experience and expression of their being. An ontological inquiry directs attention to the understanding of being through pointing out, making manifest those things of the phenomenon that show itself as it is to itself. Heidegger calls this the existentiality, or way of being, the ontological. The study of being moves beyond the epistemological concerns of subject and object intentionality and focuses on the world existing as it is available through practices that are rooted in shared understandings of being. For Heidegger, human beings are what they are up to. Consequently, the focus is on practices which "appear to the world and announce themselves as meaningful." The term that is used to describe this essential beingness is the *dasein*, the individual essence from which activity emerges, and is observable in practices and understood through the hermeneutic interpretation of practices.

The process by which the issue of ontology emerged was not initially an intellectual concern that I then went to the field to investigate. A few years before my field work I had read several seminal articles and had some grasp of the debates between empiricists and phenomenologists, and between positivists and those drawing upon interpretive approaches, as well as the underlying ontological issues of determinism and free will. My understanding was limited to the epistemology of these issues, that is, I knew the essence of the debates put forth and understood the place of ontology in those debates, took a position and could defend it. It was not

until I was in the field, in a culture, and most importantly in the practice of quasi doing of a Lakota way of life that the essence of ontological underpinnings manifested itself in a dilemma in the field, and called forth a particular kind of focused inquiry. The importance of ontological and epistemological concerns was the result of experiencing intellectual and interactional disjunctures, noting them carefully, analyzing the field experience and attending to the emergent concerns reflected in early data collection (Glaser and Strauss: 1971; Strauss: 1987).

In doing fieldwork on reservation, I was at first very discouraged and then, after a few years, very excited about the "misinterpretations" I had made with my data. The process and experience of how the misinterpretations showed themselves as meaningful is instructive. Throughout my fieldnotes are comments where people were continually saying to me "don't you know?". Now, they did not mean this in an epistemological sense. They were not asking me if I knew or didn't know the answer, nor were they asking a rhetorical question. I came to understand, despite early consternation, that they were not ridiculing my lack of understanding nor suggesting that I couldn't understand what was patently clear to them. Over time, what began to unfold was that many people were pointing out to me, in a most simple phrase, that I did not share their meanings. They were, in essence, explaining for me the difference between epistemology and ontology. Such statements did not abate completely, nor perhaps will they ever disappear. But over time, as I began to be in the world of the Lakota in ways similar to them, these comments diminished. As I began to "do the do" of Lakota practices, the world of their world began to appear

and to point out things that were meaningful in a way that they are meaningful to the other. As I began to shake hands as Lakota shake hands, or walk at a pace that Lakota walk, or drive for hours without seeing another vehicle or human being, my being began to be in the world in a similar fashion to a Lakota. I could experience a shared ontology, and heard "don't you know?" less and less.

Part of this is the necessary and normal part of the fieldwork process (Denzin: 1989; Schatzman and Strauss: 1973). Certainly, I am not the first to experience nor report the difficulties, discomforts and dilemmas of research on reservation (Wax: 1971) or other cross cultural settings. With few exceptions, these analyses of the fieldwork experience primarily point out the difficulties in communication and understanding, that is, the epistemological disjunctures. The central issues that I struggled with were the ontological components and implications of these dilemmas. The recent works of R. Rosaldo (1989), Bieder (1986), Bruner (1986), as well as earlier works of Rabinow (1977) and Wolff (1976), directly address the dilemmas of what I consider to be ontological differences as experienced in the field.

Additionally, there was an important point in my fieldwork when I realized that something more important was going on than could be relegated to normal fieldwork development. As I analyzed my own field records under the category of "differences," it became apparent that my particular vision, my understanding and interpretations were clearly imbedded in my own particular Western academic and, more importantly, ontological frameworks. As I began to understand a bit about the limits of knowing, and also as I would become frustrated with the then-current

literature on Lakota health, I found it increasingly necessary to examine and read about the ontological implications of my own dilemmas and considerations from the field. It became clear that understandings of Lakota health as available through research and tied to theories from which the research is imbedded were insufficient in important ways. That is no news. The power and limitations of theory have been critically discussed by theorists throughout the history of the social sciences. But beyond the particular disciplinary and epistemological boundaries, there is little attention to the underlying ontology of scientific effort (Schutz: 1967; Taylor: 1971).

After years in the field and years of reading scientific research on Indian health, I "know" and can articulate an epistemology of the health of Native Americans on two reservations from several different theoretical perspectives. The epistemology is fairly well formulated and can be put forth in logical sequence. What is not so easy to translate are the ontological considerations which continue to fascinate me and draw my attention. Much of this interest results from two important forces. First, was the frustration with the dominant and prevailing picture of health as presented by the biomedical model. The epidemiological picture of Indian health in its presentation is a double edged sword. On the one hand, such research has been critically valuable in justifying the development of a much needed delivery system (Indian Health Service) which has been most successful in reducing morbidity and mortality rates for this population. On the other hand, the research on health status takes primarily an individualist approach that tends objectify and then blame Indians for their particular fate and state of ill-health. The composite image of what it means to be an Indian

from this data is not a very positive one. I continued to argue, struggle, and wonder how it was that specific research efforts seemed so disconnected to the social and economic realities of reservation life. The methodologies employed clearly did not bring many researchers in close contact with those individuals, much less into the world in which Indians lived.

The second influence, which is related to the first, is how, as a researcher, I myself have been reconstituted by the nature of the fieldwork. Clearly, ten years in the field off and on, plus a developing social and familial relationship with the Lakota, heightened my concerns regarding the image of these people as available through most epidemiological analysis. It was not easy, after a short time, to argue with Lakota friends who suggested:

> It might be better if all that money the government spends on alcohol research were just divided among the people [meaning the Lakota]. We could spend the money just as well as those researchers. We would like for our children to have some of the things they buy for their children.
>
> There was the time when the government spent so much money on research here. In one year they spent enough money that each family could have gotten $15,000. I still don't know how much we got from all those studies they did. I think we would have been better off with the money. At least I could have bought a car so when my children get sick I can get them to the hospital.
>
> When you read some of that research, you think Indians are the only ones who drink. You guys drink too. You just drink expensive stuff, and you can hide your drinking. Sounds to me like some more "drunken Indian" tales. Somebody gets rich from them. But not us.

These comments and many others helped sensitize an already sensitive observer to some of the not so laudable consequences of health research on Indians. It seemed, and still seems, important that my research avoid some of these shortcomings, many

of which were pointed out along the way by keen observers of my observing, taking somewhat of an active role in my reconstitution. That ongoing process allowed this specific investigation to proceed toward a more proximal interpretation of what these Lakota consider central issues to their health.

The major difference between my epistemological concerns and my ontological concerns can be stated as follows. The epistemological considerations regarding Lakota health focus on how it is we know what we have come to know about Indian health today, how that knowledge is constructed, and what are the actions, interactions, and consequences of that knowledge, what are the economic, social and political influences on the acquisition of that knowledge, and the like. Such information can be analyzed from a variety of theoretical perspectives, each yielding certain important information. These essentially epistemological inquiries form the entirety of current understandings of Lakota health. They are not the issue of this dissertation.

The ontological considerations focus more on the Lakota as being in the world in a way that is distinct from that of Western society. Aspects of that world that are meaningful will be reflected in practices. Their being in the world opens possibilities to them that are than those of the majority of others in the larger social world, researcher and lay person alike. These ontological concerns are the issues of this work, centering on three questions:

> 1) What practices exist within Lakota society that point out aspects of an underlying ontology that serves to inform this interpretive work?

2) Of the various practices that reveal aspects of Lakota ontology, which ones illuminate areas of health?

3) What implications for the Lakota and for the field of sociology can be drawn from this interpretive analysis?

In Whose Voice

A particularly sensitive area at many levels is the question of whose voice is being spoken. Clearly the issue of ontology raises several important dilemmas. First is the principle constraint of one's own culture and the imbeddedness of the researcher in both Western and Western science worlds and those constraints to understanding those of different worlds. There is also the equally important socio-political aspect of speaking for others, and which of the others get spoken for or get to tell their stories (Kincaid: 1992; Walker: 1988; Raskin and Berstein: 1987), as well as the methodological and theoretical implications emergent from postmodern debates over storytelling, discourse, representation and truthseeking (Richardson: 1991, Seidman: 1991; Antonio: 1991). This work makes no claims to be an inclusive, or exclusive for that matter, rendering of what Lakota health really means for the Lakota. This work attempts to present, in the words of some Lakota people, aspects of their world that seemed to shed light on notions of health and its relation to the larger context of their lives. The interpretive aspect rests on the shoulders of the investigator, who has received considerable guidance and direction along the way from various people and sources on the reservation. It is an interpretive work, a non-Lakota's view of what I consider to be important ontological aspects of the world of

the other with focused attention to those issues of concern that pertained to health. The goal of this research was to uncover and articulate in a proximal way aspects of Lakota ways of being in the world, that is the ontological underpinnings, that inform what these Lakota people told me is a virtue: *wicosanni* - health.

Chapter Review

Chapter I has been an introduction to the dissertation research on Lakota health as an inquiry into the ontological underpinnings of health from which meanings of health are constructed by these particular people. The distinction between epistemological and ontological concerns as well as issues of temporality and spaciality are put forth as important convergent simultaneous lines of articulation and inquiry. The primary theoretical questions which guided the research are presented in light of this discussion.

Chapter II is a review of the literature. The first section addresses specific aspects of Western science that point to ontological underpinnings of scientific work. The relationship between those underpinnings and current definitions and understandings of the concept of health within the sociology of health and illness are explored. Many important aspects of Lakota ontology are presented through the works of anthropologists, linguists, historians, sociologists, and Lakota writers. Some comparison between these worlds is presented as well as comments on the strengths of weaknesses of perspectives and interpretations.

Chapter III addresses the methodology used in this research and the process of tailoring certain aspects of symbolic interactionism, grounded theory, phenomenology, and interpretive hermeneutic analysis for this particular work.

Chapter IV puts forth Lakota practices as experienced in the fieldwork with a focus toward those activities and expressions from which aspects of an underlying Lakota ontology can be generated. The focus is on those interactions and social activities that can be interpreted has having ontological salience and provide insight into the nature of being for the Lakota which informs the experience of health.

Chapter V focuses on the experiences and constructions of the meaning of health for this group which have resulted from direct conversations and evidenced practices. The interpretation of meaning is discussed within the framework of the ontological underpinnings emergent in the analysis of data from Chapter IV.

Chapter VI discusses some implications for the health of the Lakota that emerge from this analysis. This chapter also discusses the theoretical, substantive and methodological implications for the sociology of health that arise from this research.

Chapter II: *REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE*

Introduction

This literature review is in four parts. The first section considers certain ontological underpinnings of sociology and particularly those that have influenced the symbolic interaction tradition. The second section reviews the works in medical sociology having to do with the definitions of health with some attention to the related fields of ethnomedicine in medical anthropology. The third segment describes aspects of the Lakota world as presented in sociology and anthropology literatures as well as writings of Lakota writers from various fields that point to underlying ontological underpinnings of Lakota life. This section also includes a comparison of Lakota ontology with that of western science. The fourth and concluding section of this chapter presents the ontological position of this research work by outlining the basic assumptions and theoretical frameworks that guided this effort. The purpose in the first three sections is to underscore theoretical and substantive issues. The methodological implications that follow from the review, especially the ontological considerations, will be delineated in the following chapter on methods.

Ontological Moorings of Philosophy and Sociology

Theoretical and methodological developments within sociology reflects strong ties to philosophy, particularly in the early decades of the sociological theoretical development and within the field of phenomenology. The philosophical heritage of Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Dilthey and Husserl, are clearly evident in the writings of Comte and Spencer (in Friedrichs: 1970), Durkheim (1974), Marx (in Avineri: 1968), Simmel (1971), Mannheim (in Levine: 1971), Weber: (in Gerth and Mills: 1978) and Garfinkel (1967). The philosophy of James (1961, 1963), Dewey (1958) and Mead (1964) are acknowledged as central to the development of the Chicago School of sociology (Blumer: 1969; Fisher and Strauss: 1977), and the subsequent theoretical and methodological frameworks of symbolic interactionism. The critical debates in various fields did not necessarily employ the vocabulary of ontology, but dealt none the less with fundamental issues of the nature of science and what constituted being scientific.

Debates on the nature of human beings, idealism and rationalism, objectivity and subjectivity, the issues of free will and determinism, utilitarianism, and pragmatism, and the interrelationship of these with the larger economic political and social world of Europe form essential characteristics of the context for the rise of the social sciences. Important in this review were the developing ontological influences apparent in philosophical writings that helped shape the nature of sociology. Several critical philosophical discussions of the 19 century continue to undergird theoretical

and methodological work within sociology, as evidenced in the ongoing debates between empirical and interpretive sociology.

The focus here is to identify aspects of a western science ontology that became issues in the fieldwork of this dissertation and necessitated a more careful look into the importance of ontology as a central concern to this research.

Influenced by the early models from the physical sciences, as well as by the conditions of their social world at the time, early theorists in sociology shared similar assumptions about the world along the following lines: 1) evolution, development, and progress; 2) order, hierarchy and change; 3) control and predictability and the influence of these on social relations, and 4) and the Cartesian legacy of dualism and notions of temporality. Certainly there were varying degrees to which any of these positions were central to any given scientific work. Specific theoretical formulation, i.e. organicism, positivism, structure-functionalism, historical materialism, and later on interactionism, emphasized certain areas and combinations while other aspects were of lesser importance, were implicit, or absent. By and large, however, these four areas reflect important ontological underpinnings, and influenced the nature of scientific work in general and constituted the bedrock of traditional sociological theory.

Progress, evolution, development, change. Early theoretical formulations within sociology posit a social world modeled after organic theories of the physical sciences of the time. Comte, Spencer, and Durkheim all address notions of progress, evolution and order in a mechanistic fashion. From these early theories developed the

structure functionalist school that has dominated sociology for the majority of this century, and has maintained strong ties to the underlying importance of progress and development, order and incremental change, and control and mastery over the environment.

The philosophical works and teachings of James, Dewey and Mead contributed to the development of non-empiricist,non-positivist sociology, and created what Heidegger would call "new clearings," from which new practices and new knowledge would unfold. Their formulations of human beings as active agents creating and sustaining meanings in their lives freed sociology from the grips of determinism that dominated sociological theory of Comte, Spencer, Durkheim and Marx. The importance of this paradigm shift (Kuhn: 1962) is not at issue here. The intellectual legacy of James, Dewey and Mead are central to the development of the Chicago tradition of sociology (Fisher and Strauss: 1978, 1979). The influence of these giants is clear in the works of seminal scholars of this century that have extended the work of these philosophers into their sociological efforts (Park, Hughes, Blumer, Hollingshead, Strauss, Becker, Shibutani to name a few). These advances aside, what is important are aspects of the shared ontological underpinnings with western science in general, particularly in the areas of evolution, progress and the influence of dualism.

Mead summarizes many of these values:

> "How is society to find a method for changing its own institutions and still preserve the security of those institutions? That is the problem that presents itself in its most universal form. You want a society that is going ahead, not in a fixed order, as the religious solution would have it. You want

> a society that is progressing. Progress has become essential to intelligent life." (quoted from MSS, edited by Strauss, p. 22)

An important question to raise is whether Mead is suggesting that those who may not share a similar view of progress are excluded from his category of "intelligent life." I am not taking an anti-scientific position, but pointing to potential limitations in the supposition that intelligence is inherently tied to a belief in the notion of progress. What is progress, by whose standards, from what position, with what power over the definition of the situation? Mead, influenced by the pragmatism of James and Dewey, and as a social activist himself posited a humanistic concept of progress. But that begs the issue of power over the inherent valuation and definition of progress.

Mead also states the general scientific beliefs in evolution and control over the environment:

> "It has often been pointed out, of course, that evolution does not reach any goal. The concept means simply the adaptation of a form to a certain environment. But adaptation is not simply the fitting of the 31/form into the environment, it carries with it some degree of control over that environment. And in the case of the human form, of human society, we have that adaptation expressing itself in a very high degree of control. Of course, we cannot change the chemical and physical structure of things, but we can make them over into those forms that we ourselves need and which are of value to us. That is possible for us; and, as I have said with reference to the question of food and to the question of climatic influences, we can in a very large degree determine that control. So there is, within limits, a development toward complete adaptation where that adaptation expresses itself in control over the environment. And in that sense I think we can fairly say that human organization, as a social organization, does exercise control and has reached a certain goal of development." (quoted from Strauss, A. (ed.) *Mind, Self and Society*, "The problem of society" p.30)

In Mead it seems that evolution and control over the environment are tied directly to development and implies improvement and advancement. These positions tie Meads work, I think, to the general ontological frameworks of western science. Advancement and development are also seen in Mead as he frequently compares animals as lower forms from which humans have advanced, in control, consciousness, and the capacity to manipulate, e.g. erect buildings, control climate, decide who shall live next to it, have social organization and institutions and the rest.

Notions of concepts of evolution are clear in Park's theory of social development and the stages of association, accommodation assimilation (Park: 1952). Also obvious in Park's framework, the notion of conflict and process notwithstanding, is the underlying order and the direction of change.

This position was common, and can be seen as the essence of scientific belief structure, or ontological position, across disciplinary lines as scientists moved to create a field of disenchanted knowledge (Weber: 1946). Mead's theoretical formulations were distinct from positivist and materialist interpretations of advancement and development, evolution and progress, but the underlying assumptions of these goals are not different from the positivist theoretical constructs.

Control and predictability. One of the goals of science is knowledge in order to gain rational control over change and to direct it in positive ways so that development can proceed. In this century such a position has contributed to the construction of a technological imperative so characteristic of the post-modern world. There is a perception of the world at large that technology is the preferred, if not the

required and necessary vehicle to solve our social problems. The strength of the relationship of technology to science is reflected in the linguistic shift from a vocabulary of "science" to one of "science and technology." In the arena of health, mass media coverage of scientific and medical discoveries reinforces such common beliefs in the technological imperative.

The Cartesian Legacy. In addition to the influence of development, evolution, progress, order and control, the pervasive influence of dualism on scientific thought bears attention as it created significant problems in this work. This particularly western epistemological pattern dates to Aristotle, but is most commonly considered part of a legacy attributed to Descartes. This is a very complex issue and can be dealt with here in a rather rudimentary fashion. Simply put, dualism is a posture toward the world reflected the conceptualizations and understandings of the world that considers subject and object as separate entities. Such formulations segment the parts from the whole, the mind from the body, and in general is formalized in oppositional thinking. The influence is observable at the symbolic, linguistic, and materials levels of western society. The structure of western language separates the subject from the object. Social forms reinforce the separateness of individuals from each other by gender, physical characteristics, by status; and as importantly separates the individual from itself. This latter event is clearly evidenced in our understandings of health and the segmented nature of treatment of illness and disease as well as the health care industry itself. Leder (1990) critiques the legacy of dualism from a phenomenological

position in his analysis of illness, noting that disease is represented as an alienation of a person from the relationship to the lived body.

One singularly important way in which dualism has been problematic is in the area of temporality. By and large, Western notions of temporality reflect a discreet, segmented, linear framework (Darrouch and Silvers: 1982; Faulconer and Williams: 1985; Heidegger: 1962). History is conceived as the succession of one objective event after the next, often translated into the sequential arrival of important men in the world. The importance of temporality will be discussed elsewhere, but here needs to be tied conceptually to the underlying Cartesian legacy that science has inherited (Heidegger: 1982; Taylor: 1987).

In their critique of empiricism the early pragmatists also tried to move beyond the limits of dualism. To varying degrees James and Dewey were somewhat successful in negotiating this dilemma. James' is more ambiguous which I consider to result from his not dealing directly with the issue of dualism in his development of the individual within society. He posits that experience is central to individuality but then negotiates the concept of society *qua* individuals in a very dualistic fashion. Mead's theory of the developing self as a separated "I" and "me," also falls prey to the objectification of dualism, suggesting that not only is there an objective society to which individuals belong, but an internal dualistic nature to the self itself. With some review, these philosophers began a movement away from Cartesian legacy, but were themselves not able to move past the ontological strongholds of the tradition. These postures toward the world set up considerable barriers in understanding non western

experience as will be seen later in the comparisons between these ontological positions and those of the Lakota.

In summary, positivism, materialism and interactionism shared several similar positions on the nature of science, its work and intent. The implicit legitimation of science as the arbiter for progress, development, hierarchical order, predictability and control over change. These areas reflect essential orientations or ontological underpinnings of major work in western science, sociology included, and are the foundations upon which our understandings and explanations of the nature, the structure and meaning of the world and individual action within that world rest. In Heideggerian terms these ontological positions are the essence to which understanding of being belongs. This essential being at the individual level, Heidegger calls the *dasein*. It is from the consideration of the dazein that issues reveal themselves as important. To extend this concept it could be translated to a more collective arena it is suggested here that these ontological underpinnings within sociology point to a disciplinary beingness that influences the nature of knowledge that can be acquired about the social world. Put another way these ontological notions are central to the collective dazein of sociology, or sociologists. Since it is to the ontological constitution of the dazein that the understanding of being belongs, such beingness informs the way the world can be known and explained.

Various theoretical positions explain the social world differently and posit different understandings of how, for example, order is accomplished within society, or how society itself is even possible. The extent and complexity of these

substantive debates are the essence of sociological investigation. These issues are epistemological ones. The ontological considerations are most often overlooked. What is of interest in this dissertation is the meta-theoretical issue of ontology. Although seen as rather nonproblematic for the most part, such underpinnings influence the nature of being scientific, doing scientific work, and constituting scientific knowledge.

Medical Sociology

As a subfield within sociology, medical sociology is directly tied to the larger field theoretically, methodologically and substantively. Since theoretical knowledge is embedded in the larger ontological field, medical sociology is also influenced by the ontological positions of sociology in general. The state of current theory within sociology also has a direct influence on the substantive issues of investigation. Many works in medical sociology set out as a response to theoretical formulations that are found lacking along certain lines. The relationship is not unidirectional, as many formulations within medical sociology have influenced more general works in other fields and in the larger discipline itself.

Medical sociology, like sociology in general, is a remarkably diverse discipline. This diversity aside, however, there remains important questions regarding the nature of the field itself. There is no consensus as to the nature of medical sociology, there is no one field of medical sociology, and there continues to be dissention as to what the field should be called. Early works by sociologists

focusing on the substantive area of sickness and medicine occurred during a time when positivist paradigms were most popular and other perspectives, i.e. Marxist and symbolic interactionism, were overshadowed by functionalist domination of the theoretical domain. Problems that plague general sociology theory development are mirrored, and in some cases magnified, in the sub-specialty of medical sociology (Friedson: 1970; Johnson: 1974; Stacey and Homans: 1978; Twaddle: 1982). The various, sometimes conflicting, positions regarding the nature and orientation of the field, its designation, and its purpose certainty limit the development of general theory. I would like to look at four of these problematic areas that had special influence on this dissertation. First is the debates over the name of the field. Second is the scope of the work in the field as unfolding in relationship to the name. Third is the area of ontological underpinnings of the field as outlined by Parsons and implicit in specific other research. Fourth is the relationship between the first three concerns and the definitions of health.

1. What's in a name: Mirrors and Masks: The Search for Identity.[1] Identity is discovered, developed and altered through pointing out to ourselves and others those things that are meaningful, both symbolically and materially. What we call ourselves, "that distinctive appellation by which a person is known: his name" is a critical signifier. A name indicates placement, it sets boundaries and establishes relationships to other classes. To name an object reflects the extent of knowing.

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[1]. This title belongs to Anselm Strauss' book that has had considerable influence on this analysis of the current dilemmas and debates over what we call ourselves, and our discipline.

Naming can occur in various ways, and can change and change back again. Most importantly is that the essential characteristic of an object does not rest in the name. A name is in one manner of speaking a "definition of the situation" (Goffman: 1959). As such it calls for the capacity to apply a name and make it stick. That labeling process has important social and political components and consequences. Naming of objects call forth and elicit actions, or lines of actions. Those actions have the capacity of influencing to varying degrees the definition of the situation, the naming of objects. Naming is thus an instrumental aspect of identity. In calling forth action and in taking action of others into account in given actions, the values of the group get mirrored and also incorporated into the developing identity. The looking glass (Cooley: 1964) becomes the vehicle that mirrors the judgements of the larger group. The masks that are adopted are fashioned in response to the anticipated reaction and judgement of the larger social world.

