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# Point Conception and the Chumash Land of the Dead: Revisions from Harrington's Notes

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*This article reconsiders anthropologists' depictions of Chumash people's past beliefs regarding the journey of the soul to the land of the dead based on the ethnographic fieldnotes of J. P. Harrington. Included is an examination of the microfilmed original Harrington notes that have not been altered substantively by anthropologists' editing, as have previously published versions. Fieldnotes that had been overlooked or hitherto unreported are incorporated into the picture, and once unavailable biographical information on Harrington's consultants is used to establish the sociocultural settings that influenced how they understood the past. The results suggest that recent anthropological reporting has distorted the ethnohistoric record, creating a certain image of Chumash tradition in the late twentieth century. Our findings challenge depictions of uniform past Chumash belief in Point Conception as a departure point for souls on their journey to the land of the dead, and contradict representations of Harrington's consultants as adherents to premission religious practices. We are left with a more diverse, yet somewhat vague, picture of past beliefs and practices.*

**POINT CONCEPTION**, the distinctive bulge along the California coast (Fig. 1), is represented in a number of scholarly writings, contract archaeology reports, popular books, newspaper articles, and film as a place of central importance in the religious philosophy of Chumash peoples. It is said that all Chumash peoples have traditionally believed that Point Conception was the location of a shrine to the dead and is the Western Gate from where their souls departed for the afterworld. It sometimes is asserted by anthropologists, contemporary Chumash people, and others that the beliefs and practices associated with the Western Gate have persisted among traditional Chumash to this day (Craig et al. 1978; Matthiessen 1984; King et al. 1985).

In actuality, the term "Western Gate" was coined in 1978 for its public relations value by the opposition organized against the construction of a liquefied natural gas receiving terminal at Cojo Bay near Point Conception (Haley and Wilcoxon 1997). Wealthy neighboring landowners recruited

environmentalists, fishermen, surfers, Indians, and anthropologists to fight the proposed terminal. As members of this alliance created the Western Gate as a sacred place whose boundaries extended well beyond Point Conception, it emerged quickly as their most potent symbol for resisting construction of the terminal. We have described previously how an essential ingredient in the construction of the Western Gate as a contemporary sacred place is the treatment of Chumash as a unit of culture, a tribe, or nation in which the anthropological origins of "Chumash," and the considerable diversity within it, are ignored or forgotten (Haley and Wilcoxon 1997, 1998).

However, this modern construction of indigenous traditionalism is not entirely without historical basis. Statements made by Ineseño Chumash speaker María Solares to John P. Harrington from 1914 to 1919 linking Point Conception to the soul's journey to the afterworld were published in 1975 (see Blackburn 1975:98-100), and introduced this linkage to contemporary peoples. Blackburn's