What then can be said about the identity medical sociology vis-a-vis its name? As a name it defines the boundaries and clearly places the part of sociology within the boundaries of medicine - be it *of medicine* or *in medicine* (Straus: 1957). Medicine is clearly the signifier. This suggests several issues and concerns. It points to some of the underlying constraints to theory development (Parsons: 1964; Johnson: 1974; Gold: 1977). A review of the central substantive issues in the field clearly point to the medico-centric consequences of the name.

2. *Substantive works.* Beginning with Parsons works that set the stage for the focus and development of the field, we see the imbeddedness of the medical. The

field has focused on the sick role (Parsons: 1951) and its variations (Parsons: 1964, Frankenburg: 1974; Twaddle: 1982), illness behavior (Mechanic: 1980) and medical care as social control (Parsons: 1951, Friedson: 1970, Conrad and Schneider: 1980). Analysis is toward an understanding of medical care structure and delivery systems, utilization, health status, health states, professionalization, and professional socialization (Friedson: 1970, Becker et al, 1961, Olesen and Whittaker: 1968), health policy (Mechanic 1980, Lee and Estes: 1990). We study illness patterns along gender (Olesen and Lewin: 1985), race (Krieger and Bassett: 1986), social class (Waitzkin: 1983), and occupational (Navarro: 1976) lines. We discuss the subjective experience of chronic illness and pain management (Strauss et al:), and follow patients decisions regarding their engagement in medical help and treatment (Zola: 1968). The development of a medical-industrial complex (Relman: 1980), and the claims of a "medical crisis" in American cannot be viewed without regard to the influence of this plethora of information from medial sociology and its influence on the claims of complex and crises. Over time the integration of medicine into sociology has become more prominent and less problematic. The field by and large continues to reflect and develop its medico-centric tendencies. These connections are most evident in our own thematic of medicalization and the concerns on some level of the influence of medicine as it intrudes into multiple areas of social life (Illich: 1976, Dubos: 1961; Fox: 1989; Waitzkin and Waterman: 1974; Waitzkin: 1983; Sontag: 1977). Of interest is the contribution of medical sociology to the preemptive position of medicine in society through our naming, our substantive investigations and our

developing theoretical frameworks. The history and current nature of those relationships within medical sociology has be recently forwarded in an extensive review by White (1991).

Central to this dissertation is that the naming of medical sociology focuses attention away from the element of health *qua* health. This naming acts in Murcott's frame, as a set of blinkers, inhibiting the possibilities of health being important in and of itself substantively and theoretically. We do not give health principle position. We privilege disease and illness, treatment, implementation, essentially, those things medical.

There are several critiques of medical sociology that address the issue of substantive focus of the field that are related to the issue of what we call ourselves. Certain scholars have suggested that we move toward a sociology of health and illness (Olesen: 1974; Zola: 1974; Stacey and Homans: 1978), and that many of the going concerns of the field would be better served outside the purview of the medical and to larger political, social and ethical considerations (Zola: 1974, 1990). However, as Murcott warned, the field itself as "unsociologically conceived" will not be resolved just by calling it a sociology of health as long as the programmatic direction is focused toward the "primacy of the professionally medical" (Murcott: 1977).

3. Ontology considered within medical sociology literature. Within the literature of the sociology of health, direct attention has not been paid to the issue of ontology, per se. Writings in the phenomenology of health and illness, where one might expect such issues to be uncovered, obliquely discuss issues of the social

embeddedness of experience and constructed reality, do see an ontology of health as a central issue (Gerhardt: 1989). Parsons' work (1979) is directed toward tying American values to illness and medical practice and identifies what can be considered critical ontological underpinnings: voluntarism, universalism, achievement. Implicit in Parsons' model are two other ontological positions: 1) the American sense of rugged individualism and 2) the protestant work ethic. Proctor critiques and extends the notions of voluntarism and others have clearly articulated the extensive ties between work, the division of labor, and the conceptions of health, illness, and the structure of health care (Stacey: 1986, 1988; Taylor and Ashworth: 1987). As part of feminist writings on women's health, ontology is often central to critique though not called ontology (McBride and McBride: 1982). Stacey (1988) "calls for attention to the social "categories of significance" pointing out the immediacy of viewing cultural meanings in our analysis of health and in doing so raises subtly the issue of attending to ontological considerations.

Ontology then has not been an explicit category or concern within the field. It has been nonproblematic for the most part, something akin to the air we breath. Ontology, as that aspect of work that is rooted in and reflect basic values and assumptions about the world at large, the essence of being in the world is clearly relevant to discussion within the field, beginning with such simple assertions as what is considered to be "health."

The Cartesian legacy in medical sociology.

One important ontological consideration that can be seen as influencing the substantive work in medical sociological is the strong intellectual ties to the Cartesian model. Even from this cursory analysis of substantive issues in the field it is clear that objectification and segmentation are overriding characteristics of works in the field. Certainly the dualistic nature of the medical model and the attachment of medical sociology to the enterprise of medicine enhances this approach. The ontological influence on issues and conceptualizations cannot be overlooked. In viewing the human condition of health, illness, disease and treatment, medical sociology follows the classical model of the dismembered body. Following the traditional separation of mind from body, we distinguish mental health from physical health. We also discuss occupational health and environmental health, often as though the two are unrelated. We speak of women's health divorced from issues of human kind at large. We conduct research that influences health policy for the aged, the physically challenged, those with particular diseases, as though such folks live in isolated worlds disconnected from society at large. Public health policy is similarly fragmented, incremental, and segmented. The ontological underpinnings of dualism directly influence the nature and outcomes of our work, most importantly the creation of knowledge about these areas.

The name of the subdiscipline, the ontological moorings and the subsequent focus on medicine as central to disciplinary work, have influenced the possibilities for how sociology could interpret the world at large, including the investigation and theory development of issues of health. The following discussion of current

understandings of health is a case in point and will illustrate the influence of the dilemmas of definition and dualism on the conceptualization of health within medical sociology.

4. Definitions of health. The framing of definitions of health is tied to the larger social world in which health is embedded, and is influenced by the cultural, political and economic forces of the moment. Early on in the field of medical sociology health was tied to the medical explanation of "absence of disease" and described in human action as "normative functioning" (Parsons: 1951, 1958; Mechanic: 1980; Fox: 1989) and held sway within the dominant positivist paradigm of the nascent era within the sociology in medicine (Strauss: 1957). Marxist scholars tied health more strongly to the political and economic forces claiming health as a human capacity and potential that was utilized as a commodity for exploitation by the powerful (Navarro: 1976, Waitzkin: 1983; Ehrenreich: 1978; Fanon: 1978). Research within symbolic interactionist tradition tended to consider health rather unproblematically. Becker, whose work covers fields within medical sociology posits a definition of "healthy" is his book *Outsiders*:

> "The human organism, when it is working efficiently and experiencing no discomfort is said to be 'healthy'. Of course there is little disagreement about what constitutes a healthy state of the organism." (p.5)

Historically, medical anthropology has also shared many interstices with medical sociology (Olesen: 1975) and provide guiding light for the cultural caveats in the definitional terrain (Manning and Fabrega: 1973). The difficulty with some of the cross cultural work in the area of health and healing is that the focus on other cultural

systems is tied to dominant epistemology so that other cultures come out looking like segmented hierarchical systems that don't really show us much of what may be going on for those folks in the other culture. We see witch doctors, shamans and the rest analyzed as though they were part of a fringe western system.

Within medical sociology texts there is the general call for direct treatment of the concept of health or to attention to those taken for granteds, of which health is a primogenitor example. Few have taken up the call for such studies. If the starting place of sociology is the common-sense, lived experience of those in the world, it seems that conceptions of health require a first hand look, prior to notions of illness. Of those who claim to address health and illness, most confine their analysis to illness, not health.

In the areas of social psychology of health and illness as well as the growing field of the phenomenology of health and illness, this definitional issue tends to be handled more problematically. Kelman (1975) elucidates the context, the "social origins," for the definition problem in health, the characteristics of which continue to be salient for the field in the 1990's as they were in the 1970's. The paradigmatic concerns may be even more relevant in this post structuralist post modern era of struggles over perspective. In concert with these concerns are the social structural influences, particularly "socioeconomic circumstances," on definitions of health as posited by Stacey (1986). Concepts of health are relative to age as well as to gender (Stacey: 1988).

In a more pragmatic sense, definitions of health are influenced by physical condition. Chronic illness alters conceptions of health. In a study of individuals with colon disorders, Olesen, et.al., have demonstrated the relationship of notions of health to conceptions of the body, mundane complaints, and experiences of the self in illness (1985, 1990). Definitions of health are also tied to notions of fitness. Although somewhat circumscribed by class affiliation, such definitions appear regularly in the current market as fitness and exercise regimens are a frequent form in mass media, supporting and driving such definitions of health.

A common understanding of health as efficacy is supported by the World Health Organization definition that health is the "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Lewis: 1986). For the most part, health is considered an ideal. It becomes tied to the larger social world and ones place in that structure. It has been defined as elastic, i.e. the resistance to danger, and open ended, by which is meant "anything better than death" (Polgar in Lewis: 1986). By and large the research into definitions of health usually combine work in health with the concept of illness. For the most part, the health portion is short shrift, with the emphasis on illness, illness behavior, illness and disease (Appleton: 1990; Herzlich and Pierret: 1986; Stacey: 1988; Gerhart: 1989; Manning and Fabrega: 1973).

As noted several years ago, the concept of health has been approached rather "pre-sociologically" (Stacey and Homans: 1978). Early pioneering works of Parsons that forged the field, focused on substantive issues of illness behavior, the sick role,

and the structure of the medical profession especially its social control functions (Parsons: 1951; 1958). His work set the stage for other works in the field. Health, as an independent phenomena, went unaddressed and generally was seen as unproblematic. This back stage position has never really been altered. Work in the field, from various theoretical orientations, has taken the concept of health rather for granted, and spent little time explicating meanings of health at the personal or social level, much less tying such meanings to other critical issues of illness, disease, health care, and the rest.

The longstanding discussions of the nomenclature of the label *medical* sociology, the placement of the field *in* or *of* medicine (R. Strauss: 1962); or *of health* (Zola: 1974, 1991; Olesen 1989) continues. Such debates reflect the underlying disagreement as to the place of health within the field at large, as well as to the uncertainty of the primary focus of the field. Whether it is a sociology of medicine, in medicine, medical sociology, sociology of health, it is clear that attention to the concept of health *qua* health would benefit the field at large. Within the sociology of health, works that focus on health tend to remain theoretical (Kelman: 1975) or analyze health in tandem with the related concepts of illness, disease, and health care.

In general this review of medical sociology has shown the relationship between scientific ontological underpinnings to certain areas of medical sociology. In the specific area of health there are various forms of empirical data that help in the construction of the concept and definition of health, but as yet there is no formal theory of *health* within the field. We have not carefully recognized the phenomenon

of health *qua* health, nor have we attended to variations in its meanings nor to the interrelationships between health and the larger social structural forces. That the issue of an elaborated definition of health is important to the field is clear. Seminal theoretical and substantive reviews and critiques of the field address the issue of the definition of health as a critical area that needs elaboration along several lines (Susser: 1974; Stacey: 1988).

To summarize to this point: the ontological foundations of science, particularly the centrality of progress, order, control and dualism, have been shown as an important influence on theory development within sociology and substantive investigations independent of theoretical frameworks. Our current understandings of the concept of health are also contingent upon these ontological considerations. Within medical sociology the concept of health *qua* health is minimally addressed, and continues, for the most part, to be handled almost in a pre-sociological taken for granted fashion in both the literature and in textbooks. There has been a call for attention to this glaring omission within the field. This dissertation is an attempt to address the issue of health directly by focusing on health as it is conceived within Lakota society.

The next section begins with an overview of aspects of a Lakota ontology that can be obtained from writing about and by Lakota. It will also help to briefly compare these ontological underpinnings to those identified as central to western science in general and within medical sociology, medical anthropology and ethnomedicine specifically.

Aspects of Lakota Ontology

Scientific Approximations. For the social scientist, concepts such as the division of labor, leadership, ownership, ritual, roles, norms, social organization, are deeply rooted in Western scientific tradition. They emerge from the peculiar ontology or way of being in the world. This is not to suggest that there is a definitive Western ontology that is obdurate and immutable. However, there are histories of the West that includes political, social, economic material and ideological issues that are distinct and often considerably different from histories of non-Western societies. Even within that context, the experiences of those histories vary along several lines, of which race, class, and gender have received growing attention. Nonetheless, there is relative agreement across these lines around certain ontological concerns. The social sciences have struggled with the nature and meaning of idealism and relativism as central themes of Western thought and social relationships. Social structure is acknowledged to be a reflection of social values with materialism and accumulation central themes of western development. Since the Enlightenment, notions of progress have been a cornerstone of Western thought and action. The concern of my work is that such ontological underpinnings, though they are held with varying degrees of tenacity within Western societies, are sufficiently and significantly different from aspects of non-Western societies. In the explication of non-Western societies, Western science has paid little attention to this important, critical difference. Social

science has assumed that because analytic concepts are sufficiently explanatory of the Western experience they also will fit the non-Western world.

Because of: 1) the disparity in world views, to say nothing of the consequences of political and social inequality between scientists and the objects of study; and 2) the imposition of dominant views on indigenous societies, I consider that we know very little of how peoples of other cultures and world views construct for themselves the meanings and activities of daily life and what is held as important for them. There is a growing literature to suggest that the imposition of a priori concepts can be a considerable hindrance to understanding, particularly in cross-cultural research.

In reviewing research on the Lakota, and critiques of that literature, as much myth appears to have been created as proximate renderings of early social life have been achieved. Primarily, I consider this the consequence of using analytic concepts that are rooted in Western ontology and which are of limited relevance in explaining the cultural phenomena under study.

The literature on Lakota beliefs and rituals is a good example. A few scholars who have investigated Lakota rituals and beliefs are DeMaille's work on Walker's (1980; 1982; 1983) early documents from Pine Ridge, the work of Kemnitzer (1969b) and Feraca (1961) on Yuwipi, and the work on ritual and religion by W. Powers (1975; 1982). With the exception of DeMaille's work, the other sources use their own field data and observations, and rely heavily on Western frameworks for their interpretive analysis. Powers's work in Pine Ridge spans the last quarter century,

focuses on Lakota ritual, myth, and the making of meanings. The questions raised in this dissertation are particularly relevant to much of these studies.

Since we are all somewhat bound to our own ontological roots and cannot get totally free of our own assumptions that are tied to those roots, it is impossible to render a totally accurate interpretation of another's cultural experience. However, it is possible to come closer to that understanding from a posture that accounts for different ontological frameworks and that sets up the conditions for people of other cultures to speak for themselves in their own terms. This frequently means allowing others to speak in terms and present concepts that are not only different, but often are not easily translated, conveyed, or understood. Of course, these new renderings may be challenging to long-standing or dearly held assumptions of science. New renderings may be able to expose shortcomings or underscore inhumanities inherent in a situation. So, at both the individual and structural levels, the task of proximal interpretation and renderings faces difficult barriers.

In Powers' book on Lakota religion, he acknowledges that the Lakota have no word for religion and that they express the concept differently. He states that he is "not concerned so much with what religion is but what it does..." (1975:xv). His analysis and interpretation are based on longstanding definitions of what constitutes religion as an anthropological concept. Where interpretations and the constructions of meanings are at hand, it seems that it is doubly important to be sure that one be concerned with how the other constructs in their own words their experiences and meanings. It seems that in the area of religion this would be paramount. The very

fact that the Lakota have no word for religion is significantly important and worthy of careful investigation and analysis. A reasonable investigator must ask how it is possible to analyze something that does not exist for these people. It is close to sleight of hand to acknowledge that something is not there, wave a conceptual cloak over the void and remove the cloak to show that it is indeed there, and then to proceed to analyze the created concept. If the people have no word for religion, how does the external creation and application (if not imposition) of the existence of a concept help further knowledge and understanding of that society? In order to avoid a cultural bias, it seems that the focus might better be placed on what the people themselves consider to be their way in the world and to use their own concepts for that practice. There appears to be an implicit disrespect in Powers' book for the integrity of the data, as well as the integrity of the people he studied.

From my own fieldwork there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the Lakota have their own way of conceiving and articulating their world. What has been represented in the literature to be a Lakota religion seems off the mark, and does little to advance understanding. One need only listen to the Lakota themselves to confirm that the Western concept of 'religion' is an alien concept to these people, imposed from without:

> You guys have a religion. What you do is not what we do. What you see here is not a religion. This is our way of life.
>
> White people have a church they go to maybe every week. They pray to their god, they sing and do their thing. Then they go home and live however they want the rest of the week. And that's what they call their religion. We don't have that. We don't have to have a building, we don't

have a special time of the week. We don't pray that way. We don't think that way. It's just not our way.

Some of us are Catholics, and some are Episcopalians. Some of us go to other churches. We have a religion. Many of us were bought into religions early on. They paid us to join. We joined whoever paid the most. Some of us joined several religions. But our way is not like that. We go to church and listen to the priest. But that is different than the old way. My grandparents did things differently. They didn't believe in the white man's ways. We have our own ways and they are good.

Even now, some of us don't want those priests around. They will tell them not to come to the cemetery. We don't want them to bury us. Let us bury our own our own way. They have their way. We have our own way. We don't want their religion. That's not our way.

You know, we never did know what the devil was. That isn't our way. But they brought religion, and now it's in our minds. It was never there before. And that affects our health.

It is unclear how we further the understanding of another's world through analysis that continues to be constrained by our own, albeit dominant, concepts. Powers seems to have missed the mark in ignoring the important symbolic and practical implications of the fact that the "Lakota have no word for religion." To impose a concept on their practices verges on epistemological hegemony. When sufficient research is done in a similar vein and a critical mass of information is compiled in legitimate repositories, (i.e. libraries, museums, research centers, book stores, trading posts, and souvenir shops), such understandings and the ontological bases from which explanations emerge become reified. At that point science unwittingly comes close to creating conditions of ontological hegemony by foreclosing on the possibilities for meanings and interpretations emerging from the ontological posture of those under study.

A second example has to do with the concept of leadership. Underlying most of the literature is the assumption that "leadership" within these societies is understood to have the same meaning as in Western society, and that persons in such positions hold some special place within the social order. No accounting is made for the fact that those Western hierarchical concepts from which our notion of leadership has emerged may not hold true for and may even be incommensurate with non-Western understandings and practices of what appears to the Westerner to be "leadership." As one reads the painted leather pictographs, called "winter counts," of the Lakota, it is clear that many different people did many different things, some of which may appear to suggest some form of leadership. But that leadership shifts with tasks and external conditions. Someone who may lead a spectacular hunt may not be considered a group "leader," except when a hunt is imminent. The erroneous label "leader" is thus given to the person who has been noted to be just a good hunter. Since women appear with minimal frequency in winter counts, it might be concluded that the Lakota did not place much value on women, or that women did not hold positions of leadership. At this time, and because of the history of the past 100 years, and taking into account the possible influence of patriarchal, Western interpretations, it may be impossible to make any accurate assessment of the place of women in early Lakota society, leadership characteristics and potentials notwithstanding. Certainly there is enough confusion and contradiction in the available literature to indicate that we simply do not have the data to support any conclusion at all. Perhaps part of this is because the unit of analysis is not

commensurate with the world under study, the concepts we apply are not meaningful or appropriate, the tools we use are not sufficiently refined. Lastly, part of this void is related to the concern of this dissertation. The posture of researchers on women's place in society, feminist and non-feminist alike, is rooted in Western ontology, one that does not sufficiently mirror a non-Western experience.

In the effort to negotiate some of the seeming incommensurate nature of divergent world views, this dissertation takes as central certain of those social activities that people talk about and engage in and claim as important parts of their understanding of Lakota way. It is these practices that are central to the thesis and it is these ways that will be described. How long they have been in existence is not the important question. What is important is that for these people, they have always done things this way. And it is these ways that set them apart as being Lakota. It is these practices that they consider to be part of their being in the world, their ontology, so to speak.

We need to transcend the sometimes incompatible boundaries of the two perspectives (Lakota and Western) in order to be able to understand meanings and attendant practices across these two worlds. The first order of business is to acknowledge as central and explicate the differences and show how they are important. For a more proximate understanding of the variety of Lakota ways it is necessary to first explore the nature of being in that world by allowing people in that world speak for themselves in their own voice. This often means negotiating a new language and developing new concepts.

New frontiers must be negotiated that take as the central issue the explication of alternative ontological bases for the meanings and practices of social action. The human beings under study must be given the leverage to speak in their way, to tell their own truth, to outline their own constructions of social action which emanate from their ontological framework. The interpretation of meaning must adhere to that framework as closely as possible for a valid and reliable assessment, one that avoids the specter of ontological hegemony, to be accomplished.

On Ontological Differences. The unfolding of generations versus notions of progress and development. Within Lakota society there are no equivalents to the western notions of progress and development. The flow of generations is not seen as improvements on previous generations. Human beings are not conceptualized as developing along some ever improving continuum that places them in a better position than those who preceded. Human beings were not conceived as more advanced, thus better than, the animals that lived with them. Action was not based nor judged along these categories at all. Ironically, in contemporary reservation conversations, these concepts have a unique position. I have heard Indians speaking in English of such things as progress and development. However, for the most part they speak of the desecration and destruction that has followed western progress and development or they note how western progress and development are politicized in order to make claims, excuse and justify acts they consider to be against nature and against other human beings. Lastly, with the current trends toward economic development of reservation life, the notions of development have been operationalized in current

federal policy. But such notions are new, and not part of what I would consider an inherent Lakota posture toward the world at large.

Relationships and continuities with nature as against control over the environment. This is a second area in which considerable differences exist between the western and Lakota view. Considerations in Mead around issues of power and control will be illustrative of this difference in comparison with the Lakota. Most of Mead's comparative examples come from the environment, particularly animal life and this is distinctly different from the Lakota view. Mead uses animal life as a constant comparison to illuminate the superiority of humans and as explanation for evolution theory - an animal does not have a self. For the Lakota, their world acknowledges other life forms and incorporates them in symbolic and material ways into their lives. Animals are central to several important social activities. They are relatives, can speak, guide, direct, heal, and the rest. So we have two distinctly different conditions under which selves develop. In a western view animals are principally seen as inferior beings, without the potential or capacity of humans. Although many humans have important relationships to animals, it does not reflect a co-equal relationship evidenced in the Lakota world view.

Self as continuous with and embodied in the collective and self as a reflection and incorporation of society. For Mead society is created, sustained, challenged and changed in the interactive process whereby people point out to each other and indicate through gestures and symbols those things that are important and meaningful and which call forth a response in the other as well as the self. In socialization, children

learn to view themselves as others by taking on the role of, first the particular then generalized other. This reflexive capacity is the process through which individuals incorporate their social world into themselves. For the self to develop there must be the social. For society to exist, individuals must share meaningful symbols which have been indicated to them and which they have incorporated into their being. This interaction between the social world and individual also means that individuals constitute the society through individual and collective interactions. For the Lakota the process is different. In the Lakota world, the person is the group. Standing Bear (1975) states in this regard: "I am my people."

The world of the Lakota is one of relationships and interrelationships. This fundamental ontological difference makes dualism somewhat difficult to discuss from a Lakota perspective and also raises significant questions regarding the imposition of western scientific theoretical frameworks on Lakota practices that emerge from a world where dualism is not an issue. For example, since the Lakota do not consider the world from dualistic perspective Mead's theory of self as both subject and object becomes problematic from a Lakota posture. For the Lakota the social world is simultaneously self and other.

The world from which these Lakota obtain their identity is in a relational state with many diverse participating peoples, including animals, plants, spirits, and whose temporal form is different from the segmented western temporality. Another comparison can be made. For these Lakota, meaningful symbols do not appear in hierarchical fashion, nor is their world indicated by dominant notions of control,

advancement, progress. More common is the emergence of social forms, social organizations and institutions that reflect cooperation, dependence, assistance, mutual support. This is not to suggest that the Lakota world, in historic or contemporary terms, constitutes a utopian society. Conflict existed and continues to be a part of social life. Social change, a critical aspect of Lakota life, is a process that has taken a variety of forms. Both within early society and as a consequence of colonization, change has been part of their social world. Clearly the Lakota were not and are not automatons without individuality or free will, nor was or is their world a static one. The central point here is that underlying ontological positions in regards to control, power, hierarchy, and change are significantly different and as such set up different possibilities, different conditions, different consequences regarding concepts of the self, social change, and the various other indicators of their social world in general.

Summary. Ontological aspects of western science are embedded in notions of evolution, progress and development; order and hierarchy; mastery and control over the environment; and notions of dualism. These foundations are significantly different than the Lakota view that posits a world based on the coextensive relationship of all aspects of life, the primacy of the collective, individual responsibility, and a cooperative nature of life that does not include notions of control over the environment or species within the environment. It is a world that addresses temporality in a different way that the west.

In reviewing the central ontological components of western science and of a Lakota world, incommensurabilities abound. Such diversity between these two worlds

has been illuminating, challenging and rewarding. Each separate world helps highlight critical aspects of the world of the other and allows for a glimpse at specific issues that, for the most part in each world, go unexamined.

This chapter has delineated the importance of ontological considerations to theoretical and substantive developments within sociology as a principle influence on the nature of this work. I have also reviewed the current state of medical sociology in the substantive area of the conceptualization of health. I have placed this work within a theoretical terrain of sociology and have also outlined the basic assumptions that inform this work. These ontological and theoretical considerations have shown themselves to have direct and special bearing on the methods of this field work. The following chapter discusses specific methodological conditions and consequences related to the central concern of this chapter as they unfolded in the process of doing my dissertation research.

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Although the substantive area of this dissertation is in medical sociology, there have arisen in the process of this work equally important methodological issues. This aspect of the work has been possible because of several factors: 1) numerous experiences in the field that necessitated a reconsideration of methodology of the study; 2) an academic environment that encouraged intellectual curiosity and craftsmanship; 3) specific concurrent developments in the social sciences, particularly contemporary critiques of science. The influences of the field experience on the development of methodology will be the focus of this chapter but it is important to credit the other two sources by way of introduction to the overall methodology of this work.

Academic environment. The substance and focus of this work would not have emerged from an academic setting that considers received theory and verification research as the guardian of the sociological endeavor. It was a necessary condition for this work that intellectual curiosity and freedom not only be valued as a goal but encouraged as a means of achieving understanding. The importance of this work rests on the grounds that it was a long process of discovery intertwined with considerable debate and dialogue between and among various theoretical frameworks and differing disciplinary perspectives. As this work cuts across public health, epidemiology, anthropology, philosophy and sociology it has attended to relevant substantive, theoretical, methodological, political and ethical debates surrounding not only Native

American health but the nature of research itself and the implications for the study of Native American life.

Part of the taken for granted notions of academic studies is that the learning environment not only allows but encourages such inquiry. My own experience, prior to my doctoral studies has been to the contrary, partly because of the nature of education but also the particular fields course of studies I have pursued and that influence on my own intellectual development. The freedom of exploration during my fieldwork was, for me, both unique and challenging. It was one that required considerable time to learn, explore and develop a process of inquiry as well time to do the work of investigation. The recognition of the academic environment often goes unnoted or mentioned in passing in the acknowledgement section of dissertations and books. For this piece it was undoubtedly a *sine qua non* of this work, particularly of the methodologies employed. Another overarching variable was the temporality of the study, the ongoing contingencies that emerged in the field, in the classroom, and in academia during the time that have collectively created the complex and lengthy period during which this work was accomplished.

Temporality and discourse in science. All work is bounded by the times - this is no exception. Early sociology theorists writing on the nature of science and early pragmatist writings have greatly influenced my posture toward theory and method within social science in general (Weber: 1946; Simmel: 1950; Dewey: 1958; James: 1963; Mead: 1964; Blumer: 1969; Conkin: 1976). The growth of critical feminist theory during the 1970's and 1980's provided critical insight into the weaknesses of received

theory. It also helped provide a vocabulary from which I could address such issues as the role of western science in understanding non western experience - just as feminists questioned the capacity of male dominated science to accurately render the non-male experience of the world (Gergen: 1988; Harraway: 1988; Harding: 1986; H. Rose: 1983; Finn: 1982; Fee: 1981; McBride and McBride: 1981). Certain feminist scholars were tremendously important in pointing to the conceptual distinctions among and between groups in the areas of gender and cultural (Keller: 1985; M. Rosoldo and Lamphere: 1983; Nelson and Oleson: 1977; Leacock: 1973). Feminists and non-feminist scholars within sociology (particularly the sociology of science) within anthropology and within the history and philosophy of science provided hope and direction in circumventing some of the weaknesses within methodology (Briggs: 1986; Denzin: 1989; D. Rose: 1990; R. Rosoldo: 1989; Atkinson: 1990; Devault: 1990). Discourse during the past decade involving post-modernism and the influence on theory and method have had an unusual influence on this work, mostly from a retrospective position. While in the field much of the debate was inaccessible to me. While in the classroom, other issues were more significant. So at this time, as the fieldwork is somewhat in a pause and reflection mode, I review and reweave ideas and concepts in light of recent discussions of interpretation within the sociology and anthropology of science literature, (Woolgar: 1988; Harding: 1987; Hartsock: 1987; Clifford: 1986; Starr: 1991; Fugimura: 1991), as well as the important debates over the voice of discourse and issues over the power and implications of speaking for others (Kincaid: 1992; Walker: 1988; Cambell: 1987; Miller: 1980).

Simultaneous influences over this time emerged from the field as participants and actors on reservation pointed out their own experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of the history of science from the perspectives of those who have been relentlessly studied. Their voices are responsible for creating an alternative viewing of an arena that has typically been considered not only the sole and privileged domain of science, but somehow beyond the pale of common understanding. It was through their articulated concerns that much of this inquiry was possible, their critiques of science given equal weight in this investigation. So, not only do I stand on the shoulders of giants from a variety of disciplines, I consider myself tenuously poised also on the shoulders of Lakota elders who are themselves the embodiment of centuries of knowledge and experience that is treasured in no less meaningful way than academics treasure their intellectual resource. The ability to even be in such a precarious position reflects important growth within science. It is a positive statement of the possibilities for a shared development of science, one that takes seriously the intersections the lived world of the other and the ways in which that world is weaved into academic theory. In these ways this work takes seriously those issues that have been recognized as the often implicit political nature of social science (Gouldner: 1970; Bruner: 1986; Fanon: 1963; Waitzkin: 1983). Both academic setting and historic period, as well as the lives of those Lakota who are integral to this study, have intersected in complex ways that have allowed for this particular work to unfold in the particular way it has.

Such were the intersections of various influences and lines of action that bear upon the methods of this work. The third focus is that of the field experience itself

which centered on two related themes: 1) the historic context of research on Native Americans and 2) the dynamics and dilemmas of the oppressor identity.

Socio-historic context of research on American Indians

A relatively consistent characteristic of the relationship between dominant society and American Indians, particularly the political relationship between the government and Indian tribes, is that of ambivalence. In the five centuries of European life on the continent, Native Americans have experienced annihilation and emulation, disdain and embodiment, paternalism and self-determination. Such confusion is obvious in the history of national Indian policies, in literature, in our written history, in the public press, and patently clear to many who study the position of American Indians in contemporary society (Spicer: 1969; Prucha: 1973, Deloria: 1987, 1970; Tax: 1974; Viola: 1981; Wax and Buchanan: 1975). It is obvious in our language of "discovery" that so permeates the dominant discourse during this quintcentenial year. The image of the American Indians has spanned a spectrum from hostile savage and heathen to the personification of nature itself. Research efforts are bounded by the social and political climate, and as such the various pictures of "American Indians" that have emerged cannot be separated from that context (Lyman: 1982; Edelman: 1977; Jurich: 1982). For the American Indian these competing definitions have direct and often negative social and political consequences.

The part that social science research has played in this unfolding drama is not inconsequential. Decisions about Indian trust, information that guides national policy,

statistics that justify allocation of funds and services are most frequently tied to the research act. The social and economic conditions of American Indians have been greatly influenced, both positively and negatively, by the work of social scientists. Claims over who is an Indian have often been partially determined by information obtained in research. Individual and collective identity has been discovered, rediscovered, vanished, and reappeared in the writings and creations of social scientists. One unanticipated consequence is observed as those torn from their cultural roots yet striving to identify with an Indian heritage, look to books to learn how to "be" an Indian. Many of the consequences go unnoticed by researchers. Much research that is done on the American Indian population is funded through the government and as such there are serious questions regarding conflict of interest since it is the federal government who is responsible for the major portion of service delivery to Indians on reservations throughout the nation. Some of the research that has been done has provoked important legislation for increase health care services and educational services for reservation Indians. So this is not to say that all research brings negative results. What is clear from the Indian communities with which I am familiar, is their astute awareness of these dilemmas and a cautious, and at times understandably antagonistic attitude toward the work of research and the persons employed in that line of work. The following comments indicate some of the frustration and consternation expressed by some Lakota of this study:

What do you want to know for? Are you writing a book?

> You know how silly you all look, running around here in khaki shorts and boots, trying to find out about Indians. Tell me, what's so interesting about Indians?
>
> See that guy with the camera and tape recorder. Every year we get them. They come with summer. All the graduate students travel here to rediscover the Indians. They act pretty silly, try to learn beadwork and dance. Then they go home in August. I'd like to know what they do with all those tapes. They even come from Germany and places like that. They really like Indians in Germany.
>
> "As an anthropologist and a Lakota woman...I often wonder what it is that makes Indians so interesting to study. Why is it people want to study Indians?" (Medicine: 1988)

Some of the earliest visitors to reservations were researchers. Many of the early government workers on reservation did their own types of research and wrote about their experiences among the Indians (Bieder: 1986). As with all research the context of work at the turn of the century was circumscribed by scientific interests of the time, the political nature of federal tribal relations, and the social position of Indians within the larger society. There were then, as now, important methodological constraints, for example limited knowledge of the culture, questionable facility with Indian languages, the nature of the research effort, timing, length of stay, the relationship with the people under study, available translators and participants, and personal attitudes. On the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations, most in-depth studies have dealt with many of these dilemmas and challenges, and have with varying degrees of success recognized the outset the pitfalls and mine fields inherent in the research endeavor (Walker: 1980; R. Wax: 1980; Maynard and Twiss: 1970).

Because of the variety of theoretical and methodological orientations in use it is not surprising that there is conflicting information on American Indians. In addition to

these academic issues, there are also factors related to respondents that are equally important. In discussing the problematic nature and history of research on the Lakota, some of the people I interviewed stated that they felt "no obligation to report complete or even accurate information." This problem is not unique to this population as the problem exists in any survey or interview effort. However, for the Lakota there are several important overarching issues. First, in some cases the information requested is considered far too personal to call forth any answer, so something misleading is the best way to avoid embarrassment. An inadequate response to a "disrespectful" researcher is considered appropriate. A "disrespectful" researcher is one who "doesn't know what s/he is doing or asking," i.e. the researcher does not understand the nature of the question within the cultural context, thus will not know "how to handle correct information anyway."

> This stuff that goes in books. Most of it doesn't matter. They come, ask questions, and are stupid enough to think we're going to tell them what we know. All we tell them is what they want to hear, so they'll go away. Like that guy who did research in the schools on alcohol. He asked my kids such personal questions. Most children here are taught what family means, and you don't talk about family, especially to strangers. So what good is his study. Most Lakota children just put down any answer. They joke around for a long time and have good stories to tell us about what they put on those questionnaires. But the person running the study thinks he's getting a good idea about drinking and Indians. But that's what they're paying him to do, so he has to come up with something.
>
> If you want to know, go ask my mom. She'll tell you. Or ask my dad, he'll tell you.
>
> My parents can tell you, I don't know.
>
> I don't remember how that went. Go ask my mom.

During the early period of my fieldwork there was a reservation wide research being conducted on attitudes and behaviors toward alcohol consumption. My fieldnotes from that time reflect some of the dynamics and dilemmas that these people experience and express.

> "Currently there is a large research project on alcohol and teenagers. From what I can gather the school children are being given questionnaires in class. All around the community kids are talking about how they answered questions. There's a lot of laughter and joking. Some comments I heard suggest that the kids are having a heyday with the project, if they answered questions the way they are telling their friends they did. There's some insurgent activity as students who have completed the questionnaire are priming those who go to schools where the study has not yet been conducted. This research project has been the topic of conversations around here for about two weeks now. It has made for very entertaining dinner conversation. Parents don't seem to interfere. No one has suggested that the children answer more 'honestly'. Some older siblings appear very proud that their younger brothers and sisters have been able to get around the system of research. Some parents I observed got quite angry when the children relayed questions from the test. They felt that many questions were an infringement on their privacy, and that such research would never be done in 'white schools' near reservation, even though drinking behavior there 'is just the same as here.'" [Fieldnotes: 1981]

Second, the history of colonization of the Lakota is sufficient rationale for many not to cooperate with researchers who are seen as part of dominant, oppressive, society. Third, many Lakota consider research to be an incisive tool of exploitation whereby researchers and institutions get very rich studying the poor Indians, and the Indians do not benefit from the enterprise.

These factors constituted key categories early on in my research effort as I worked through initial analysis of data. What became clear was not whether my data was any more real or true, but that, in addition to the varieties of truth, there is a more

subtle thing going on here about intentional misinformation. There were two critical methodological issues that had to be recognized and addressed. The first was the identity of oppressor, the concerns of which transcended the merely methodological concerns and raised important ethical and personal considerations. The experience of that identity along with the process of managing and renegotiating it formed the foundation for the emergence and development of the methodology for this work.

The Oppressor Identity

> What has all this done for Indians? We're still poor, have lots of diseases, no work, houses that leak, cars that don't run, programs that don't work. Researchers get rich on us. They come and tell us that they are doing something very important, saving our culture. Now that's just funny.
>
> All these Indian experts running around. You see them everywhere. They know everything. They make lots of money studying us. They drive new cars, wear cotton and wool clothes, eat out at restaurants, buy really good blankets and beadwork. They come and take what they want and then they go. And we're supposed to cooperate. What a joke.
>
> What's in it for us. Do you see how we live? Can you show me how we are going to be helped. There's been lots of research here. What has it done for us. It's just another study. Nothing is going to happen. Why don't they just give us the money and we can decide what needs to get done? We don't need you guys.

Because of the nature and history of research on reservation, there is a working identity for researchers as oppressors, or at least part of the oppressive system. This is not unfounded. Researchers have come to reservation, earned lots of money, drive nice cars, rarely walk, don't mingle much with Indians save for job related interviews and observations, interfere with the goings-on there, act like they know everything and know how to fix everything, act like Indians don't know anything yet want to ask questions about what they know, impose on the lives of Indians and feel like the Indians not only

owe it to them but should be grateful for the intrusion. The researcher most often comes to the reservation with little knowledge of the culture, stays a short time, takes and gets what s/he wants very cheaply - including many- prize artifacts, then goes away with a fat pay check, never returns, but becomes known in the world at large as an Indian expert. The Indians talk of being a "captive population" with little power to keep researchers away. They have no say in "who comes and what they want to study." They have little input into research that is government funded, and less in research that comes from the private domain. People are aware when researchers arrive and depart. They express strong sentiment about being "intruded upon" and being asked questions that "any one with manners would blush to ask." Indians voice a concern that these researchers are their unchosen spokespeople who have "no real concern for the lives that Indians lead day in and day out, long before and long after the research work is done." For many Indians, it has been and continues to most often be a dehumanizing and humiliating experience. The picture of Indians in the scientific literature as well as the popular press is often uncomplimentary, focusing primarily on negative aspects or problems, as though Indians are the only ones who incur the dilemmas of the modern world and the ubiquitous presence of such social forms as alcoholism, violence, domestic turmoil, and the like. Such coverage helps create and sustain a public image of Indians and reservation life as something of a social blemish. Indians question "what good has come" from all the research that has been done. To many it certainly hasn't helped the majority of Indians; just made Indian experts rich. And some Indians are hard pressed to see any benefit to them from the experience.

> So would you want to help if you were in my shoes? Would you like to cooperate with people that have written bad things about your grandfathers. Would you want to say things to someone, never knowing what they were going to make of what you said? I don't trust any of you guys. You're all out to get something, and never think of giving back. Go study your own people. Leave me and my people alone.

Researchers are not unaware of these attitudes and have a variety of ways of analyzing the situation.[1] Some have suggested that the non-cooperatives are "anti-intellectual." Such criticism explains that their hesitancy and refusal to cooperate is somehow their fault, "they just aren't smart enough to understand that what we are doing is for their own good." Such a posture mirrors a three hundred year theme of paternalism extant within Federal Indian policy. Others have suggested that the people "like to politicize everything" and they just use researchers as targets of their political aggression. Others, in response to the dilemmas and antagonism, confine their interviews to those who immediately cooperative. Others have decided that after several years of research on the Lakota that "it is time to stop. These people have become like family. They are my brothers and sisters, and I won't do any more research on them."

Many researchers go to the field with a variety of structural and individual agendas, demands, and constraints. Most arrive on reservation trusting and believing that research does more good than harm, that it does help in some way. Nonetheless the primary reaction to research on the part of the people under study is a negative response, suggesting that something is awry. The concerns that I heard voiced focused on several

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[1]. The quotes in this section are from personal conversations that I had with researchers who were conducting research in Pine Ridge and Rosebud during the time I was in the field.

issues. People's experience with researchers and the research act continues to mirror the larger social reality whereby power rests solely in the hands of the researcher. Even those researchers who come to research with "good intentions" appear to "have an attitude that their way of helping is better than the Indians' way;" that somehow the research effort will yield more legitimate solutions and that the researcher knows best what is good for the Indians. Such paternalistic attitudes are often not well cloaked, and are often quite blatant in the content of interviews and questionnaires. During my work on reservation I had the opportunity to meet several researchers both in formal and informal settings. My early contact did little to dissuade me from the accuracy of the Lakota's perceptions of and their experiences with researchers. From my early fieldnotes:

> "During this summer there were four different researchers I met here. One was from Europe. Some had ongoing projects that spanned several years. I would ask them about how they negotiate some of the issues that Indians had told me they considered important, e.g. tribal approval; reciprocity of researcher and community, what they did with the data they collected, how Indians participated in research in other that subject capacity, and if they ever socialized with Indians. None of them were particularly interested in my questions. Some felt I was being idealistic. It was not uncommon to be laughed at when I raised the issue of tribal cooperation. 'Ask the tribe for approval of my project? You have to be kidding. What do they know of research? Besides the tribal structure is a farce. It wouldn't matter what they say. Every two years they change hands. They don't really matter. No, they don't need to know what I'm doing here.' The most common response to my questions was laughter. I am simultaneously annoyed and embarrassed, angry because I am not taken seriously and embarrassed that I asked such "silly" questions. However, it is somewhat curious that their responses reinforce what the people here have been telling me about how they have experienced research efforts. I seems as though I am here watching those who watch the watchers." [Fielntoes: 1980]

Negotiating the Oppressor Identity. The process of negotiating and transcending this identity has been an ongoing one. It turns around several processes, many of which

are covered, if only implicitly, in the following section. Two aspects of this dilemma that seemed particularly salient were to acknowledge the experience of those who had discussed the issue with me and in some form to accept the identity as one that was earned and deserved given the history of research. This posture tended to equalize the power relationship between myself and the people I wanted to know. Such a posture opened the conversations to such possibilities as discussing the nature of trade offs of research, the dilemmas of being a researcher, the nature of intentions, and from there constructing the groundwork for building trust and gaining support for my own efforts. Simply put I acknowledged that the history of research and the experience of research was considerably different from an Indian perspective and formally worked with the people to overcome these weaknesses. It was an ongoing negotiation not one that was resolved and then implemented. The concerns of these people also sensitized the researcher to the nature and extent of unintended consequences of research to those under study. This position required a conscious effort to be aware of the experience of my work, the inner subjective as well as the inter subjective nature of it. It meant taking seriously their experience of my work, negotiating the considerable differences in the areas of temporality, intentionality and meaning. It required at times to relinquish control over areas that are considered to be within the sole domain of the researcher, for example the instrument design, the interview format and content, the length of discussion, and the nature of interpretation. Although cumbersome initially, this process proved most valuable and rewarding as fieldwork unfolded through the years. It was not uncommon that in the discussions of the dilemmas I experienced in meeting dual and

often competing sets of requirements, those of science and those of the field, that solutions proposed to me by participants were most helpful. In a collaborative and collective fashion participation was encouraged and the boundaries of the work more carefully constructed to insure the integrity of those involved and the integrity of the scientific effort.

Another aspect of negotiating and transcending the oppressor identity was to make a commitment of exchange, to assure that something of equal or greater value was left or given in return for the benefits I have received from my work. This is more problematic than the other aspects of the work. I am convinced that what I have taken, both personally and intellectually from this process will always be greater than what I will be able to return. Nonetheless, the reciprocity that I consider most valuable is my effort toward authenticity and toward a positive project. Throughout the time it has taken to complete this, many Lakota have read and been not only satisfied, but pleased with my renderings of their lives. For those who will read this, and variations of it to follow, I have the hope that it will serve as encouragement for several audiences. For the Lakota, it documents particular aspects of their world that are critical to their being at this particular moment in time, and supports their own hopes and dreams for their generations to come. For those who chose to work with the Lakota in the area of research, I trust it will provide some guidance and direction particularly in the area of methodology. Perhaps something of what is said here will help researchers in the future avoid some of the weaknesses of research of the past, at least those areas that have proven disruptive to the social life of those under study.

Over ten years the experience of living in and caring about people who live in poverty has allowed be to see science from the perspective of those under study. There appears from the perspective of being inside to be few benefits and lots of costs to the research enterprise. I would like to think that sensitivity to these concerns and issues has altered the course and outcome of this project and that in some way this work and the process of this project has and will be of benefit to the Lakota I was privileged to come to know.

Although the identity issue was a prevailing one, others aspects of the fieldwork warrant focused attention. From the outset, as is well documented in anthropology literature, the nature of cross cultural research had its own sets of opportunities and constraints.

> "Eventually, I plunged into the experience of another culture, until I found myself liking what the members of the other society liked, frightened by what gave them fear, grieved by their sorrows, delighted in the situations which filled them with satisfaction and joy..." (Lee: 1959:4)

The process through which this unfolded for me while I was in the field can best be described as learning to learn as a Lakota.

Learning as a Lakota Learns

It became clear early on that I had to learn about the Lakota world in a way that was different than the learning process that was familiar to me. Immediately clear was the problem of process. The format for interviews is the didactic method - this is particularly inappropriate with the Lakota. It is rude to ask a direct question, particularly if you are an outsider. Cultural norms dictate that even within the group the format of

question and answer is not an acceptable form for social interaction. For example, instead of asking for a ride to the store, an older woman might say to her daughter that she "needs to go shopping in town" and the daughter might let her know what time she would be going to town so that the older woman could be there to get a ride. It also works with children. Frequently, youngsters will make statements rather than ask questions, "I'm going to the store with you" and not "Can I go to the store with you"; or as was frequently the case I would inadvertently mention that I was going to the store, or my sons would say that I was going, and by the time I was ready to leave, the car would be filled with children, none of whom had asked, "Can I go with you?"

Information is transmitted in other ways, and it was clear, early on in the research, that I needed to understand and adopt those ways if I was going to get to the heart of the matter at hand.

> "No one asks questions, it is just not done. You watch and listen and don't ask. You can state something and hope someone will respond. They may or may not. If they do it will be in their own good time with things that they wish to say, not necessarily what you want to hear. BUT if they answer direct questions, 'they will tell you just what you want to hear', may be a lie or no, seems like it usually is." [Fieldnotes: 1981]

These norms regarding questioning and securing information make research problematic at best. Interviews, at least formal constructed structured ones, were almost nonexistent. The most formal "interviewing" was a reverse interviewing when someone would say to me, "so they tell me that you are doing research...," or "I heard you were out talking with Mr. Shot the other day." Both of these statements are an invitation to respond to what I have been doing and learning and an opportunity to get feedback as to the accuracy of data and the accuracy of my interpretations. It is also a way of people

checking out the reliability of others' statements. Then if things aren't going too well, someone may intercede in my behalf and help me get my stories straight. Sometimes, if I had misunderstood it was a clear indication of my inability to listen. In getting feedback on my understandings my own picture of what was going on changed. In that way I was doing something of grounded theory, moving between data and theory - at least my constructed theory or explanation of what was going on. I would check to see that if my categories of significance were really the significant things, if the way I understood certain things were accurate or the way I was articulating them was thorough and complete and close to how the Lakota saw things.

This labor intensive, time consuming process was critical to the research project. This work is directed to the essence of people's lives, their ways of being in the world and examines and attempts an interpretation of such practices. My own fieldnotes reflect at times the desolate and essentially ethical dilemmas inherent in such work.

> "This is particularly a problem for my work since I try to focus on those things that are considered meaningful in these people's lives, their way of being in the world, to examine it and interpret to the best of my knowledge what it is all about. How do you do that without asking questions, without asking direct questions. And for these people, questions are not the normal way of obtaining information. It is a real catch 22 situation. It has been done with varying degrees of success, with a lot of concern about what I am doing, and a lot of concern over the business of privacy and disclosure, over confidentiality and the seeming complacency of science to respect the ways of being of different people. At times I don't even want to put into print some of the things that seem essential to the 'analysis.' I want to let these people alone to live their own lives in as much peace and happiness as they can create for themselves."
> [Fieldnotes: 1984]

In addition to learning about the nature of questioning there were three other aspects of learning to learn like a Lakota. In watching the teaching/learning process of

socialization three other processes appeared as central to the phenomenon of learning like a Lakota learns. The three other processes were: watching, listening and remembering. It took time to understand these processes and more time to learn how to incorporate them into my own field technique. Over time however some of it became second hand and certain cross socialization that I experienced assisted the process considerably.

On Watching. For the most part, watching is part of the world-taken-for-granted (Schutz: 1967) of researchers who become participant observers. To observe entails being watchful. But in the world of the Lakota, watching as a Lakota is a skill. It requires being observant, as seeing things around you - very little things. In addition to noticing who is there, attention is also paid to what they wear and how they wear it, where they stand, who they talk to, when the talk to whom, where people sit. Meanings are obtained from watching minute gestures: eyes, eyebrows, cheeks, chin, forehead; head, shoulders, arms, hands, legs, feet, stomach, movements to a fro, up and down; distance in standing from another. One notices the kind of handshake, the length and type of a conversation, the weather and how it changes over time. One watches one's surroundings, the subtleties of geography and terrain, how to get places without maps or familiar landmarks.

The manner in which you watch is important. It is not the bold activity known to horse racing fans. Nor is it the familiar look and see method that is familiar in general society. The way many Lakota watch is quite subtle and unless familiar with the activity it most likely would go unnoticed, or at least not identified as watching behavior. Watching is not staring or glaring. It can be described as looking ahead and seeing on

the periphery, to see all around you without rotating your eyeballs. Don't turn you head quickly and be obvious. You scan frequently what's going on. It's a real art to be looking and not look like you are looking.

One interesting form of developing watching skills are Lakota hand games where participants learn how to watch and identify subtle body movements while paying attention to the general patterns of the game at hand. Hand games are social games in which sticks are passed from person to person on a team. The effort is to engage in the passing activity but to fool the opponent team as to where the sticks really rest at the end of the passing cycle. Some get very good at watching gestures and reading them. As it can also involve gambling, money is won or lost on the ability to be observant.

Historically a group's survival was closely tied to being observant of environment and subtle changes in it. It was important to be ever watchful as you went about your daily livelihood. Lakota socialization into cultural practices is closely related to watching in order to do things the correct way and not embarrass yourself or your relatives. Since there is not much directives given even to children as to how to do things, one has to watch carefully and then participate when you are sure how to do it.

There is a seemingly infinite number of things to watch in the environment: grass, trees, wind, clouds, earth, shrubs, plants, herbs, paths, water, roadways, ravines, hills, sandhills, fenceposts, pastures, cows, horses, people walking, cars, who drives what car, houses, who lives where, road signs, myriad of off roads and major thoroughfares, sidestreets, back yards, quilts hanging, cats and dogs, and the way in which these things are related. All these are important if you are to participate and

understand conversations. They are all an important part of peoples lives and their reference to the world around them. Each is important. When things are talked about and references used there is meaning to that. People notice things that are considered important and those become the way they talk about their world. If you are to know that world you must learn to see, be observant of, these things in order to understand, or hope to understand their meaning.

> For example, directions to places are elaborate and they way they are given is meaningful. If someone tells you to go down the road where that lady hangs her quilts out, they may be telling you something about quilts and this particular lady's collection. Then if you ever ask about getting a quilt for a give away, watch out. You are going to hear this chastisement: "Didn't I tell you where to find quilts? Don't you have any ears." [Fieldnotes: 1980]

There is a hesitancy noted in many interactions which is related to the notion of not engaging in activities until one has watched sufficiently to assure appropriate participation. This is dissimilar from dominant society in which spontaneity of action is appropriate and one is more likely to engage in a situation and figure things out along the way, often by trial and error. Because of this difference there is room for misinterpretation of actions around hesitancy in social interaction (Wax and Thomas: 1961). For the Lakota the directive for social action is "watch and wait," "don't do anything for quite a while until you are sure what is going on and what your appropriate action should be." The process in most social situations is to walk into a situation and stand or sit and look over the place, watching everything that goes on and figuring out what is your course of action. This can take minutes or hours. No on rushes you or pushes you to do until you are ready.

Much of what I write is from observation, watching others do their life, listening to what they say to each other, watching how they act with each other, seeing what recurrent things exist in social life that these people consider important. Watching what they practice and engage in, what things they do with their time, how they dress, what they eat, how they talk about the ordinary happenings in their life, how they socialize with me, what they tell me is important to them, what they do when they are sick, how they take care of themselves, who they consult, how they handle information about their lives, the influences on what they can and cannot do. Watching may also conjure up the image of a sedentary transient, not doing much of anything. To the contrary, a considerable amount of time was spent doing life. Field work meant active engagement in the variety of daily activities: cooking, shopping taxiing, listening, babysitting, visiting, and in every way participating in a way that reflected the developing relationship between myself and those who helped me be part of their world. In general I took an active participant role, one that altered over time my capabilities and my possibilities for viewing and interpreting aspects of Lakota life. This engagement has allowed me to interact with people in a relational way which is critical to understanding as it is essential to the nature of being social in a Lakota world.

On Listening. A second critical aspect of learning as a Lakota learns has to do with listening. Listening is part of the art of being on reservation. Ears are very important, as are eyes and a memory. But listening even from early years comprises much personal activity. It is a talent that is practiced from early on. Children do a lot of listening. They hear what is said and make sense of the world through language. Not

many questions are asked. Watch and listen then do what you are capable of with the information.

Listen to words, tone of voice, watch the gestures of face and body. Listen so that you can remember and repeat what was said just like you heard it, if, and only if it is something you are to repeat. Listen so you know what not to repeat. Listen so you learn how to talk and what to say. Listen so you can learn how to act, what to do, what needs doing. Listen for what people say, because they won't ask you things. Listen so you can respond appropriately with the appropriate thing. Listen because in the middle of something that seems meaningless, something important is going to be said. Listen so you learn the sequencing of conversation; important things coming last, in many cases. Listen so you can learn how men talk, and how women talk. Listen to learn who says what, who talks about what. Children are told to listen and watch, to follow adults listening and talking. This is not to say that children get the message to be seen and not heard. In most situations, when children talk they are given the same attention that adults get when they talk, even when they seemingly take forever to say what it is they want to say.

Most often one listens to stories and recounts of events that metaphors and allegories containing messages of how Lakota people do things in the world. There is very little directives given from which people base their activities. Verbal information is transmitted in a more subtle and indirect fashion than that of dominant society who tends to get to the point immediately in a fairly directive and efficient manner with little loss of words.

Within this social world it is important to develop very good auditory skills. The social forms encourage such talents. There is a lot of time spent listening, watching and doing. There is not much time spent talking about how to do things either. You learn by listening and watching, not by being told how to. Watch, listen, and then act fairly succinctly describes Lakota practice and a Lakota way. Such practices tie directly to the nature and meaning of being a Lakota. After watching and listening and remembering, each individual has a considerable degree of freedom to develop his/her own way of doing life. The doing of life is one's own, supported by values of responsibility and autonomy, with very little directives or verbal instruction.

These processes are clearly visible in the activities of children. The tools they have are their eyes and ears and their sense of themselves which directs how they are going to put it together independently. Teaching comes through watching and listening mostly, and with some verbal directives, but children don't need much of the verbal direction. They tend to do things much better if given simple directives from which they can then go about their work on their own. In observing in classrooms, this often creates problems for teachers unfamiliar with Lakota ways of learning. Because there is so little directives in the learning process, children have a greater independence in how they do things. This independence is not always valued in the classroom where conformity makes for easier teaching.

For many Lakota children they learn to do life in a different way than most children. Many Lakota children are not dependent upon being told how to do something, dependent upon another's ideas of how to put it together, and are not dependent upon

approval of how they have done. There is no need for the outward approval that seems so common in dominant society. They are satisfied just to be on their own doing their own way. And adults leave things the way children construct it, most of the time, and particularly in families that I studied. This socialization issue will be further addressed in the chapter on Lakota ways.

On Remembering. If it is important to watch and listen it is the third process that helps formulate the overall activity of learning, that is the remembering process. Remembering is critical to the nature of social activity in Pine Ridge and Rosebud. You have to remember everything. It is a chore to remember but far worse at times when you forget and forget to remember. You have to remember mostly who is who. Who is related to who, and how they are related. You have to remember names and places. You have to remember stories and be able to tell them just the way they were told to you and who told you and when and where and why. You have to remember events, and who was there and what they said, and how the acted and what they did. You have to remember when things happened to who and what happened because of that. You have to remember directions that are given to you in a very different way. You have to remember where people live and how to get there. You have to remember your way around with very few markers to help you out. You have to remember who drives what kind of car. You have to remember who is sick and who needs help. You have to remember who not to talk to and who to talk to. You have to remember how to act. You really have to remember it all. And you have to remember it always. You have

to remember everything that is said to you because someone is going to ask you some time to repeat what happened or what was said, even years later.

Those who don't remember get criticized and teased. Those who don't remember get told "you have no ears" and very often this is an insult. Or someone will say, "I already told you that, don't you remember" and then they will go into a long description of just when they told you, what you were wearing, where you were standing or sitting, who came in and interrupted, what you said in response, how you acted, what you ate, if you had coffee, how many cigarettes you smoked, and the like. Following such accounting will come the inevitable comment, "Don't you remember?". It is the implicit ridicule that acts as social control to teach better listening and memory skills. Very quickly the internal voice began to say, "what's the matter with me, can't I even remember that. Don't I have eyes and ears." At times I have been told: "Children remember, and old people remember, anyone who can't remember must have something the matter with them."

The learning process in this context, that is as an outsider trying to learn as a Lakota learns required vigilance. It seemed to me quite clear why children watch so intently and spend considerably less time talking about things than watching and doing them. It also seemed that the practice of talking about good things made the process of remembering easier. The ever present form of humor in conversations was also one of the easier things to remember. Not that jokes would be recalled but the humor of situations was the central theme of many conversations making the recollections of such events easier for this listener to recall.

The Experience of learning points out the importance of ontology

In the experience of learning to learn as a Lakota the centrality of ontology emerged both as a methodological and theoretical issue. The methodological concerns focused on the nature of the fieldwork and interpretive analysis. In working through several interpretive dilemmas the larger issues regarding theory and the nature of science were called into question. Some of the theoretical issues then became central to the fieldwork effort and have been discussed in the introductory chapter and will be readdressed in the conclusions. Important here is delineating how the process of learning to be in a Lakota world raised the centrality of ontology as a methodological issue in this work.

Although the process of learning to learn as a Lakota allowed for the development of more shared meanings, the interpretation of those meanings was particularly problematic early on the fieldwork. The category of "critical differences" kept emerging in my grounded theory method of analyzing fieldnotes and also in my memos from the group sessions that reviewed my data. The coding efforts and the integrative work at that time were accurate but there remained a sense that "something was missing." I could understand the analytic meanings of the data, but at the same time knew central aspects of my experience of the field as well as critical portions of the Lakota experience of their world was missing.

The way past the dilemmas of these disjunctures was to try and bridge them by incorporating a hermeneutic posture toward the data as well as continued reliance on aspects of grounded theory analysis. The manner in which this was accomplished was

to return to the field with the summaries of grounded theory work paying close attention to experience and interpretation in the field.

This process involved considerable struggle in trying to stay true to particular methodological and theoretical models and yet create the clearing for new meanings to emerge and new concepts to develop in which to articulate understanding. Another important aspect of this work was the continual movement, both physically and intellectually between two different worlds, and world views. It seemed as though I was building bridges and attempting to begin a dialogue between very disparate worlds when my representation of each world had its own unique nature and limitations. At the time I could talk across paradigms, understanding fairly clearly the epistemological and methodological frameworks of positivism, historicism, and symbolic interactionism. The dilemmas experienced in the field were more radical than could be accommodated by or explained through invoking a particular paradigm.

The vehicle through which I moved beyond these dilemmas was to attend to the experience of the field, an experience that had been telling me that knowing is rooted in a complex of actions and practices, in a particular way of being in the world. The essence of that being is the ontological. Once that particular piece had emerged from experience, I could then go back to the data and analysis and identify "what was missing." From that point the remainder of my data analysis focused solely on identifying and articulating aspects of the nature of being in the world for Lakota. Once the ontological positions were clear, then the inquiry into the specific substantive area of health could be managed.

An Hermeneutic Approach. As an interpretive activity, the hermeneutic analysis of this work takes seriously the nature of experience as it unfolds in both a temporal and subjective manner. What I am trying to do is to point out the practices of others and what they tell me those practices mean. I have come to an understanding of being through having things pointed out, made manifest those things of the phenomena that have shown themselves as important to the persons of that culture itself. As the issue of health appeared as central to discussion with people, and is critical aspect of Lakota way, the aim in this work is to show health as it is to itself. I am looking at phenomena, outside of traditional disciplinary frames, observing acts which people engage in as meaningful to them. I did not go to the field with the notion of understanding health as it appeared to the Lakota, or as a concept that needed redefinition. In allowing practices show themselves as they appear to the people engaged in activity, lucky for me, health appeared as an issue in itself for the Lakota people. There are important assumptions that guided this work, as well as a developing awareness of its limitations.

Ontological posture of this research

Since ontology is given a preeminent place in this dissertation, the final section of this chapter focuses on delineating my own ontological postures by putting forth the assumption of the research and by placing my work within the theoretical terrain of sociology. Such ontological and theoretical considerations have been guided by the experience and knowledge acquired in the process of this research.

Underlying Assumptions. This section focuses on some underlying assumptions, current posture and reflections upon the data, some of the difficulties and rough edges

that were encountered in framing this analysis within an hermeneutic construct. The central concern is one of bridging two ontological postures and retain authenticity and some reverence to both worlds.

A primary underlying assumption is that for this work, the Lakota world that has been explored is considered to be a principally non-Western world. The world view of many Lakota emerges from an ontological posture toward the world that is not only distinct from the western world but in some important ways incommensurate with the larger national society in which the Lakota live. This point, and the methodological implications of this divergence, has been well argued elsewhere in regard to many Native American tribal people (Miller: 1980). However, the importance of this in my work was not dependent on academic argument but rather emerged from several years of living within Lakota community and wrestling with critical reality disjunctures.

Secondly, there is an assumption that there remains within Lakota society, beliefs, meanings and activities that although they have altered since contact with Western world still retain a non-Western essence. In contemporary Lakota society there are enduring forms (Durkheim: 1974) and essential practices (Heidegger: 1982) that occur with sufficient frequency and duration to support this position. Additionally, this relatively viable Lakota way of being is, in part, distinctly different than western ideas and explanations of being. Experientially my most convincing argument is that I would have no turmoil or difficulty or misunderstandings were the available worlds more commensurate.

Thirdly, there is the explicit social responsibility I assume to be integral to research work. Such a posture has a long standing history within the Chicago tradition, which has influenced various aspects of this work. Mead's comments are directive and cast special light on the important ethical discussions of research affiliation (Becker: 1968; Gouldner: 1968).

> "This location of the problem in the experience of the individual in its historical setting dates not only the problem but also the world within which that problem arises. For a world within which an essential scientific problem has arisen is a different world from that within which this problem does not exist, that is, different from the world that is there when this problem has been solved. ... Such worlds dated by the problems upon whose solutions they have appeared are social in the sense that they belong to the history of the human community, since reflective thought is a social undertaking and since the individual in whose experience both the problem and its solution must arise presupposes the community out of which he springs." (1964: 59)

My interpretation of this passage emphasizes the community aspect that for me is compelling in Mead's instruction. I consider that there is more that the scientific community in which the research is conducted. There is, in a Lakota sense, the relational nature of researcher and the social world, or community, which is being investigated. For this work, I consider it my task to be responsible to each divergent community. Not only am I working under the requisites of formal science but I am also accountable to the Lakota people of this study whose lives and world I have influenced and been influenced by during the process of my work. I am assuming that in order to authentically represent a Lakota view of health I must bracket many of the taken for granted western concepts of health in the attempt to know in a Lakota way what health is all about. This position is the familiar stance of the field researcher. In order for the

Lakota to speak in their own voice, their language, symbols and meanings must take preeminence. There are in this effort some caveats, considerations and limitations.

Caveats and Constraints. One of the caveats of this work is trying to describe and record fieldwork so that the world under study appears authentic and real. It is very easy to fall into conceptualizations that tend to trivialize, romanticize or colonize health. It is not uncommon to find historic accounts of traditional health and healing that portray such practices as anachronistic and superstitious. More contemporary works often analyze non-Western practices in terms that are devoid of the meaning they hold for those engaging in such practices. Health policy based on such studies often echo a paternalistic cry "if only they knew how backwards these beliefs and practices are..." they could improve their health. Very few studies address rituals in their entirety or attempt an explanation that reflects the meanings and implications such rituals hold for those who practice them. There is a new wave within a popular health movement as well as some attention in academic literature that makes claims to understanding Native American medicine as "holistic health." However, this reconstruction is based on two premises: 1) that the process of identifying all the parts will necessarily lead to a "whole" and 2) the concept of balance as central to health. Lakota beliefs about health do not include taking things apart to understand them, nor do they include notions of balance. Balance is a concept of dichotomy - of keeping opposing forces in balance with each other. It is a linear symbol and metaphor. Lakota thought is not fundamentally linear nor do the symbols and metaphors for health negotiate fulcrums. I am not even sure they negotiate circles, the other important symbol of holism.

The task at hand is to understand another world from the practices that show up as meaningful to those engaged in such practices. Secondly, the work of this study involves translation in some sense, the interpretation of those practices into meaningful language that can be understood by non-Lakota people.

This raises a second caveat. Although guided by the ideals of authenticity and integrity (Jurich cited in Strauss: 1987), this work is tied to the domain of western science. As a member of western scientific culture, I am never free of those influences on my being and my knowing. Nonetheless, it has been a central task to begin by searching for and delineating some of the more obvious disparities between western and Lakota world and then building clearings from which a more mutual understandings can unfold. Translations and interpretations are problematic in everyday life as well as the world of research, even when culture is a commonality. The interpretation of a Lakota world is admittedly limited. However having taken seriously the ontological issues involved it has negotiated some of the interpretive dilemmas. Finally, guided by notion that science is never complete, nor completely accurate, the goal has been to obtain a fuller and richer glimpse of certain phenomena within Lakota life that illuminate and expand our understandings of health in that society. Such understandings can enlighten important issues for developing an elaborated conception of health within the larger society. At best, what I am presenting is a reality as I have interpreted it, with the concerted help from many Lakota. It is a picture in time, surrounded by variation, complexity and the vicissitudes of change. It attempts to represent within the symbols

and language of the Lakota my experiences and understandings of their experience and understandings of health.

A third caveat and limitation of this work is the nature of incommensurability. A completely relativistic position might suggest that the two worlds, that of the Lakota and that of western science, are so dissimilar as to make intercommunication meaningless. Such a position would say that as a westerner, one could never understand the meaning of health for the Lakota. Without arguing the truth or relevance of such a position I would suggest a variation of Godamer's interpretation of Heidegger's notions of incommensurability which posit a more positive outcome of disparateness. In this view each world allows for things to show up in the other that would not be accessible in the world itself. This position is also part of the constant comparative method in grounded theory. As my focus is on delineating aspects of Lakota health I will confine the analysis to those things within the Lakota world that might have implications for how dominant society views health.

Succinctly put, the otherness of the Lakota way shines a light on heretofore unnoticed western meanings and practices. Minimally, western practices and meanings can be viewed in a different way. New questions can be asked as a result of what shows up as issues in Lakota life. The reverse is also true but for the purposes of this work an unnecessary exercise given that most Lakota live in a world that requires negotiating dominant definitions of health on a frequent basis. Incommensurable aspects in this work will then be handled in such a way as to allow for the possibility of Lakota view illuminating and extending aspects of the dominant understandings of health.

Data Collection and Analysis

Grounded Theory. As has been noted, this fieldwork spans approximately twelve years. The initial work included considerable written and tape recorded fieldnotes that focused on observations of reservation life and my participation in the social world on both the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations. Additionally I kept notes on informal conversations I had with various people, Indian and non-Indian alike regarding life on reservation.

In reviewing my records and notes, I have amassed reams of written materials over the past years. Brief chats, long conversations, and participant observation notes fill multiple drawers of file cabinets. The data used for this particular piece reflect a portion of those notes. In all I have interacted and recorded conversations with close to 150 different individuals. Approximately half of those have been part of ongoing discussions, and a core of twenty or so have participated ongoingly in the process of reading and working through interpretations.

Respondents are residents or past residents of Pine Ridge or Rosebud reservations. Although there are some social and historic differences between these two groups of Lakota people, the focus for this work goes beyond reservation boundaries. Those people who are concerned with living a particular life do so in fairly similar or unique, though not consistent or identical, ways. In general, the major thrust of this work on Lakota ways, is shared among these groups. Clearly there are various ways in which aspects of Lakota ontology show up in each individual life, but the nature of a collective sense of Lakota ways is visible throughout the population. Additionally, there are

several blood relations that cross reservation boundaries and much of the social life is not bounded to reservation lines. The experience of federal relationship is also similar, though not identical, on both reservations. For the purposes of this work I would acknowledge that there are some historical and social structural differences between these two reservations but would underscore that for the focus of this piece the populations in the two reservations are pretty similarly unique and distinct as to make up a singular unit.

From almost the beginning of my work, I had the good fortune of being surrounded by Lakota families. My initial family in Pine Ridge was one that paved much of the way for my early work. Although not related by blood, these generous and kind people, incorporated me and my two children into their family as though we had always belonged. We lived with them as members of their group, sharing in every aspect of family life. The initial period and the circumstances of being there in the homes of Lakota doing what they did in life created the essential conditions for this research. For the most part I watched and listened and then remembered and wrote and reflected, interpreted and analyzed meanings and wrote memos. Then spent time reviewing those memos with friends and family, with colleagues, advisors and mentors. As I recall the process of data collection, I cannot remember a formal interview. The experience was one of an ongoing conversation with several people at various points along the way, weaving and reweaving my understandings of the world that they disclosed to me as well as the world that I experienced.

Midway through the my fieldwork I acquired a second family. Within a year's time, I had become part of an elaborate family system in Rosebud, acquired in-laws, nephews and nieces, and also had a child. As a result I had access to a community of older traditional Lakota. There were several positive outcomes from these social ties. First, I was able to review early concerns and developments with family members and friends and obtain review and reaction, as well as clarity and direction in my interpretive process. Secondly, this second community of people are primarily Lakota speaking and were able to work with me through translations and cross translations, as well as refining my social skills so that my work could proceed more productively. Thirdly, as a family member, the ease of conversations increased as well as the openness of discussion. People took an active part of helping me do the work of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Some of these people participated in "grounded theory evenings" as we sat together coding fieldnotes, drawing integrative diagrams which sometimes looked more like artwork or mock cartoon strips. In all these people contributed significantly to the analytic process. Of the cadre of friends and family who I could turn to for discussion, many had diverse and at times conflicting positions, opinions, and interpretations.

Hermeneutic interpretation. The nature of this fieldwork is not one in which I have moved between worlds traveling 1500 miles to get data and then returning to the university to analyze it. I am part of both world simultaneously. Each situation has altered me, framed my experiences in each that allowed for certain issues to emerge as central to this dissertation. It has been as difficult and demanding as it has been

enlightening and rewarding. The outcomes of this work could not have accomplished had I tried to maintain more contrived boundaries between the two worlds. Conversely, I also have altered both these worlds in the process. The Lakota who have worked closely with me have reported moments of frustration and enthusiasm, just as have my colleagues and mentors at school.

Lastly, it is important to point out that as close as I came to experiencing and representing aspects of the world of the Lakota, I as an outsider am still distant, and I give a distant near account. The accounting is from the position of the outside other, having spent considerable time learning and practicing and being in ways that brought me fairly close to meanings that otherwise would have been obscured had I remained within more traditional methodological and theoretical frameworks.

Lakota Perspectives on Methodology

In addition to learning to learn as a Lakota, that in itself being a particular method, there were other aspects to the acquisition of knowledge from a Lakota perspective that bear addressing. The world of the Lakota is such that the nature of scientific knowledge and how it is obtained follows different guidelines. As well as being held accountable to the tenets of good science, I am also responsible for fulfilling the responsibilities of my work as seen from a Lakota perspective.

There were many aspects to this that would benefit discussion. The notion of reciprocity is discussed early in this chapter. Here I would like to end the methods

section with other rules that are considered to be "good method" within the Lakota world that were made explicit to me.

> When you want to know something, you have to be willing to do something with that knowledge. That knowledge is given to you and what you do with it should benefit the people.
>
> You have to be serious about it, not just curious. You have to be patient. You have to be willing to sacrifice.
>
> You don't just ask for help and then not have some responsibility attached to what you have been given, for those things that you have been able to acquire and achieve from that knowledge.

As is clear, the Lakota have their own guidelines too, and the extent of disclosure that I have been honored to achieve carries with it obligations that I take seriously. Equally important as the professional responsibilities and ethics is my social responsibility to the Lakota community and to the people who have guided and helped me by sharing their lives.

CHAPTER IV: ASPECTS OF LAKOTA ONTOLOGY

Lakol Wicohan Tewahila
I love my Lakota ways

Introduction: Culture, practices and being in the world.

The central focus of this chapter is toward a proximate understanding of aspects of a Lakota ontology, those deep rooted meanings that inform a particular world view and social practices. Following theoretical and methodological considerations within symbolic interactionism the focus of this analysis is on social interactions, symbols and meanings (Blumer: 1969).

Heidegger suggests that we are thrown into a culture, socialized into ways of being in the world that allow for certain things to show up as meaningful (Heidegger: 1962). It is through the observation of daily practices in which things show up as an issue to the actors that one comes to an interpretation of the meaning of being for the other. This understanding of being through practices cannot be obtained, according to Heidegger, within the Cartesian framework of subject observing objects. Practices are the embodiment of the ontological framework, the starting point for hermeneutic interpretation. Practices expose aspects of an ontological terrain from which an interpretation can then be posited. Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, posits:

> "(1) that these ways of behaving presuppose shared practices, and (2) that these practices must be interpreted as having in them an interpretation of what it is to be. [As such] ways of behaving are not merely ontic facts to be studied by some particular discipline...but contain an understanding of Being of the sort Heidegger wishes to study." [Dreyfus: 1983]

Following Heidegger's direction primary attention will be given to a hermeneutic interpretation of those practices which show up as an "issue" of importance to these Lakota. An analysis of practices will illuminate aspects of a Lakota ontology that inform cultural meanings. Then, from a posture of proximate understanding of aspects of a Lakota ontology, I can turn in the following chapter, to specific practices of these Lakota that show themselves as issues related to health. Lakota practices, then, are the focus of this chapter and the vehicle through which an underlying ontology can be unfolded, and in which the subsequent analysis and interpretation of health is embedded.

The chapter is organized to cover four areas: 1) who are the Lakota, a definition and description of this population; 2) Lakota expressions that reflect aspects of a Lakota ontology; 3) the nature of the group and the individual; and 4) aspects of Lakota social interaction; and 5) interaction with and among children, socialization and the transmission of meaning.

Who are the Lakota?

There are various histories written about the Lakota and a complete review of those works is not appropriate to this study. Interested readers are referred to general anthropology texts, other histories (Hyde: 1957, 1974; Hassrick: 1964; E. Deloria: 1944; Olson: 1965) and to historical biographies (E. Deloria: 1990; Standing Bear: 1975). This study takes as its central focus those things which for these people show up as important in their daily practices. The definition of who the Lakota are is

circumscribed by the parameters of this research, this particular group of Lakota, and those things which they said to help me understand who they consider themselves to be. This overview, then, is a summary of what these people have talked about that relates to their concept of being a Lakota either directly with me or in a formal social gathering which I attended. As such the following is a contemporary social history as constructed within the experience of this fieldwork.

The Lakota of this study are part of the Lakota people whose oral tradition tells of their origins as beginning a long time ago in a place within the earth. From the time of their exodus to live on, rather than in, the earth they have journeyed from the land of lakes (Minnesota) to the Plains area. Initially these were times of plenty when their parents and grandparents roamed lands that were full of buffalo and the other necessities of life. The Lakota were a people whose social life was organized principally in small extended family groups, called tiospaye (Deloria: 1944), the population of which might have ranged from 30 people to perhaps 200. The vicissitudes of weather, the availability of the resources of buffalo, roots, berries, herbs, water, encampment sites, the proximity of other non-Lakota people both friendly and not, all contributed to early social relations.

For the Lakota, the "culture into which they are thrown" has had a particularly unique temporal aspect. Economic, political, social and geographic histories have brought significant influences and alterations to the possibilities for things to show up as meaningful. The last hundred year period of conquest and domination of these

people has rapidly and dramatically altered social relations and social structures within Lakota society.

The federal government through treaty and congressional legislation has imposed regulations on almost every aspect of life on reservation. For the Lakota, this is of central importance for their ability to maintain cultural continuity. Congress in the late 1800's outlawed Lakota spiritual practices, mandating them to "release the spirits of their ancestors" and "cease the practice of heathen ways" (Vogel: 1974), and then contracted with different Christian denominations to work on the reservation to convert the Lakota to Christianity. It was not until 1978 that Congress reversed these laws and passed the Religious Freedoms Act, allowing Native Americans to publicly and formally engage in their own spiritual practices.

Boarding schools were instituted and many Lakota children were forcibly removed from their homes to attend school. Once there, they were severely punished for engaging in activities that connected them with their culture including speaking their own language. The influence of boarding schools on the social fabric of Lakota life cannot be underestimated. The major part of an entire generation was physically, emotionally, spiritually, ideologically distanced from their own culture. This was then supplanted by a significantly different culture which formed the materials of their daily living for most of the formative years. The consequences for various aspects of Lakota life were important. Individual and collective identity changed; social relationships shifted to replicate the dominant hierarchical model; instructions were in authoritarian military fashion to people who were reared in individual autonomy and

responsibility. Such alterations took both subtle and covert form as well as the more obvious interactions of relationships of unequal power.

Through the Allotment Act of 1890, lands that were negotiated during treaties as tribal lands were divided into individual allotments and frequently assigned in such a fashion as to split up the important social unit of the *tiospaye*. The economic base of tribal life was shifted through legislation and funding from a hunting and gathering to a farming economy. Because the notion of land ownership was foreign to Lakota, coupled with their unfamiliarity with the business of farming, the less than honorable deeds of various land marketeers, and the dire poverty of the Lakota that forced many land sales, much of the land base of the Lakota was lost following the Allotment period.

Tribal governments that wished to maintain federal recognition were forced to institute tribal political structures that mirrored the federal legislative model. Prior to reservation, the political structure of tribal life was not based on the authoritarian hierarchical model, but centered on shared leadership and personal responsibility (Lee: 1961). New political forms were foreign in idea and practice bringing significant political turmoil.

Mechanisms for social control following the war period of the 1800's effectively isolated and pauperized this population. Food was rationed as a means of obtaining compliance, as were housing, clothing, education and health care. In general people's experience was that of forced assimilation or annihilation long past the final military encounter at Wounded Knee in late December, 1890.

For the Lakota of Pine Ridge and Rosebud who comprise the population of this study, this history is an integral part of daily life. People talk frequently of their social conditions and the nature of the federal tribal relationship, of things that are going on in congress that influence their lives. Nonetheless, what seemed remarkable from the outset of this research project is the capacity of these people to be in the world in ways that are remarkably distinct from dominant society, despite the ubiquitous governmental presence, influence and control.

In general the people of this study are economically poor, most are unemployed and underemployed and have experienced this throughout their life. Menial labor in a variety of forms comprised the major source of income. Seasonal agricultural work brought an ebb and flow of people to the potato and corn fields, not too dissimilar than the employment experience of farm workers in the valleys of California. Other Lakota spoke of chopping wood all day, or cutting 100 fence posts for nine cents a post and then selling it to local non-Indian farmers. Some leased, and continue to lease their land to local farmers and live off that minimal income. By and large, there is an active backstage survival market, where people share and exchange food, clothing, food stamps, commodities, cars, money and the like.

These various conditions create an important context for daily life on reservation. Many of the consequences of these structural conditions are discussed throughout the dissertation. This brief history has been presented to give a general introduction to events that these people consider important to their definitions of themselves and their world.

Lakol Wicohan: Lakota Ways

In the early stages of the analysis of my field data the salience of "practices" emerged as an integral theme. As I began coding for different kinds of practices, and as I attempted some integrative memos, it became clear that these "practices" were signals of a more integral part of life than was reflected in the coding scheme. It was at that point that the study of Heidegger's notions of ontology helped refocus this analysis and interpretation toward aspects of ontology from which practices of Lakota life can be understood.

There are two expression in Lakota which were linguistic cues that referenced important practices. The first expression is *Lakol wicohan tewahila* - I love my Lakota ways. The second expression is *mitakuye oyasi* - all my relatives. Both of these phrases were critical pointers for the nature, direction and scope of the research.

Lakol wicohan tewahila, "I love my Lakota ways," was often coupled with the expression *Lakota piki ote hikelo* -It's hard to be a Lakota. Both expressions when spoken in English tend to have "Lakota" replaced with the more generic "Indian," so that you will hear the expressions "I love my Indians ways" and "It's hard to be an Indian." In the early analysis of data, these *in vivo* codes, pointed my inquiry toward the importance of ontology in this work and help shape further investigation and analysis. From the outset these people were telling me that their "ways" and "being" were central to their shared meanings from which they construct their social world.

There are variations and permutations on activities whereby these show up as meaningful. By and large, however, these people have as central to their being a

distinct active knowledge of their ways, how they act in those ways, the meaning and importance of such activities and the understanding and recognition that to be in the world as a Lakota is an essential yet very difficult task. The Lakota concept of "ways" and their use of the active verb "to be" resonated clearly with Heidegger's notions of "practices" as reflective of "being." The task was to put the two together to expose the underlying ontology, then get to those issues which have to do with health.

The notion that there is "a way of being," and that people actively recognize and act upon those understandings in forthright manner is a distinct part of Lakota world. There is a pride in Lakota way that sustains the difficulties in life that arise. Talking about that way, recognizing it, giving it ongoing meaning in practices, attending to those ways as one might tend to a garden, are regular activities in Lakota life.

The socialization process essential to all societies is carried out in a variety of formal and informal ways. For this particular group however, that process appears to be central to many of the activities of daily life. Much of the activities of daily living can be seen as purposive practices through which the culture survives, activities that assure some cultural continuity so that the valuable resource of culture gets replenished. The nature of these practices underscores Heidegger's theory that human beings act in ways that presuppose shared practices and that practices point to meanings and the interpretation of what it is to be.

By and large these Lakota are in the world in a way that can be considered a process of being Lakota. This is quite the point that Heidegger is making - that human beings do or act from an ontological posture, they do not find representation of their beliefs and then interact with those representations in a subject-object fashion. The importance of practices for this group is reflected in an expression *itch esh duole*, that translates to an expression in English, "it's not done that way, we don't do it that way." There are two important aspects of this expression. First the emphasis and importance placed on practices, on the active doing of things. Second is the word "we," the sense of the primacy of the collective as distinct from other people. The first is the point I am trying to make here, that for these people, their practices are central to their being in the world in an active and ongoing fashion. The second is the nature of the primacy of the collective.

Basically then, the experience in the field directed attention to the importance of practices, not as archaic, quaint or curious rituals, nor as objective data, but rather as those things which for these people are issues for themselves. Early investigation and analysis revealed the critical aspect of the divergent ontological posture toward the world that sets these people apart from others. Interpretation of those practices requires an explication of central aspects of Lakota ontology. The remainder of the chapter explores certain practices within this group that point to the nature and meaning of being Lakota. Those practices, are bounded by far more than the public rites and rituals of feathered costumes, pow-wows, the characterizations and symbols commonly taken as typification and definitions of what it means to be an "Indian."

The practices of daily life are tied to a history, rooted in the symbols of language and demonstrated in the simplicity of a handshake, a cup of coffee, a greeting, a song, a conversation, a bowl of soup, a name.[1]

The Group and the Individual

The Group: Mitakuye Oyasi — All My Relatives

> When you say mitakue oyasi, you are saying you are related to all things in the same way. Not better, not worse, we are all relatives. It says how we must respect all things because of that relationship. We are all connected, animal people, you and me, the clouds, rain, air, stars, the planets, grass, the earth, trees which make your home and many things in your home, the minerals, and even chemicals from which many things are made, even your computers. We understand that. And there is a way to live when you know those things.
>
> If you could really understand the meaning of mitakue oyasi, that is all you need to know. Then you would understand everything. It is everything. It is the most complete saying. It says it all. It directs your life. But most people don't understand what it means, not really.

"Mitakue Oyasi," all my relatives, is a common expression. It is a supplication that connects the presently living to those who have died, with that which is considered sacred and mysterious, the "wakan," and is heard at the end of talks and speeches in both private and public, formal and informal, secular and sacred settings. In public speeches, at the beginning of social events the announcer starts off the occasion with a brief talk and will begin and end with a variation of "mitakue oyasi."

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[1]. Schutz refers to these aspects of social life as the "world-taken-for-granted." Geertz calls them the "immediacies of life." In anthropology the distinction between emic and etic may seem to apply also. These conceptualizations, although methodologically useful, obscure the issue of ontology that was an important part of early dilemmas and clearly evident in emergent categories of initial data analysis of the fieldwork.

It is the expression that states the relational nature of their world, reminding all who are there of their encompassing bonds.

For these Lakota, life is constructed within a framework that sees all things as being related. This relationship among all things is constructed in a non-hierarchical fashion. There exists an interdependency upon which the life of all things hinges. There is communication and relationships across species. There is no distinction between animate and inanimate objects as the western view holds, nor the overarching dynamic of the subject-object dualism found in post Enlightenment western thought. All things have life and all of life is connected. Lee, in her interpretive work on the Lakota, calls this connectedness "co-extensive with the universe" (1961:62). Her interpretive work on the nature of responsibility points to the centrality of relationship for this group. While, her work refers to the Dakota, certain points should be underscored. First, the Dakota, Lakota and Nakota were the three bands of the Teton Sioux who spoke different dialects of the same language, and shared a similar social history and culture with each other. Because of this it could be successfully argued that her interpretation has cross band significance. Second, one of her primary sources, the books by and about Black Elk, refer to a person who was from Pine Ridge and who identified as a Lakota. Third, at the time of Lee's writing, the nomenclature for this group was taking a shift from the French derivative of the Chippewa word nidawisu, or Sioux, to the indigenous referent of Dakota Tetons. It was not until later, following the political activities of the 1970's particularly the takeover at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation, that the term Lakota came

into common usage. To return to the important interpretive work of Lee regarding the salience of relationship:

> It remained for the Dakota to recognize his relatedness, and his responsibility; it was there for him to discover. Growth meant increase in responsibility only in that it meant increasing recognition of the responsibility of being Dakota, being human, and being a part of the universe. Children had to be brought up in awareness of their relatedness.... They had to learn that they were responsible to enhance and intensify their recognition of relatedness and their very relatedness." The bringing up of Dakota children was such that they grew up to feel that they were part of nature, or relatives of all things, to feel that 'there was no complete solitude,' because, wherever they were, they were with their relatives - the rocks, the tress the wind. They grew up to feel, as Standing Bear put it, '...that we are of the soil and the soil is of us. We love the birds and beasts that grew with us on this soil. They drank the same water and breathed the same air. We are all one in nature.' 62/...Their bodies were nourished by rain and sun and wind just as much as by meat and plant food. The growing child was taught to be sensitive and highly perceptive of all natural phenomena - of wind and insects and plants - so that he could receive instruction from them, knowledge and guidance and advice. 'There was no such thing as emptiness in the world . . . Everywhere there was life, visible and invisible, and every object possessed something that would be good for us to have also - even to the very stones. The world teemed with life and wisdom.' 'The approach of the Indian toward the animal kingdom was not in the manner of a detached study but more the natural process of 'getting acquainted' - an exchange of friendship.' The corollary of this postulate of relatedness, even of oneness, with the universe was that the self was, or became eventually, co-extensive with the universe."

Lee's work focused on information gathered from early decades of this century. From my fieldwork, there is strong evidence that this notion of relationship continues to rivet Lakota practices and indicates the continuance of a way in the world that is rooted in a separate ontology from dominant society.

In everyday activities the importance of relationships shows up in a variety of ways. One very simple activity is the way in which people address each other in a relational manner, often avoiding the use of personal names. Parents often call or

speak of their children by saying, "my boy" or "my girl." Even people in their 40's can be referred to this way by older uncles or grandparents. It is also common for persons with whom one feels a particular bond, to call to that person in a relational way, so that even though a young girl may not be an actual, or biological, daughter she may be called "my girl" by a several different people. It is quite literally, an engaging way, one that establishes and reinforces the relational nature of social life. In greetings, people will more often than not say such things as "hello, uncle, it's really good to see you," "well auntie, how was Bingo last night," or "that cousin of mine...." Names are in many ways inconsequential. It is, however, very important to have a working knowledge of the relational scheme, of family and social ties in order to follow much of the social discourse, and social interaction.

During the initial stages of meeting people, the most common statement is "who are your relatives?" or "who is your grandmother or grandfather," or the more confrontive "and who are you?", meaning who are you related to. The answer to these questions is critical in that it places the respondent within the larger social scheme and connects everyone to each other. At once the personal identity is tied to the larger group. Social identity is actively constructed as part of the larger organization of relationships. In some fashion, the questions asked imply that one is one's relations.

The importance of familial relationships has a long history within Lakota society. Early writings elaborate the meaning and importance of relationship along the Lakota lines of related by blood, *owe*, or considered-of-blood - *oweya*

(Walker:80:3). For an outsider, it is critical to be able to form a relationship by association, to be considered-of-blood. Once that relational connection is made, the outsider becomes an insider in a like-kin way. Those considered like-kin are bound by the social dictums of relational behavior. The importance of and problematic nature of this relationship for those engaged in research is addressed by others who have studied the Lakota (Wax: 1971). From my fieldnotes:

> Things are going much better since I am considered part of a family here. People act differently, are more willing to talk, tease me much more - about being short and such, let me know what is going on, help with my mistakes, and seem to be happier to see me. It is always nice to feel accepted, but there is something particularly meaningful when someone said to me "my girl." It touched a very deep spot, this expression that I had heard so often and glimpsed as being important. I have been called friend, "kola," for a while now, but having older people say to me 'my girl', carried so much more meaning. That relational connection is very deep and very strong.
>
> Being related to the people is taxing at times. It carries with it many social obligations and responsibilities. It means I babysit, and taxi others around, cook, shop, help those who need things when I can, be sure to check in on relatives, sit and drink coffee for hours when I should be writing up my fieldnotes or reading. It means learning about the nature of the group and where I belong. It means learning who to say what to. It is a very different way. For those who have more, be it knowledge, talent, transportation, the responsibilities of family can at times be burdensome.

Within the constellation of all things being related, there are certain practices around relationships which are suggestive of the importance of the group as well as the importance of individual autonomy. The relationship between the individual and the group is central to sociological concerns. For the Lakota both the meaning of the group and the relationship between individual and group takes on a different form. For these Lakota there are two important groups, the family/kin network called a tiospaye, and the larger group of the Lakota people, oyate. Historically, while in

general the individual was left alone to act autonomously, there were two occasions where the group took precedent over the individual. During times of warfare and during buffalo hunts, the rules for the group were expected to be followed. At all other times there was and continues today to be in ideology and in practice considerable individual autonomy, diversity and freedom.

This particular aspect of Lakota life suggests a divergence from the conceptual framework within sociology whereby the relationship between individual and group is characteristically described as an antagonism of the individual versus the group, the ongoing dilemma of free will and order. For the most part, social analysis posits, among other things, an essentially subservient role of the individual, who must relinquish certain autonomy in exchange for group membership. The requisites for membership in Lakota society suggest far less antagonism, and practices among members reflect a high degree of autonomy, personal choice and freedom. The next section describes practices through which one can understand the relationship of the individual and the group for the Lakota, a relationship that emerges within the context of non-hierarchical social relations.

The Individual

For this group of Lakota and also reflected in the reservation society to a large degree, individuality is given considerable importance. This is supported in several ways. There are practices of non-interference that insure individual autonomy and

freedom that are rooted in an ontological structure that believes that each person is unique and exists for some purpose. Each and every person is of value, has talents that are unique and have been given to help the person through this life.

> People get to things in their own pace and way. Don't rush them or act like what you have to do is more important. Everyone has something to accomplish in this life and has a responsibility to do that in their own way, so others have the responsibility to encourage that by not getting in the way.

Specific practices around non-interference point out the ontological bases for the importance of individuality within this society.

Non-interference. In order to assure that individuals develop in their own way, non-interference is an important aspect of interaction. There is a high degree of acceptance of different ways, reflecting a value for diversity and a norm of tolerance. The individual is responsible for his/her own actions, and the consequences of those actions.

It is not as if there are no standards or norms. Within Lakota society, there are certain ways to do things, but within some very broad parameters, individual variation is highly prized. For example in dancing, there are particular types of dance, but each dancer has his own style and spectators frequently will converse about particular dancers unique steps, or turns, or subtle movements. To the outsider what appears as "bobbing up and down" has infinite variation and it is a common practice that many persons can identify the particular variation of several of the dancers. The latitude to variation is broad. There are events where even quite out of the ordinary dancing will be accepted or if not accepted ignored. At one social dance, a graduation pow-wow, it happened that:

> During the final traditional men's dance contest this fellow who was home on a leave from the state mental hospital went out in the middle of the dance area with his dog and danced along with the six or eight traditional dancers who were competing. No one went onto the arena and told him to leave or forced him off the floor. Everyone just waited for the music to end and the guy left along with the other dancers. It was no big thing. Everyone knew to expect something like that when that guy is home. He's just that way. It was a good song too. I bet lots of those old guys wanted to get out there and dance too!

It should be pointed out that traditional men's dancing is highly valued and honored within the Lakota community. So even during one of the most respected of times, what for other societies might call forth some dramatic intervention, in this group required no corrective retributive intervention. The meaning and mechanism for handling what might be labelled deviant behavior is considerably different. In this situation, what would be considered aberrant or deviant behavior, is tolerated and not made much of. The dancers kept dancing, the people enjoyed the dancing and the music, and the very different fellow was noted but not really responded to, no one mocked him or jeered at him, some heads nodded and eyebrows raised, but no one overtly criticized or chastised, or acted to remove the fellow.

In such situations one is apt to hear the expression, "that's just the way he is." It is common to hear older people say of a young person who is always getting into trouble, "that one likes to get into trouble, that's just the way she is." Such a comment is not necessarily meant as a criticism, it is more a statement of fact. For the listener it means that if you want to stay out of trouble, stay away from that person. But also, if you want trouble that's the person to go see. However, the directive to stay away will not be uttered; instead one will hear, "that person is just

that way." In these cases the comments point to idiosyncracies that in other cultures might be the brunt of much criticism and scorn.

On the other hand, the expression "that's just the way they are," may be also be said of someone who is particularly talented or someone who does something particularly different. It underscores the value of individuality that is held by this group. It highlights diversity and autonomy which are also important to this group. Such expressions as "being that way," or "oh he/she is just that way - that's the way they are, that's the way that person does things," are acknowledgements of the fact that someone does something that way and to leave him be.

> Some day it may need to be done just that way and that person will be needed, since no one else can do it just that way.

> There were these five Indian guys coming in from Manderson and they had a flat tire on the way. There they were out there on the road in the middle of summer heat. All of them got out of the car and stood around for a long time. All of them stood around waiting for someone to change the tire, no one wanted to appear to be the expert and tell anyone how or what to do. The one who knows how to change it will do it, sometime. But no one says,'you do it' or volunteers anyone to do anything. Things may take a little longer, but they get done. Usually better, too.

The value of individuality can be seen in the practices around art work. In beadwork the pattern and texture are often the signature of the creator of beaded pieces and the unique style is known around the reservation and valued. The same is true of quilt makers, where colors, styles, patterns and quilting stitch technique are as good as a signature.

A person is considered a special spirit and no one has the right to interfere with one's life, even in subtle ways. You don't just jump in and "help" someone do

something. If your help is needed you might hear, or "my girl, this chair is heavy," or "my grandson, there's commodities in the car," each a signal that if you want, you can help out.

> We are proud people. We have self respect. If you go and help out too much, it looks like you have no respect...you must think we can't do it ourselves. You see lots of older people hobbling around, or fighting with a pow-wow chair, dragging it all the way to the arena. Maybe you think we don't care about them. But we don't want to embarrass them by bringing attention to them or be disrespectful by stepping in and doing something for them they want to do themselves. We show respect that they can still take care of themselves. We may have to wait a long time and miss grand entry, but that's the way we are. Everyone gets that way, if they're lucky.

What this lady is reflecting is the ontological underpinnings of these practices, the importance of respect for each individual, their capacities and lack thereof, and the importance of showing that by not interfering, nor criticizing nor interrupting in any way.

The great value placed on individuality and diversity emerges from the basic ontological posture of respect for human beings that is inherent in the culture. This respect is rooted in the belief that all beings are here for a purpose and each person is responsible for their own life. Each individual's talents and abilities are needed for the survival of the group. The norm is not to interfere with the process of someone else's life. Things are said along the way to encourage basic Lakota values and actions, but in general, individuals are left to make their own ways, their own choices about how they will do life, even if others don't agree with it. Something good will be seen in some very terrible situations. There is always the hope that people will be

good, that they can be good, that the current situation is only temporary. They will come around.

These practices show a considerable tolerance for varieties of ways of doing things, for people discovering for themselves their own meaning in life, and for considerable endurance in the face of the unknown and the overwhelming. In the vocabulary of human interaction one rarely hears such expressions as "he did that wrong," or, "this is a better way," or, "do it my way," and the like. This appreciation and value of human diversity is an essential aspect of child rearing where children are given latitude to explore and learn at their own pace in their own way and sets up conditions for individual strength of character and identity as a Lakota.

Having discussed aspects of the nature of the group and the individual within Lakota society, we can now turn to the final two arenas that show up as important to social dynamics in this particular group. The final two areas in which practices showed themselves as particularly salient to the understanding of Lakota ontology are social interactions and the place of children in Lakota society.

Lakota Social Interaction.

Since oral tradition is central to a Lakota way, the process of social interaction, particularly communication is a practice and process through which specific aspects of Lakota ontology can be identified. In this section I will address

the issue of social interaction and the way in which interactions point to underlying ontology and practices around relationships, non-interference and encouragement.

There are many forms of social interaction, some are unique to this population and important to this analysis. There are particular interaction rituals (Goffman: 1959) that characterize aspects of a Lakota way. Social conversation is the focus here. People speak softly, and slowly, and carefully. Words are measured in some fashion, with the underlying guide that "once it is said you can't take it back." Many times I heard the remark "you just don't talk for no reason. You must have something to say," or "there's a reason why I am saying this," or "she didn't say that for no reason."

Conversations take a along time because of this. People tend to take time to think about what they want to say before they start verbalizing ideas. A comment can be made and several minutes may pass before someone responds. Patience is a requirement for someone socialized into a more rapid paced conversational style. An important aspect of interaction is that more often than not people will avoid direct eye contact during conversation. It is considered rude to look directly at someone's face. Out of respect for the other you look past or to the side of the person you are talking to thus avoiding any inadvertent disclosure that the other person would prefer stay hidden. During some of my conversational interviews I would be looking at a wall, making conversation, trying not to ask direct questions, and listening to responses. The chairs that the two of us would be sitting in were frequently facing in different directions so that if I were to look at the person all I might glimpse was a profile. In

conversation people stand or sit relaxed and rather still. There is little arm waving and gesturing about. The significance of a statement is carried by carefully chosen words. The words carry a tremendous weight. I was frequently told:

> You guys [meaning non-Indians] throw words around as though they have no meaning. You keep talking, saying the same thing over and over, hoping you'll stumble across the right combination. Then when you are done, you can't remember what you said anyway. You really don't have any respect for words or for the people who listen to them.

During the early segments of interviews many of the older respondents would remind me of interactional practices. It became a recurrent theme of being 'trained in interview technique' as shown to me in the practices of the respondent. The following is representative of such discourse:

> When you talk to me I take time to think about what you mean with your question and how I can give you a good answer, one that will help you understand. Since you don't talk Indian, it is difficult. It takes me longer than usual because I think about it in Indian and then I try to find the best English words. And sometime there isn't a word so I have to try to tell you some Indian to help out. I have to be careful what I say. What you ask is important, how I answer is important. I hope you understand. It takes a lot of time to talk like this. But when you are finished you will understand in a good way. Be patient, have courage, be happy. It will all come out just fine.

Non-interference and conversation. During conversations the usual protocol is that one person talks, the other listens. Often there is a time lag between one comment and the next. And as often when one is speaking they are left to take as long as they like to complete what they want to say. There is a remarkable lack of interruption. The speaker is left to complete their thoughts without interference, no additions, corrections, substitutions. This form crosses age lines. Children are left to talk on at length. And they are expected to wait to talk and not interrupt. The ideal

is that one does not interrupt during conversations, but waits for however long it takes for the other person to finish what they are saying. The pacing and form provide context, and support an underlying ontological position about respect for individual and notions of time, as well as other things I am sure I missed. You come to understand and operate in a different way. No one rushes a conversation, except, as can be expected, if there is an emergency of some sort. Usually, though, talking provides much of the daily activity. One becomes very patient and thoughtful in interaction, cautious about vocabulary, and learns to take seriously what one says. It will be remembered, recalled, and is an intimate part of the larger social world in which you live as a Lakota.

Even young children are observed waiting for long periods of time while others finish talking. Children will come in to a home or up to the place where people are talking and listen and wait often standing close by a relative. Sometimes after a short while, an adult may shorten his conversation and look at the child to acknowledge the child. Then the child may talk and everyone listens until the child is finished. Very rarely does one hear a child entering a house calling "mom, dad...," nor will you see children pulling at their parents to interrupt or interfere. They more often come quietly, watch to see what is going on, and place themselves accordingly. Children as young as two or three incorporate these practices of interaction. Certainly, in emergencies and such, children and adults interrupt. But by and large there is a calmness in interaction that is respected by all.

These characteristic of conversation within this group of Lakota points to several aspects of their being in the world. Non-interference reinforces respect for individuals. Being allowed time to collect and articulate your thoughts as you need and not being interrupted reinforces one's individuality and uniqueness. Such interaction processes reflect a particular posture toward time and temporality that is distinct. No one rushes another to "hurry up and get on with what you wanted to say." The attitude in interaction reflects the importance of relationship, in that adults and children alike are considered equal participants in conversation. Most often, children wait and don't interfere, and neither do adults when children talk. No one is forced to talk, or told to say anything. Children are not explicitly called upon or told to say "hello" to people nor made the center of attention by other verbal instruction regarding their discourse. Each person on their own can enter into the conversation or remain silent. There is an absence of any sense that one person has more to say, or something better to say, which supports the basic non-hierarchical nature of social relationships. Such interactional practices are remarkably different than those generally observed in dominant society, where quick bantering or rapid exchange, interruptions, revisions, and restatements are the norm.

There is a particularly interesting aspect to social conversations in this group. The format for conversation usually places the most important items at the end. People will visit for a long time, sometimes hours, before the most important thing is said. There were many times, particularly early on in the fieldwork that I missed critical information because my social experience is that people say the most

important things first and also my patience and tolerance and appreciation of a different style needed to be learned and developed. Conversations frequently would begin after supper and continue on into the night. The peaceful low, quiet voices and very melodic cadence of speech frequently lulled me to sleep before the end of the evening's visit. Although coffee was almost always part of the conversational accoutrements, the caffeine frequently failed to assist eyes and ears, and I would awake in the morning to teasing and having to ask someone to retell the end of the evening's stories.

Encouragement and conversation. Encouragement is a central theme within conversations. A significant part of conversational content is devoted to remarks that encourage people in what they are doing. Humor is one of the primary tools for this encouragement. One hears much laughter and joviality. Jokes on oneself, and the relaying of funny experiences are often the way of beginning conversations. Many events are highlighted by lightheartedness as a way of keeping peoples' spirits up. In situations where troubles are involved, the conversations are more likely to be humorous than serious. The message is to "let it roll off your back," "nothing really happened," " don't draw attention to yourself or the situation." It has a way of decreasing the severity of many traumatic situations. As far as situation with children are concerned, such diminishing allows situations to pass without much notice by adults. Such practices appear to allow children to grow up with a different attitude about injuries. Children don't get infantalized, or get much attention for minor injuries. One consequence is that they don't try to get attention by doing these things.

They can't use danger as an attention getter, or use hurts for attention getter. Also they learn not to draw attention to themselves. This is very unlike many American parents who tend to dote over children and their scrapes and bruises.

One consequence for parents is that such a posture sets up the possibility of getting through some tough times without guilt and anxiety or at least it lessens those feelings. The message is "it's no big deal so don't worry about it. Everything is alright so stop fretting." This is important considering that the verities of reservation life frequently involve less than mundane occurrences, e.g. tornados and blizzards, poor road conditions that can cause serious accidents, the sequelae of poverty which involve times of little food, cattle that have broken through fences and roam the dark night roads and are often driving hazards, health facilities that are up to 100 miles away requiring a two hour commute, to name but a few.

Another aspect of down playing serious events relates to the importance of respect for individuals. Parents would not act to embarrass or draw unnecessary attention to the child by making a scene or overtly reacting to situation. This is similar to the practice that names are not used very often, as a way of not drawing to much attention to someone.

These diminishing practices also happen when telling stories not involving children. Some terrible accident or potential accident or loss (e.g. fire) can be recalled and bring laughter as a way of diminishing the consequences of the incident. Also something funny can be recalled and it is a way of accentuating "good things" as a way of life.

That diminishing of the very serious is part of most storytelling. Even the most serious of stories, e.g. near death events, people will always have several funny parts that become the focus and the things that seem to be most remembered. It has a way of getting you to think positively, not to deny or ignore the serious, but to make light of it and leave with the humor or good feelings, not the worrisome or hard feelings.

Conversations frequently avoid the topic of one's own troubles. Personal troubles are just that, "personal." To express them openly is to risk embarrassment to listeners, or to burden them with worries that are not theirs. There is the notion that you don't bother people with problems. You may tell a close friend, but as often as not troubles are usually kept within the family, and even there, conversations around difficulties tend to be more humorous than grave.

> When I fell off that horse he drug me for nearly two miles down hill and everything. I don't think he missed a cactus. And when he finally stopped my uncle said, 'well, my girl you have a good horse for barrel racing. And she was. We will take first next month, you watch.
>
> He ran right into that car...made a big dent in the fender. That guy (driver of the car) was sure shook up about the dent, probably wishes he could get a cast on it and have it all better in a few weeks too.

Late one evening when I was back in California, an older woman who considers me her "daughter" phoned:

> So, I just called to see how things were with you and the boys, and the rest of the family. [I supplied the information in about ten minutes.] Oh, I'm glad to hear everyone is doing good. [A fifteen minute rundown of how things are with her, pow wows, politics, latest jokes and silly occurrences, who she saw in town, etc.] Well, I am glad to hear my boy is on the road heading this way. You know they are going to cut my left leg off tomorrow morning. Can you beat that? Saturday and everything. I guess the doctor's need overtime

> pay. So I guess I'll have time to get my shawls cleaned before we go out dancing again.

The persons relaying these events or their relatives had suffered no minor difficulties. They and their families were quite concerned about their recoveries. Nonetheless, in the telling of accidents, hospitalizations, amputations and the like the form, content, use of distraction, understatement and irony act as tools of encouragement and strength. When there are more serious consequences, particularly involving the loss of lives, stories are brief, capture the essence of loss and grief in very simple, direct statements.

> They went in the ditch, she went through the windshield, landed in a tree, dead. Three others were lost in that accident too. She was the only daughter left in that family.
>
> That was the second son he lost, poor thing. There's only one son left. It was a very bad accident.
>
> It is hard to bury your child. Accidents are so hard on us. The roads are terrible in this weather.

By and large, though, most injuries and less than life threatening events are relayed with emphasis on the more humorous aspects that the serious sides. This kind of discourse sets up possibilities for handling grief and anguish in ways that are dissimilar to dominant society.

For the most part people spend social interaction primarily in encouraging "the good things in life." Conversation will center around certain problem areas that everyone experiences, e.g., work, employment, politics, hospital, tribe, lease money, school, but there are more humorous anecdotes than scathing complaints. The

message is similar in that it is understood as a difficult situation, but the medium allows engagement without the burden of responsibilities for other's troubles.

There are specific tools that people have to avoid or redirect troublesome conversation. Most often people will "laugh off" the incident. They also may seem to ignore the conversation, though I am sure that the contents are remembered, just not responded to. Another tactic is to tell a more elaborate and troublesome story, thus minimizing by comparison what has been said. In any event the practices are geared toward diminishing the trouble so that the teller of bad tales is not embarrassed and does not bring embarrassment to others. People won't forget, though the incident will change and feelings will alter, so that what you have said may come back to haunt you and people will say, "Remember when you were complaining about...." The message is don't complain, act to solve a problem and let it go. If you must talk about it, tell us something funny so that you aren't embarrassed now or later, and neither are we.

There are many explanations as to why personal troubles are kept to oneself, why it is important to encourage people and say positive things. Some have to do with health. Others tie to the respect for individuals which is highly prized. First you don't want to burden others, not embarrass them with information they might not want to hold. Nor do you want to make them somehow responsible for your feelings. Each person is responsible for themselves only, a cornerstone of individuality.

> Even when I talk to you, what I say affects your health. The tone of my voice, the way I say my words, if I talk fast or slow. If I tell you good things or not. If I tell you my troubles, what can you do about them They are mine. I have to solve them. If I say things that hurt or bother you, that

> affects your health. I don't want that. If I say something, it puts that in your mind, and that will be part of you. Now why would someone want to put trouble in your mind? And why would you ask for that? When you go away, I want you to be happy.

Part of encouraging the "good things in life" is seen in how people say encouraging things to each other, even in the face of danger, threats, sickness, hard times. Encouragement is an important part of interaction and conversation. People say things like "oh that's good," even when something isn't done so well, or "that was a good dinner," even when it was burned, or "that was a good song," when someone didn't sing so well.

Another equally prevalent practice is for someone to make a joke of the situation that makes everyone laugh. This takes the focus off the person who might have blundered and diminishes the error. Another expression that is commonly heard is, "be happy." This is a frequent response to someone who is to have a very "hard time," serious sickness in the family, money worries, loss of job, or perhaps something went all wrong, or things look really bad, or you aren't getting along so well with family members. The underlying practice suggests a respect for individual's so as not to reinforce their hard feelings, and supports a stronger side that is perceived as necessary to get through "hard times."

Practices around encouragement are observed across age ranges, from the very young to the very old. It is part of a way of being that is learned early on and it is a common part of social interaction that everyone encourages each other in the things that are important. Such practices go far to keep people happy and light hearted in the face of lots of troubles and hard times. The practice of reinforcing good things

ties to an ontological posture that supports the autonomy and respect for the individual person in that each person is encouraged to tell about good things, act toward each other in happy ways, and watches out for each other in their conversations and retelling of events that involve others. Additionally, such stories act to diminish the more difficult or stressful aspects of life. These practices direct attention to important aspects of Lakota ontology. An analysis which points to interactional content as buffering life on reservation that is rife with unpleasantness and very traumatic events, e.g. poverty, people burning clothes in the winter to stay warm, car accidents, homicide, violence, lots of death, lots of diseases, misses the important ontological point. These practices emerge from a group because of the nature of their being in the world for which practices of relationships, individual autonomy and respect show up as issues to its members. The practices in social interaction help clarify how daily activities continue to reinforce these aspects of a Lakota ontology.

For these Lakota then, there is considerable individual freedom and autonomy within the relational context of this group. Such individuality is considerably different than the "rugged individualism" of dominant society in which practices around individual autonomy bring forth issues of competition, materialism, accumulation, separation from the group, as well as a high degree of conformity as against a high degree of diversity. For the Lakota the context of individual freedom and autonomy takes place within the overarching practices of relationships which act to militate against anomie and alienation, important growing concerns within the social structure of industrialized society (Durkheim, Weber, Marx).

Having discussed the nature of social discourse and tying such practices to an underlying ontology of relationships and respect for individuality, I will finish the chapter by briefly addressing a final aspect of Lakota practices. The last arena of significance centers on the place of children within Lakota society which sheds light on aspects of Lakota ontology.

On children and the transmission of meaning

There is a song for children that is sung to honor a child and the words translate: "My mother and father told me I am a Lakota. Be strong. Have courage." From the outset of my fieldwork on reservation, I have recorded notes on children since many aspects of social life revolve around them. Children are everywhere. They are most often with parents or other adults, in groups together walking, riding horses, kicking stones down the roads, playing ball, carrying younger siblings, talking in the same quiet low tones of their parents, and joking and laughing a lot. Boys and girls often wear the same kinds of clothes, jeans and tee shirts, jacket and snow hats so that it is often difficult to tell gender. And there are few cues from conversation that set the genders apart. Families are often all together, huddled six, eight, ten in the car riding down the road to the store, or a ball game, or a pow-wow, or to visit, or just out for a ride. Couples are not the norm after about eighteen. More often than not it is parent(s), grandparent(s), aunt(s), uncles(s), or cousin(s) together with children. This is not just at social gatherings but is observed daily in the practices of walking, cooking, talking, shopping, resting, playing, visiting, and the like. When

you invite someone to dinner, the family comes, not just the person you ask. If children ask for a friend to stay for a meal, you can count on several of the friend's siblings to be there also.

When children are at play in a neighborhood, every child who wants to join in participates in whatever way he or she is able. A group of children playing baseball can include toddlers to teenagers with everyone getting a turn at bat and out in the field. Siblings watch out for each other and assure parity.

For the Lakota, children are a very valued part of life. They consider children to be the reason for survival, why many things are done in certain ways. Children are what matters, a most important gift.

> Nothing is permanent. That's why you must always think of the children first. Take care of the children,they are all you have. Everything else can go, nothing else is even important. Their life is all that matters.

> Children come to you for a reason. They are special spirits. They know things we don't know. They see things we don't see. They are old spirits, maybe the spirit of your grandfather or someone else. You have to honor and respect them. They come first. They are our life.

These people consider children to be special individuals with special knowledge. For them children come into the world already knowing things and children's work in life is to unfold for themselves what life holds. Parents' work is to support and encourage that task, not to interfere or direct.

> I can remember that my mother never raised her voice with any of us. She always spoke quietly. She never hit us or hollered for us. She was always quiet and gentle. That's the way we believe. Children are special. They are to be respected because they have special knowledge and are special human beings. You wouldn't want to frighten them by yelling. It might disturb their spirit. Their spirit might leave. You are to respect children.

Children are fed first and learn that they are important in that way. Sometimes others go without food, or without the choice portions of food as children are allowed to help themselves to what they want before the adults are fed. They learn they are special, and as they grow up they help teach younger children the same thing. They learn to give up their priority position to younger siblings or younger relatives.

Children are the cultural resource. The one thing that is important is that parents teach their children to be a good Lakota primarily through example. How the child learns that, what the child learns of that, if the child learns that, is an individual thing. The parents through their behavior and activity, through stories and interaction show this Lakota way to the child. For the most part the child is left to learn at his or her own pace to recognize the value and uniqueness of the individual, there is very little directive or instructive advice in any area of life.

> We don't bother our children or get in their face. We let them learn on their own. We show respect for them. This has been the way to help children grow for as long as people can remember. It is how my grandparents were, it is how I am with my children, and how they will be with their children too. And I will be that way with their children."

Children are allowed to explore on their own, to go and do things as they will, to accept the consequences of their actions and decisions, to learn in their own way at their own pace with encouragement and lots of laughter along the way. From early fieldnotes:

> Initially what struck me was the way that children are allowed to experience their world and learn things on their own. There appeared to be considerable independence on several levels. Children explored things, watched and listened, then attempted to do what it was they were about.

Older children and adults did very little interfering, whether it was to help out or do things for the child. Children dressed themselves and if they didn't get it quite right, things were just left that way, pants on backward, or inside out, hot clothes on a summers day, etc. Children seemed to have considerable time to do what they wanted, to create their own games, and play with whatever they choose, including things that might be important or sometimes considered dangerous. Children were not coaxed out of wanting particular things nor told very often that anything was off limits. If they wanted to eat, they went and got something to eat. If they couldn't manage to do it all, they asked for help after trying on their own. Young children's sleeping didn't seem to be on a schedule. An adult might say that it is time for bed and children would get to bed in their own way at their own pace. Often they could sleep where they wanted. Often this meant sleeping on the floor in the kitchen where conversations were going on. Once asleep the child may or may not be moved to a bed or couch. If a child chose to sleep somewhere then they lived with the consequences. For example, if they wanted to sleep on the floor, they had to put up with the sound of conversation, the hardness of the floor, the dust on the floor. A child might be told "there are lots of mosquitos outside," but if they went ahead and slept out of doors and got bit then they lived with the itching and there was little attention given to the bites or any complaints the child might have about them. If a child complained about itching it was most often met with a teasing comment like, "you were told there were mosquitos, don't you have any ears?" Children learned to accept the consequences of their decisions with little placating from adults.

When buying toys, children pick what they want with little interference. "That's what s/he wanted." Doesn't matter if it seems to be "not right." There is some reason the child wanted it and they are free explore their world as they can. Cost is a variable that constrains choice, but not adult supervision or opinion as to what the child should have. If the child is told to pick something out, they get what they pick. I'm sure that this has variation, and sometimes adults say they don't have money for some things, but in practice I see children picking things that are not what parents may want them to have and being allowed to have it anyway. The child learns, or the parents learn something new from the choice.

[Fieldnotes: 1980]

Children have freedom to say and do much of what they want, particularly at early ages where there is lots of latitude to develop individually. Children can jump in a car and go places just by saying, "I'm going with you." And most often they get

to go. If they aren't happy where they are going, they live with it. Perhaps next time they will get further information before deciding to "go with you." There are limits to what children are allowed, but by and large the world from which they operate is considerably wide and flexible, very much like the geography of the plains. Children play outside and get dirty, and are left to play until they come in to eat, then they wash, eat and go out to play again. No one seems terribly concerned that children stay dirty most of the day. There is not the endless parade to the bathroom to wash nor the obsessiveness with cleanliness. Part of this is pragmatic. The prairie is very dusty and it would be impossible, unless you kept children locked inside with windows and doors sealed to keep them out of dirt and dust.

Part of the work of older siblings and adults is to keep a close unnoticed, watchful eye on children. On occasion even animals join in, as dogs or cats would follow toddlers around watching them on their sojourns, and even guiding or pushing them back home after a short jaunt. Many stories involve animals keeping watch over children.

> We had a special dog. He took care of the children when they went out to play. One of my grandchildren got lost once and we couldn't find him. After about an hour of looking we were just ready to call the police and send out a search party when here came (the dog) nudging my grandson on the back of his pants, steering him toward the house. These things with dogs happen all the time. But I also know other animals to keep good watch over children.

> Everyday I would dress for school, get on my horse and ride to the road where the bus would come and get me. My horse would wait with me. When I left he would go on his way back home. When I got off the bus after school, there he'd be waiting to take me home again.

In the telling of such stories it was clear that the respondents considered that the animals knew exactly what they were doing, they were acting as good relatives.

The value of individual autonomy and diversity is evidenced in child rearing practices. Children are praised for their individuality, and others watch so that they can point up the things that are idiosyncratic to particular children. There is a lot of story telling around such idiosyncracies. The expression "that one just does it that way," is a frequent accolade that distinguishes one person from the next. Children are praised in stories of their feats, many of which reinforce their individuality and unique ways of doing things.

Diversity is highly valued and reinforced through praise. Children are not compared to other children. The standard is the Lakota way - not being like anyone else in particular. One might hear "he smiles like his grampa," or "he walks just like his uncle." Such comments are not inherently valuational. There is an absence of judgement by comparison. Diversity is also reflected in the nature and stories about children. There are seemingly endless conversations about how this or that child has his own way of doing things, and elaborate descriptions of just how they do it. These stories rarely take place in front of children as it might embarrass them or give them too much praise. It is important that one remembers these idiosyncracies too, and how they change over time, because frequently it will be the salient clue in a story that has some particular meaning attached to it. Instead of calling out someone's name in the story the person will be referred to by his particular idiosyncracy. An

older woman who I visited with often, knew that I was writing on Lakota health and thought a friend of hers might be able to help. Her instructions to me went like this:

> You know the one I am talking about. I told you before, that one who always wears his hat a little to the left and down in front. Well, his mother is the one you want to go see and talk with her about what she may know about that.

For children things are learned in a similar way. Instructions are given with similarly few direct references, so children learn early on to pay attention and remember the little things; to learn relationships, to learn idiosyncracies of others. Everything that is said is considered important.

But the point is that children are socialized into valuing and developing their own individualities, and allowing for diversity in others. They come to understand the personal and private as important to individuality. They also learn to respect the other person as a different and unique individual.

What children are shown through interactional practices instructs them in what is important. This process in ongoing from the time a person enters the world. Infants are held a lot, almost continually. Older women and men spend considerable time with youngsters, telling stories and often playing with them. Children are given a lot of attention. Everyone holds and talks to babies that come into a room. Crying is given a special meaning, and infants crying has particular, sometimes ominous, meaning.

> It's not good for babies to cry. If they are fed and don't have wet diapers, it's not good to hear them cry. Sometimes it can mean something bad will happen. Or it may mean that the baby saw something, someone may be coming or something. Or maybe you will get sad news.

Don't let him cry. It's no good for him to cry. It will make him sick.

Stories of idiosyncracies include even the very young. Everyone is watching and even young children watch babies so that they can tell stories about what the infant does, and learn about that infant's style of life early on. A young five year old told me the following as I couldn't get his six month old brother to stop crying:

> Don't you know, he doesn't like cold milk, it has to be warm for him to drink it. And he doesn't like to lay on his side. You have to lay him either on his back or his stomach.

The "don't you know" was a comment on my inability to observe this infant's idiosyncracies and know just what it was the baby liked or didn't like.

Pay attention, watch, listen, remember, non-interference, laughter, not to embarrass, not to be center of attention, to endure hard times with happiness, be patient, take time to visit, don't rush - take your time, be satisfied with what you have and make something good of it, stories and their purpose and process are all fundamental to child rearing. Children learn early on that the tools for this kind of work include the individual's eyes, ears, mind, talents as they begin and continue to work of watching, listening, remembering, critical practices to being in the world of these Lakota. I refer the reader to the section in the Methodology chapter where practices of watching, listening and remembering are explored at some length and are also pertinent to the socialization of children.

To briefly restate here, the practices of watching, listening and watching involve a tremendous amount of fortitude and intentness. One has to pay attention. It is important work of learning to be a Lakota. "It's hard to be an Indian." It is no

wonder that during the learning of such practices that there is so little talking from children. And it is no wonder that most of the talk is of good things, they are much easier to remember, as well as being practices through which encouragement is reinforced.

In general, social interactions around children reveal that they are considered important and equal participants in Lakota life. They are shown much happiness and laughter, individual respect, and given considerable freedom to develop autonomously. They are encouraged to be happy, have courage and be strong in character. They are encouraged to share from an early age, to learn self discipline. They are told that nothing is permanent, that material things are secondary to relationships. They are taught in an environment where practices incorporate non-interference, non-directiveness and non-confrontiveness as meaningful characteristics of social interaction. Their non-hierarchical relational world is one in which individual identity is forged to the collective mitigates alienation and provides sense of security. Generosity and practices of sharing temper hoarding and encourage non-materialism. The value on personal diversity encourages creativity and allays competition in certain critical areas. Such practices continue to point to key aspects of the underlying ontology in which relationship and individual autonomy are central.

Summary

In this chapter several important analytic dimensions of Lakota life have been explored. I began by explaining the *in vivo* manner in which ontological

considerations showed up as eminent methodological and theoretical issues. Ontological underpinnings are seen as available through practices.

Two essential aspects of Lakota ontology are captured in the expressions, "I love my Indian ways" and "mitakuye oyasi" which point to practices and relationship. An analysis of these reveals the centrality of the non-hierarchical nature of the relationship of all things and the respect for individual autonomy. An analysis of social interaction and the place of children in Lakota society reveal several key conceptual interrelationships. Practices of non-interference and encouragement support the high degree of individual freedom which is possible because of the high degree of responsibility to the collective. The social relationship of the individual to the group is not one that supports the individual for oneself, rather is suggestive of the intimate co-extensive relationship between the individual, the group, and the universe at large. In being a good individual, you are a good member.

For the Lakota the ties that bind are all encompassing reflecting the interrelatedness of all things in a non-hierarchical way. This world is teleological, "things just don't happen for no reason." Individuality is highly prized with an eye toward the importance and survival of the group. One is to be happy, to have courage, to be strong, to be kind and generous, to encourage good things, to remember good times, to help others but not interfere, to respect everyone, to remember that you are an Indian, that you are sacred and related to all things, that these are the ways that have been given to them as a people. These are the Lakota

ways, they are what it means to be Lakota, and it is in the practice of these that the meaning of being Lakota unfolds.

At this point I have delineated some of the ontological aspects of Lakota life, principally the centrality of the concepts of relationship and individual autonomy. I have discussed how these principal social forms show up in practices and reveal specific other aspects of a Lakota way of being in the world. With these two principal social forms understood in relation to their ontological importance we can now move toward an interpretive understanding of specific Lakota practices in which health shows up as an issue for these Lakota people.

CHAPTER V: TOWARD AN INTERPRETATION OF HEALTH

Oyate Ki Yanipikta Cha
That the people will live

It is your relationship with all things that is your health. It is your life. It is the most important thing to know. That relationship with all things kept us going. Now it is getting harder to keep that way.

There was a time when people could do many things. Before the white man came. People could do things. They had a relationship with the animals, plants, herbs, even the moon and the sun. They could talk to the clouds and make things happen, even the sun and the moon. They could talk with them and have certain things happen. There were people who saw spirits, ordinary people. They would say 'oh, here comes one,' meaning a spirit. They would go get some food to put out for them. There was a man I knew as a boy who could do things with stones. He had help from the stones and that would help people. ... There were people who could go out and talk with the plants and find out which ones were good for certain sickness. And those worked too. There were people who could talk to all animals. Animals would come and show them things and they would be able to do things. Bears, deer, weasels, coyotes, horses, dogs, even crickets, and ants can help.

With that, we were given, I guess you would call them 'guidelines', but that's not it either. It's not like your ten commandments. I don't know what to call them for you. They go like this: *wicozanni*, that's health; *wicohicahe* is generations. We always say that it is good when you get to see to your fourth generation. That is a good life, to be with all those relatives. The next is *wowakan*, and that is sacredness. Then there is *waukiyea*, generosity. And *wakankilena* - holiness. There is also respect. And then they say, if you think you have attained these six, remember the last is *waunshila*, humility. I guess these guide us through a good life. These explain life. At least that's how I understand it, so that's how I say it. Maybe you don't understand.[1]

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[1]. The use of Lakota words and their spellings are problematic. Many of the terms expressed in the field were not found in Lakota dictionaries. Some other words were found in dictionaries but there were disagreements as to spelling and meanings. This is coupled by the nature of the Lakota language which is gender attended, that is there is a man's language and a woman's language. Also there were disagreements among people as to the correct words and spellings. I have chosen to use the words that were most commonly used and the spellings as they were spelled to me by respondents, using as my determining criteria what I considered to be the best match between a respondents understanding and the meaning of a

The Language of Health

The world of these Lakota is a world of relationships, of one's connectedness to all things and beings. The quality and integrity of life is observed in one's relationships. For the Lakota, life is considered a "gift." An important, if not the central, component of one's life is one's spirit. The understanding of that spirit is tied to the concept of health.

> *Wicozanni* [health] comes from the spirit. It is your strength. You get *wicozanni* from studying things. Different people understand different things. My grampa knew about animals. He got strength from animals. He understood things from the animals. That understanding gave him strength, gave him *wicozanni*.
>
> *Wicozanni* [health] is your self, your spirit. You live with *wicozanni*. You pray for it. You can get well, can help others get well by asking for help for *wicozanni*.

Health is a reflection of the nature and strength of the relationship to the world at large and one's practices relative to those relationships. Health, as part of the larger relational nature of life, comes along with the doing of a Lakota way. That way is circumscribed by practices which envelop the ideals of the Lakota guidelines of generations, sacredness, generosity, holiness, respect and humility. These guidelines are stated in a significantly different form than those found in the commandments of Mosaic Law. The Lakota guidelines are not explicitly directive,

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given text, and may not be considered the best or most appropriate choice by a Lakota speaker. All respondents have Lakota as their primary language, and have a very diverse background in the language, some having taught Lakota language at the university level, others having equally respected knowledge and experience within their communities. When discussing this difficulty with friends and relatives it brought much laughter and often a shrug accompanied by some comment to convey "it doesn't matter how you spell it, what is important is that you live it."

and reflect the general ontological posture of non-interference. This particular aspect of their social world sets possibilities for practices along different lines than those which are founded on a more western approach. This is not to say that the Lakota are free to kill or steal, covet or dishonor parents, and the like. What is important to point out is that the form and content of these Lakota guidelines sets up possibilities for the nature of their being in the world to unfold in distinctly different patterns than most westerners experience. These guidelines, as an ontological basis, are critical to consider in our understanding of Lakota health and practices around health, illness and curing. These guidelines are also referred to in other field interviews as "virtues," "gifts," "our ways," "principles," "directions," and "the Lakota life." In a Heideggerean sense they can be seen as the "tools" with which these people engage in the practice of being Lakota.

In terms of health, some respondents refer to "living with *wicozanni*" and "praying for *wicozanni* for yourself and others." To be healthy one leads a good life, is generous and kind, is happy, encourages others, helps others, has good things to say, remembers good things, and acts the same toward all people. Certainly, this is the idealized state of being, one that individuals strive for with varying degrees of success, and tied to the opportunities, constraints, and conditions that influence the daily lives of all human beings. The important point here is not to emphasize nor submit some romanticized notion of Indian life, but to clearly point out the distinctly different ontological aspects of the Lakota world that inform notions of health.

The concept of health is all encompassing. Health is not understood as a separate entity that can be extracted from the doing of life. The language in which the term health is used refer to the active process of living one's life. Individuals speak of "walking in health," and this implies that one lives with one's relatives in a way that is commensurate with a Lakota way. Health is more than personal physical capacity, is *not* connected with the absence of disease. Health does not appear as a static state of being, rather it implies an active dynamic process of doing life. Health is related to the entirety of one's life, to one's relationships with others. It is not conceived of as an objective entity that can be measured and assessed according to some external specifications.

People speak frequently of "the gift of life." The place of children in this group reflects the value that is placed on new life, and how life connects each participant to those that have gone before and those that come after as well as to those that are currently alive. Life itself is conceptualized in a way that speaks of an ongoingness and a largeness that reflects a distinctly different ontology of time and space than in Western societies. The Lakota conceive of all of life as connected and not constrained by space or time - that is each life is intimately tied to the ongoingness of time and the specifics of the moment (DeMaille in Walker: 1982).

As noted above, one of the guiding principles of life is *wicozanni* - health. I would often hear, "This [*wicozanni*] is the most difficult of all principles to understand." For the Lakota, complete understanding of health can be obtained through a particular kind of living which includes considerable spiritual development

and accomplishment, acquired through specific guidance and help. To point to the central nature of the spiritual as part of health the following quotes are instructive.

> There are certain people who have been chosen to help in certain ways. These persons have power to interpret what the spirits have to tell us. They can help us understand our dreams and what they mean to us. The spirits can send us messages or signs in our dreams. The special interpreter can help us that way. Some also have special gifts, they are holy persons with special ways and can heal us and call to the spirits and beg for our health. They have special ways, special songs that will help the spirits come. These songs please the spirits and they are happy to help anyone who needs help. There are many spirits. And each one wants to help their people because they care about the red people very much. When someone is sick they will come and cure them, regenerate them and give them a new life.

> We are all pitiful people. We came into this world with nothing and we will go out with nothing. What we do while we are here is important. How we take care of the elderly, how we respect each other, kind words we can offer each other. Everyone has troubles, problems, difficulties. We all need help and encouragement. The spirits are here to help us and want to help us be happy and healthy. They can reconstruct the body and the mind, they can give us spiritual help and strength. They can show us herbs and roots that will help restore our health. We can ask the herbs and roots to help us get better and thank them afterwards. Animals can help us, but we have forgotten how to be with the animals. They can tell us a lot if we just listen. There are a lot of ways that we just have forgotten since the white ways have come. Now we get sick and go to the hospital and do what they tell us. We have forgotten we have been given things far more powerful than what the doctors at the hospital have. We are Indians and we have our own special ways. We have special ways of living on mother earth that have to do with us, not with white people. That is our health. The way we can walk on mother earth and the way we can be with our people. We must remember what our grandfathers told us about our ways. We must teach our grandchildren. Mostly we must teach them our language. It is through our language that they will learn these ways and through this language that the spirits will help us and bring us good health and a good life.

> These spirits are all around. They are here to help you. To give you good health, to give you spiritual guidance, to help you with your job, and you school, to help your children. They want to see you happy. They will help you in every way possible. They teach us about herbs and roots and help special ones to know things of the spirit world. The herbs and roots have power and can heal us if something is the matter. Certain herbs can take away

> things, other herbs can dissolve things like gall stones. Some teas can help your mind or help your stomach, or take away pains of different kinds. But you must pray with these medicines and ask the spirits to help you, ask the spirit to guide you and help you lead a good life. And you must make an offering to the plant and the spirit for the gift of health and life that they bring.

For Lakota life is *wakan*. In early works, this word has been translated as meaning "mysterious" (Walker: 1980). Later translations, particularly those using religious paradigms for inquiry and interpretation, translate *wakan* to mean "sacred." In conversation with people in the field, both translations were used. However, when exploring the meaning of "sacred," most often respondents would refer back to the earlier translations by saying such things as:

> When we [in an exclusive sense meaning 'we Lakota' people] speak of *wakan*, we know what it means. It means those things that we could call mysteries, something special, something we must attain spiritual help to understand.

> I can tell you it means sacred. But you don't understand what that means to Lakota. Because it means something different to white people. Some [Lakota people] don't even say that word - and you shouldn't ask about that word. It would insult some people that you even say it, or ask about it. It is a mysterious word. Some are gifted to understand, some work to understand, some never understand. But the mysterious is all around you.

> It's a very touchy word. Be careful when you use it. Many mysterious things happen through that word. I would not like to talk about it. There are special people who can do that. Not me.

The world of the mysterious is an active part of the lives of these Lakota and central to their meanings of health. Their practices around this are multiple and complex, and include both individual and group activities. During my fieldwork, particularly in the later years, I was asked, in some cases specifically told, not to discuss the specifics of health and healing practices that involved activities that these

Lakota revere as *wakan*. For those interested there are several accounts of these rituals (Feraca: 1961; Kemnitzer: 1969b; Powers: 1982; Walker: 1980, 1982; Twaddle and Hessler: 1987). Such ethnographies vary in both analytic and substantive quality. For some Lakota who have read them, these documents are a source of some laughter and ridicule which is principally focused on the inaccuracies of the interpretations rendered. My own critique of most of such writing is that the analyses are tied to western conceptual and analytic frameworks that are insufficient for accurate interpretation.

For my research here, I would only underscore that the principal guidelines for a Lakota way are inherently and visibly observable in practices of *lowampi*. Most importantly is the centrality of the concept of the spirit and the requisite work of attaining spiritual development as part of being healthy. As I reflect on my own experiences and understandings I must admit that, because of the nature of ontological distance between the Lakota and the researcher (having been reconstituted by the field experience notwithstanding), I am effectively incapable of discussing or analyzing such meanings, even from a distanced near account. In a rather ironic sense *wakan* maintains it's essence as mysterious to me.

Health as Life

In addition to the mysterious nature of health, there are other aspects that can be delineated. *Wicozanni* includes all of one's being in relation to the world, and it is the relational nature that provides the context for health being meaningful.

Relationships include more than the typical kinship meaning of relationships. Lakota talk about relationship to animals and trees, the water and air, the earth and the sky, those beings who have gone before and those beings who will come after, those beings who live in the spirit world, and those that live in the physical world. Activities throughout the day turn around these relationships. To be healthy is to be in good relation to the things of this world and beyond this world. To be a good Lakota leads to health - that is to be happy, to have kind words, to be generous, to be respectful of one's relations.

As life and health are in a relational process, even simple practices that one engages in during life have bearing on health. The Lakota pay attention to how one walks, who one sees and talks to, the direction of the wind, the animals that walk and those that fly, the weather and climate in which one lives that influences the kinds and quality of foods that can be eaten as well as the activities in ones' life. All these influence health.

> How you walk, the direction you turn around - to the right or the left... all that says something about your state of health. What you put in your head has a lot to do with your health. If you work on machines all day, they affect your health. If you work with people all day they affect your health. Colors and light affect your health. It depends on the kind of person you are. Some people, noises affect their health. Mostly your spirit affects your health. You must take care of your spirit if you want good health. And you must lead a good life if you want good health.
>
> Everything is connected to our health. All of life, all that goes on, all that you can see has an influence on your health. Don't you know that. Don't you understand what I am telling you? Even your sitting here has to do with your health. Even what I am saying to you affects your health.
>
> You have to be careful what you ask me, for I will answer you. And there may be things you don't want to know. Think about that. Sometimes

> what is good is bad and what is bad is good. You may think you want to know and that is good. But it is bad because, what are you going to do when you find out? Or like that... food is good. But too much is bad, or the wrong kind is bad. What is good for the cold people is not good for the others. Or what is good for the west people won't ever help those in the south. Sometimes the air is bad, but we don't even pay attention to that. If you don't take care of your toilet, it can kill you. Think of that, getting killed by your own farts.

To a non-Lakota, such activities might be seen as requiring constant monitoring or at least attention. For these Lakota, the practices become part of the routinized world, the taken for granted activities that they constantly negotiate. As with the rest of the world there are individual differences in how such information is processed and responded to. The conditions of daily life preclude attention to some of these things, and force attention to others. There are those who remember these ways only when they get sick, others whose actions reflect an ongoing proximate and immediate awareness of their world.

For these Lakota, then, health is considered everything and all things around them influence their health. My interpretation of their concept of health suggests an all encompassing definition directly related to their relational coextensive world in which all parts influence each other.

> What one thinks has to do with your health. The ideas that you let into your mind influences your health. The air has to do with health. Too much salt in the air can make you sick. Too much pollution in the air can make you sick. Too much dry or cold or heat in the air can make you sick. The grass that cows eat makes different milk; some of it can make you sick.
>
> *Wicozanni*? It means everything in life that is for health. Everything in this world is always changing. This earth is moving every second. The fire in the middle is always burning and changing and some times the steam comes up through the veins and explodes and that is not good for health. Certain things can happen about health. If the wind comes from the wrong

> direction it can make you sick. If someone comes and talks to you in certain ways that can make you sick. Or if they come with good words that can bring you health. It depends on the kind of person you are. Some people are afraid of some things - can't stand to be around dogs or cats. They see a cat and get all excited and there goes their health. Then you get rid of the cat and here comes their health again, they feel better, fear is gone.

In these statements, health is personified. One walks with health as though a companion. Health can come and go, and is influenced by a multitude of personal activities including thinking, feeling, talking, watching, listening and the like. Health is contingent on the good things in life, those central categories of the previous chapter: encouragement and having good things to say, laughter, sharing, non-interference, pacing, eating, having a good mind, good words and works, being happy, having courage and being strong. These components of a good life are essential to being healthy. Health is not extricable from life in general.

With the concept of relationship being the central issue, what can be said about relationships and health? How do practices reflect underlying an ontology and show health as an issue in specific situations?

Health as Seen in Social Forms

In the last chapter many aspects of Lakota ways, or practices, were delineated and all can be reviewed for their salience in terms of health since for these people health embodies all of life. In the last segments of this chapter I would like to explore two arenas of activities in which social practices illuminate the issue of health as meaningful for the Lakota. The first activity is that of social interaction, the

second considers a formal social gathering of the pow-wow, or social dance. expand the text and include practices around social interaction and group interaction that help direct our attention to health.

Social interaction - conversational style and content. The way in which people interact with and relate to each other indicates important practices which help in the understanding of health. People generally speak in a low voice, conversations are relatively quiet, unhurried, and lengthy. In conversations people tend not to have sudden outbursts or exaggerated animation. Frequently, in homes, coffee is served and conversations and visits can take hours. One person will talk while others listen and then someone else may respond. The unhurried nature sets up possibilities for serenity, for a sense of importance, that the visit is meaningful and valued and that no one is rushing off to something more important. There have been times when I have gone to visit and stayed hours only to find out later that the other person had missed an appointment or postponed other things they needed to attend to in order to accommodate my visit. Such accommodation reinforces the importance of the relationship and respect between and among those who come to visit and those who are visited. It also ties to underlying notions of temporality.

Temporality in social interaction. During visits, one would not often be hurried to finish up so that other responsibilities could be met. In some cases the conversations might continue as other responsibilities were met. For example, if a child needed to be picked up from school or get to a ball game, a visitor might be told "my child has a game today" and either the visitor may chose to go and return

another time, or more likely, get in the car and go along, continuing the social visit on the way. But many times, I found myself waiting for someone, only to find out hours later, that a visitor had stopped by who precluded a friend's leaving their home to come and visit me.

People take time to think through their thoughts and consider what is being said. There are often silent periods in conversations. There is not much sense of immediacy. Interactions are paced quite slowly with all getting time to talk and listen. There is, thus,an absence of vying or contending for the floor, which tends also to reinforce the place of non-interference and respect. These conditions set up important possibilities for individuals to feel valued and part of the group. Such practices also place value on individual and not on material aspects, with time being seen a material force.

In addition to the pacing of conversation, one sees a similar relation to temporality in social actions in general. On the reservation, as may be noted in other rural areas, life itself has a slower pace. Particular to this group however, such pacing is fairly consistent across social action. There is very little admonishment to "hurry up." Many valued activities take a considerable amount of time, e.g. beadwork, cooking, storytelling, butchering cattle, and the like. Persons are encouraged to do life slowly. One does not see many people running about frantically doing things quickly. Children are allowed to do the things of childhood and learn the ways of growing up in a slow pace. A child might be observed learning to tie shows and remaining at his task for long periods of time before someone goes to help tie the

shoes. And not very often do people complain of the wait. In general, time is not a commodity that is seen as needing to be exploited or one that is used to evaluate efficiency. The efficiency of life is seen in the process of activity, not the time required to complete it.

Relation to health. The content of conversations are clearly tied to notions of health. People are held responsible for actions and interactions. Although the focus of this dissertation is solely on the construction of health, the following examples related to illness and disease are instructive in pointing to aspects of the importance of words and conversational content to these people. When someone is sick it is more likely to be reflected in the types of encouragement that are given. For example, this group of people don't talk about terminal illness, or how much time is left. They talk of the good times.

> Medical doctors say, "Oh you have 6 months to live." Lakota would not say that, they consider that would put that notion in your mind and make you die in six months.

The following accounts were told in different ways by several older people. The point is clear, what is said to individuals is very important. The context, form and content of conversations have direct and meaningful consequences to health.

> My dad had a big lump on the side of his head. It kept growing and he went to the hospital. He was feeling fine but my mom kept after him to do something, so he went to the doctor. They checked him out and it was cancer. The doctor told him he was too far gone, he had six months to live. That day was February 21, he died August 21, six months to the day. That doctor shouldn't have done that. They just signed his death warrant.

> We don't say those things [tell people they are really sick, or that they only have so long to live]. Maybe at the very end the medicine man may say, 'it is time to get yourself ready, right now'. Until that last moment, there is

> still hope, there is still life, and life can go on. The mind is a very powerful thing. It can create life, and it can bring death. Just depends on how you think.

Such interactional experiences set up conditions for several aspects of Lakota way showing up as important. First, it is the relationships that are important as seen in the unhurried manner of social interaction. No one is pushed to get finished with what they are saying. Second, each person is seen as an equal and important participant, even if one must wait. Third, respect is shown in waiting for people, either waiting for them to finish what they say, complete a visit, or wait for an arrival.

The conditions of respect and non-interference, of being happy and saying good things set up the possibilities for participants to be valued and respected. Such conditions militate against competition, since no one is set up to have to compete for the resource of someone's time and attention. When conversations focus primarily of pleasant matters, are replete with laughter and jokes, and tend to end on a positive note of encouragement, one disengages from conversation with good feelings which are the bedrock of mental health. The frequent expression "be happy" is more than an accolade, it is an essential quality of social interaction and tends to reproduce itself in a dynamic way. As such these interactional practices help set and reinforce notions of health.

Since much of social activities is valued in its processural nature, the experience of time as it relates to health is somewhat unique. Practices do not reflect the presence of notions of "being on time" or "finishing on time" or "having only so

much time." Social interactions unfold in a manner that respects relationships not timeliness. Conflicting obligations or responsibilities are resolved with these values in mind. There are some outcomes that can be related to health: for example, under Lakota temporal conditions, stresses related to timeliness are fairly nonexistent. A world constructed with an understanding that most things in life will get done when they get done diminishes the nemesis of the bell's toll, the clock's alarm or even ticking, and a person's sighs of exasperation. Such a concept of temporality reinforces the dynamic process of life, placing outcome of any immediate activity in a much broader context.

Having delineated aspects of interpersonal interaction and their relationship to the Lakota conceptions of health, the final section of this chapter looks at a collective group setting in which aspects of health can be underscored.

Wachipi: The social dance or pow-wow. The structure of various social group socials reinforce values and practices as well as indicate the connections between ontological roots and practices that point to health. The one group activity that I will focus on is the social dance, or gatherings called a *wachipi*, most commonly referred to as a pow-wow. These social events are very popular. During most of the year there will be a couple gatherings a month. During the later spring, summer and early fall, there are several pow-wows, with two or three scheduled for the same weekend, most extending through two or three days. People come from near and far, camp out and sometimes come several days in advance and stay a day or so after the celebration.

At these gatherings several things take place: singing of traditional songs in Lakota by different drums at which 2-12 singers may participate, dancing by people of all ages in traditional as well as everyday attire, and socializing by other participants who walk around or sit in chairs or on the ground watching and visiting. Usually there is a "feed" in which certain people have the responsibility to prepare and serve a meal to all who are gathered. At such events the songs that are sung talk about being happy, having a good time, being respectful, the importance of children, the relationship with those that have died, honoring of soldiers and children, as well as many other others. Additionally, the announcer and others who get up to speak will begin and end a talk by saying *mitakuye oyasi*, reminding everyone that they are related to all those things around them. Some gatherings can be called for important events such as graduations, or the honoring of particular communities, or appointments to tribal offices, or a significant community accomplishment.

At these events special names can be given to particular individuals who have earned such an honor. For these particular people, their families will have a "give away," where they give gifts to people who have come to participate. The families spend considerable time making quilts and beaded attire to give away. In special cases a horse may be given away in honor of a particular person to show respect for that individual's accomplishments. Other items are given away also, for example blankets and sewing material, towels and kitchen utensils, baskets of fruit, and many other items. Many times there are special items for children and all the children are invited to come to the arena and pick out what they want. Boxes of apples and

oranges are placed out for children to help themselves. Very frequently you will see young children take three or four pieces of fruit and immediately walk to share these with their grandparents and younger siblings. Candy is a favorite gift that can be tossed out to the crowd which draws an immediate scramble from the children as they run to get the treats. The children then go and share their prizes with other family and friends.

In addition to dancing, singing, honoring, feeding, visiting, many reservation wide pow-wow's will include some athletic event. Intermural baseball and basketball, as well as track and horseshoe tournaments provide lively competition between communities, or reservations. The activities at pow-wow's begin early in the morning and the final dance can take place at two or three the next morning, though most dances end around midnight.

The pow-wow announcers are frequently known by their ability to keep people laughing, to tell good jokes, and to remember and retell important events, and in general to keep the mood of the gathering happy. As important as his knowing how to follow the formal structure and process of directing a pow-wow, the announcer has a responsibility to the group to insure that people who come to the gathering are taken care of, entertained and happy. Announcers who are well respected do both these informal and formal aspects of their work. Interactionally, the informal skills of storytelling and levity are considered more important as it is these qualities that help maintain good feelings and group solidarity.

For those who attend, particularly local and community events, it is a time to reinforce one's connections with individuals and the group, to hear people speak primarily Lakota, to be encouraged with stories, songs, and dances. It is a time to enjoy the serenity of the plains, and to spend most of the time in good spirits with considerable laughter, companionship and good feelings.

Such events go far to support the health of the people in that they are occasions where one is ongoingly in the practice of what it means to be a Lakota, from language, to song, through dances, give-aways, feeds, conversations, and geographic surroundings. For some, these comprise a major part of weekend activities. People talk about gaining "strength from pow-wow's," feeling "down and needing a pow-wow," "lonesome for a pow-wow," or "missing the pow-wow." The pow wow activities, from the planning stages through the specific weekend events demonstrate several important underlying values. Relationships are the key as older people instruct younger ones of the relational familial lines, pointing out relatives and delineating the connections. A considerable amount of visiting reinforces relational lines, as stories are told to help listeners remember their connections. The activity of feeding and the content of speeches reinforces the notions of the relationship among all who have attended. The work of feeding is a cooperative effort engaging entire families, men and women, children and older people in butchering, cooking, baking, serving the food to friends, relatives and strangers alike. Generosity is clearly evident in the give-aways. The items to be given out have taken considerable time, effort, talent and money to provide for the people. Many times the announcer will

call people "who have travelled some distance" to go to the center of the arena and pick an item. It is not uncommon for total strangers to be in a position of choosing a prize quilt, or blanket, or hand fringed shawl, or quality beaded item. Upon receiving a gift the recipient shakes the hands of the family sponsoring the give-away, acknowledging the connection and bond of friendship and relationship among the people.

These weekends are times when individual's are reconnected with the group in a symbolic, physical and material way. Generosity and collective effort are evidenced in most activities of the weekend. There is a light-heartedness that characterizes most of the events. People visit for considerable lengths of time, in quiet voices, laughing frequently as they retell stories from generations ago as well as discuss at length the complexities of current social and political life. In all, it is considered a pleasant and effective way of maintaining the health of the people.

SUMMARY

For the Lakota health *qua* health is an elaborate, multi-dimensional, all encompassing, concept. Health is the process of being in the world. To be healthy one leads a Lakota way of life. The possibilities for this life, and for health, are rooted in a particular ontology or meaning state. Aspects of that ontology that are reflected in practices in life that reveal conceptions of health include the importance of social integration as seen in the relational nature of their world; the structure of freedom as demonstrated in the value of non-interference which supports individual

autonomy, and the quasi-boundless, non-linear, conception of time and temporality. Health is not segmented from life, and thus is not segmented from the individual. It is not an objective measurable entity rather an essence of variable quality that can be observed in the nature of the way one lives. Health is not premised on the absence of sickness. An individual may be very sick but still be seen as quite healthy. For this group of Lakota, health is not an object to be understood outside of life in general. The possibilities for their understanding health do not allow for the objectification of it. Health is conceived of as an indicator of the integrity of relatedness, the cornerstone of Lakota ontology. When relationships are weakened, so is health, when relationships are strong, so is health. Health exists simultaneously at the personal and group level and these are intimately connected in a coextensive way. This does not mean that Lakota do not engage in western medicine, i.e. some, most, go to doctors, (though some do not) and the conditions under which they make such decisions are tied to their meaning base. They may take medicine and may alter doses as do others in larger society, they get immunized, get traumatized, get cured, have surgery, and the rest. However these encounters and interactions are susceptible to considerable divergent interpretations due to the basic ontological difference between Lakota world and the western world and are rooted in their practices in life which are the mainstay of what they construct as health.

The ways of these Lakota are seen as virtuous, and the associated practice as a way of insuring some fulfillment in life. The Lakota way is the tool to a good life -

one that connects each individual to the group in such a way as to insure a high degree of individual autonomy.

The ontological underpinnings of Lakota way point to practices in which the individual-group relationship is maintained and nurtured from birth through death to afterlife, all of which are simultaneously connected across time and at any specific moment in time. Health, as part of a constellation of relationships, includes other human beings and the entire world at large. Within the Lakota framework, health is both an individual and collective phenomenon. It is everyone's responsibility to act in ways to assure the health of the collective. Additionally health is characterized as a guideline to life and a virtue. Health is spoken as a metaphor for the integrity of the relationship of the individual to the world at large and is evidenced in practices around those relationships.

In the next and final chapter I will briefly discuss the implications from this research both for the Lakota of this study and for the field of medical sociology.

Chapter VI: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Search and Discovery of Meanings

Examination of the sociology of health requires attention to the nature and meaning of the concept of health itself (Idler: 1979; Susser: 1974; Kelman: 1975; Lewis: 1988). Such definitional considerations are bound within the field to theoretical moorings, reflecting the larger social, economic, geographic, and political influences on the world and the world of science at any moment (Twaddle: 1982; Stacey: 1988; Gerhardt: 1989). Additionally, within that social milieux, is the longstanding belief in the notions that health is tied to the cultural fabric. This dissertation renders some of these definitional considerations problematic discovering and disclosing along the way some of the deeper, ontological firmament from which these theoretical considerations emerge. This radical, in the sense of getting to the roots, theoretical stance was not an intentional one. Rather it emerged in the field out of the dilemmas experienced in cross cultural inquiry and fieldwork when longstanding concepts and theories did not stand me in good stead as I went about investigating the nature of Lakota health.

Looking back, this dissertation has a rich and diverse heritage. It follows in the Chicago tradition of symbolic interactionism, the influence of pragmatism, the fundamentally social nature of human activity, that society is created through shared meanings that are constructed in the interactional process (James: 1961, 1963; Dewey: 1925, 1958: Mead: 1938, 1964; Blumer: 1969). It incorporates aspects of

the phenomenology of Heidegger (1962, 1982) and Schutz (1966, 1967). This work engages important discourse within hermeneutics and the fields of interpretive sociology (Garfinkel: 1967; Woolgar: 1988; Fujimura: 1990; Starr: 1991), anthropology (Geertz: 1973; Rabinow and Sullivan: 1979; Bruner: 1986; Rosaldo: 1989; Latour: 1990), and philosophy (Taylor: 1987; Gadamer: 1987) and others in the social sciences (Ricoeur: 1976, 1979; Caputo: 1987; Packer and Addison: 1989). It enters the formal universe of discourse during postmodernism and, not by design but as a consequence of field experiences, addresses some of the current issues regarding the nature and limits of science (James: 1963; Keller: 1985; Harding: 1986; Hartsock: 1987; M. Rosaldo: 1987), power and claims-making (Latour: 1988; Haraway: 1988; Aronson: 1984; Alexander: 1991) and the imminent concerns over the nature of texts and authorship (Atkinson: 1990; Walker: 1988; R. Rosaldo: 1989; Geertz: 1986; Kincaid: 1992; Antonio: 1991).

Within the field of the sociology of health, this work is placed alongside of others whose concerns have focused on the nature, meaning and social context of definitions of health (Straus: 1957; Parsons: 1958; Wilson: 1970; Zola: 1974; Kelman: 1975; Field: 1976; Dallmyr and McCarthy: 1977; Wellin: 1978; Idler: 1979; McKeown: 1981; Twaddle: 1982; Crawford: 1984; Stacey: 1988). An area where this work diverges from most others is that the focus on definitional considerations is centrally located within underlying ontological considerations. For the most part, such considerations, save for Parsons's work on definitions in light of American values (1958), have not taken seriously these formative considerations. Developments

within anthropology, particularly works of Manning and Foster (1978), Fabrega (1973), and Kleinman (1978, 1980) have opened avenues for discourse and understanding between different cultural and social systems. These works, however, focus more critically on illness, disease, curing, and care and pay less attention to the phenomenology of health. The nature of the fieldwork experience forced attention to the world-taken-for-granted posture regarding definitions of health within anthropology and sociology. The consequences of field observations and discussion suggested that the problem was beyond divergent conceptualizations of health, that the dilemma was being evidenced at a deeper level of meaning and existence. The paradox is common in science, and particularly evident in cross cultural research. On the one hand, concepts are needed in order to foster inquiry and investigation. On the other hand, how does one explore the salience of concepts if they are not rendered problematic? After four years of fieldwork, the central issue became that of ontology — that the nature of being in the world of the Lakota was significantly different from that of the researcher. The agenda for work became one that required a learning to be in the world in a proximal, or similar way, and releasing my intellectual bonds to concepts that had previously driven inquiry. There are limits to that capacity, and a 'sensitized and directed' closeness, is what proximal came to mean. The world of the Lakota is just that - their world. Interpretation of that world is from a distanced near account, based on twelve years of learning, to varying degrees, to "do the do" of Lakota life. In that process, one in which my project of research unfolded as

meaningful to the others, many of these Lakota, in their own words, explained their world to me including their constructions of health.

For this group of Lakota, the world is conceived as a system of co-extensive interrelationships, driven by the primacy of the group and the secondary position of the individual. Principal values include generosity, courage, and happiness and are seen in practices of cooperation, encouragement, and non-interference. These values are also reflected in relationships that tend to be collaborative rather than hierarchical, existing in a sense of temporality that is non-linear and quasi boundless and a conception of the world that appears to be non-dualistic. For these people, the nature, meanings and experiences of health are rooted in this elaborate world that is distinctly different from major components of the western constructions of reality. At the outset, health is a virtue, at once an individual and collective experience. It is a metaphor for the integrity of the relationship between and among the individual and the group and extends beyond the physical world. Health is not the absence of disease, nor is it necessarily tied to, or confined by, physical capacity. Along with the collective nature of the world, health is seen as simultaneously an individual and collective responsibility.

Implications from this study address sociological and political issues for the Lakota people and for the field of sociology and science in general.

Implications for the Lakota

These considerations regarding the implications, particularly benefits for the Lakota of this study, are especially difficult because I am discussing how people of a different world view will gain something from this research. Given the history of research on reservation, and research on American Indians in general, I consider this work to break from the hegemony of that history in important ways. This work takes as given the meaningfulness of the Lakota world in its own terms. It has bracketed important dominant concepts and theoretical formulations in the effort to move beyond the imposition of formalism and positivism so evident in prior research. Although it is an interpretive work, that interpretation rests on hours of discussion and review, rewriting and reformulation in a collaborative way with the people whose lives and meanings are central to this work. Nonetheless, the final analysis and interpretation rests with this author, and no claims are made to being a voice for these people.

This work has the potential to sensitize the scientific community to important political issues of concern regarding research within oppressed communities. The theoretical and methodological considerations are more than merely academic. The consequences of research, intended and unintended, have political hues that often go unnoticed or unaddressed. These people have clearly delineated their experience in this area and have illuminated some of the shadowy areas of the research act.

The nature of this work has been such that individual people, whose lives may never have crossed, have had the opportunity of discussing issues with each other

through the interactive process of grounded theory method and analysis. As such each world has been available in specific ways to the other, and as such has encouraged a dialogue and increased understandings in both worlds. That process has been rewarding, encouraging, frustrating, and illuminating for many who have been part of this lengthy endeavor. In this way science became more accessible to those under research, and those under research gained more power and influence over the content, method, and outcome of research.

Implications for sociology

The interest in definitional issues in the sociology of health is gaining attention within the field, after a hiatus of approximately ten years. Early concerns over the definitions of health were part of the larger discussions of the consequence of medical affiliation and influence (Straus: 1957; Zola: 1974; Murcott: 1977), addressed the moral and ethical (Wellin: 1974) as well as the sociocultural and structural components of reigning definitions. The struggle for definitional terrain was, and continues to be, related to the underlying debates over the identity of the field, the influence of medicine over definitions of health, and the generally pre-sociological manner in which issues of health are addressed Murcott: 1977). Although Parsons (1957) and Susser (1974) tie definitions of health to underlying social values, and although others allude to the strength of those ties (Idler: 1979; Zola: 1991; White: 1991 for historic review), discussions of the definitions of health continue to appear *in vacuo*, with little elaboration of these ontological underpinnings. Conceptualizations

of health appear as non-problematic aspects of several other related issues. Health is posited as health status and relegated to an epidemiological concern. It is put in tandem with illness, and then usually treated as perfunctory introductory comment to the more important human condition of illness. Health is conceived as health care and the focus then shifts to cure, treatment, and the political economy of health care delivery systems. These structural conditions are the principle foci of what is conceived as health policy. In general, the term health appears as a cloak that covers issues most often medical, not health related. This is not to overlook the very important structural concerns of capitalist medical care and the social structural forces that indeed impinge upon health of a nation. The issue is that the term "health" has been used to gloss other more centrally medical concerns, thus shielding a more sociological analysis of the phenomenon of health.

This fundamental definitional ambiguity reflects a central dilemma within the field regarding the scientific construction of boundaries between the biological and the social which is rooted in the conceived dualism, between nature and culture. This dualism and the inability to move beyond it, is a major inhibitor in the inability to grasp a theory of health, either within the sociology of health or within sociology in general. White suggests that methodologies of the postmodern era, i.e. phenomenology, social constructionism, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, and others, are well suited to the task. This research suggests that in addition, attention also needs to be given to underlying ontological nature of health. Attention to those ontological components in Western society may help release definitions of health

whose meanings, in this society, have in recent years come to be mediated by medical concepts.

Although the call for more interpretive work within the sociology of health is a welcomed one, the hermeneutic focus of this work was a consequence of field experience emergent in early grounded theory analysis of data. In their own language and vocabularies, eloquent in a unique way, the Lakota I worked with and learned from were telling a similar story of the shortcomings of theory and science. This work then focuses on agency and structure, locating the meanings of health in actions and practices of people in their daily lives, and the discovery of meanings of those practices as they mirrored the health of the people. It moves beyond the deterministic view of culture and views socio-cultural variables as negotiated realities whose meanings are constantly unfolding in the nature of human interaction and social practice (Merchant: 1980). The benefit of this position regarding culture is that is allows for an analysis in which aspects of one world highlight heretofore unnoticed aspects of the world of the other.

The substantive finding on the nature and meaning of health for the Lakota raise important considerations for the field, primarily the importance of ontological underpinnings that drive definitions of health. Some concerns of this group include the nature of autonomy, responsibility, and the collective enterprise as critical elements in the phenomenology of health. Far from a residual category, for these folks, health is central to their being in the world, and a metaphor for the essentials of their existence, i.e. their co-extensive interrelatedness to the world at large. This

research suggests that broader based definitions, ones that move beyond segmentalism and essentialism, can be discovered within a focus on the phenomenology of health *qua* health.

The methodological implications for the field focus on several current issues within the sociology of knowledge, phenomenology, and the sociology of science (White: 1991; Zola: 1990; Atkinson: 1990; D. Rose: 1990; H. Rose: 1983; Packer and Richardson: 1991; Harding: 1987). The nature of ethnomethodology, of the writing and reporting of texts (Agar: 1986; Woolgar: 1988), of written and oral forms of communication (Gumperz and Hymes: 1964; Atkinson: 1990) have been central concerns of this work from the outset. Again, this has not been a planned approach to the field, but a necessary and ongoing base from which each field encounter was begun, as people in the field continued to express these concerns in a different language or medium. The issues of researcher as oppressor are relevant not only to work with American Indians, but have important implications for other minority groups, as well as those whose position in society leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, both materially and ideologically. Another methodological contribution from this effort has been the intermingling of the world of science and the world under study in a way that fostered dialogue and discourse, and gave those under study the power of access to the interpretation of their own lives. Such work goes far to insure the integrity of those who allow a momentary glance into valued and dearly held aspects of their lives. These methodological issues have particular relevance as the world in which we live simultaneously contracts on various fronts and becomes

more diverse, and as sociology attempts to render understandable the increasing complexity of the world at large. The lived experience of diverse groups, e.g. women, people of color, and individuals of varying social class membership, will be better understood, elaborated and articulated from a position that gives credence to the meanings of the world and experienced by those who live in that world, rather than how they experience a world that science defines as real.

The Limitations of this Research. The limitations of this work rest with the focus on health to the exclusion of other categories of significance, e.g. illness, disease, cure and treatment. Clearly, further work flowing from this endeavor could yield important additional information both about the Lakota world and the Western world as well. A second shortcoming of this work, part of which is related to the socio-historic moment, is the difficulty in creating the ethnographic language, the new vocabularies that form rich discursive bases from which meaning and interpretation emerge. These bases also form the new firmament for the development of postmodern social theory (Keller: 1985; McBride and McBride: 1981; Bruner: 1986; Antonio: 1991). This aspect of current scientific work is experienced in various fields, not only social science but also within natural sciences as well (Haraway: 1988; Harding: 1986). Lastly, I would add that the world of the Lakota of this study is also greatly influenced by the social forces of rapid and dramatic change. This work, then, is a representation in time, one that in some sense defies replication and verification. The world under study has experienced several major events during the twelve-year span of this work. For example, a new $10 million plus modern western

hospital was erected on one of the reservations. This, and other governmental interventions and interactions, are events that surely will alter the possibilities postmodern and conditions under which meanings and definitions of health for this group are negotiated, and the likelihood that the meanings discussed herein can endure.

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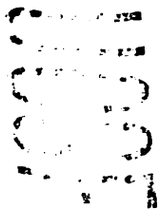

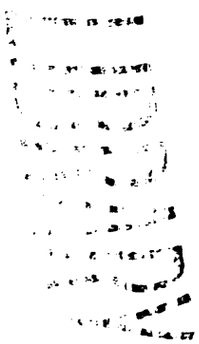

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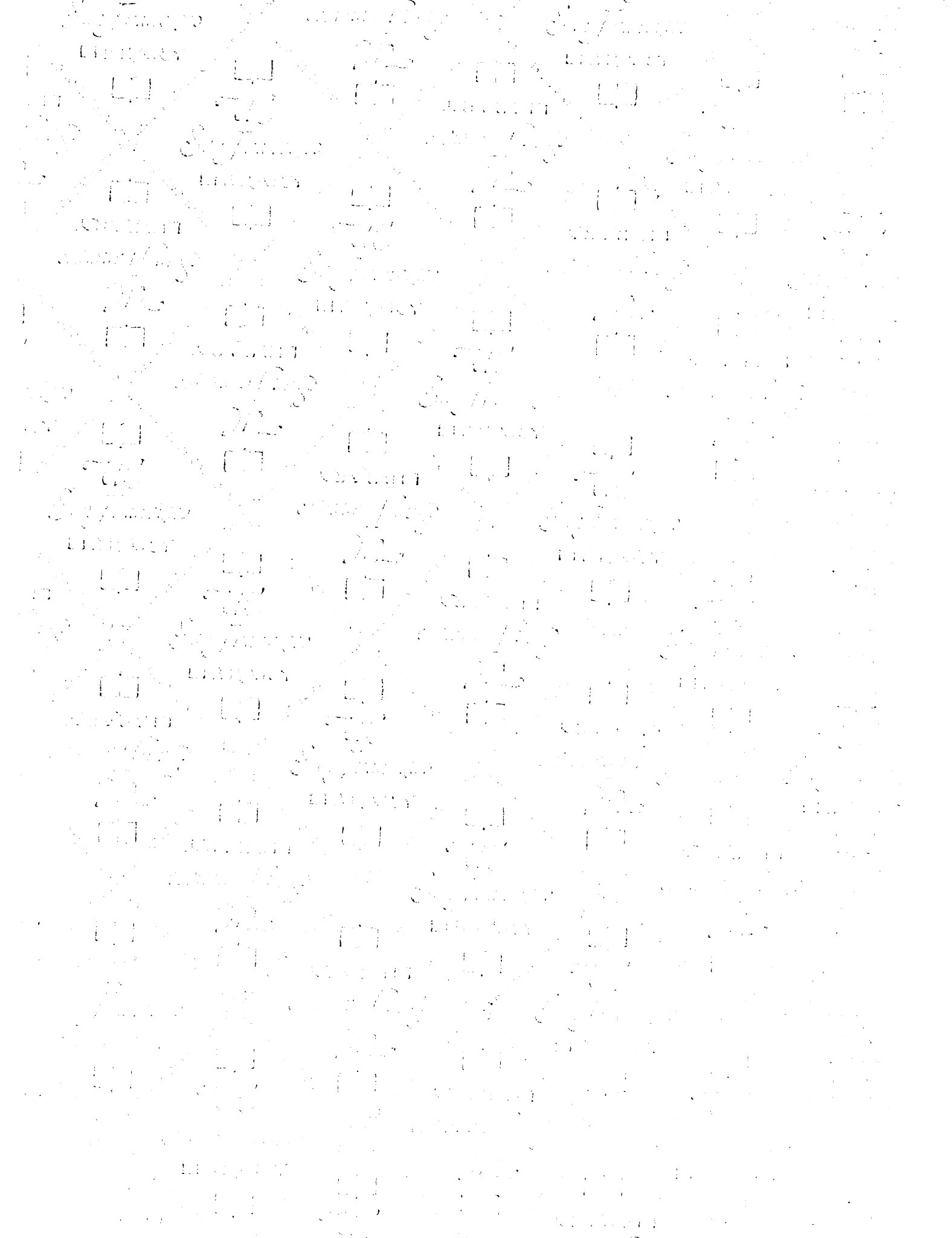
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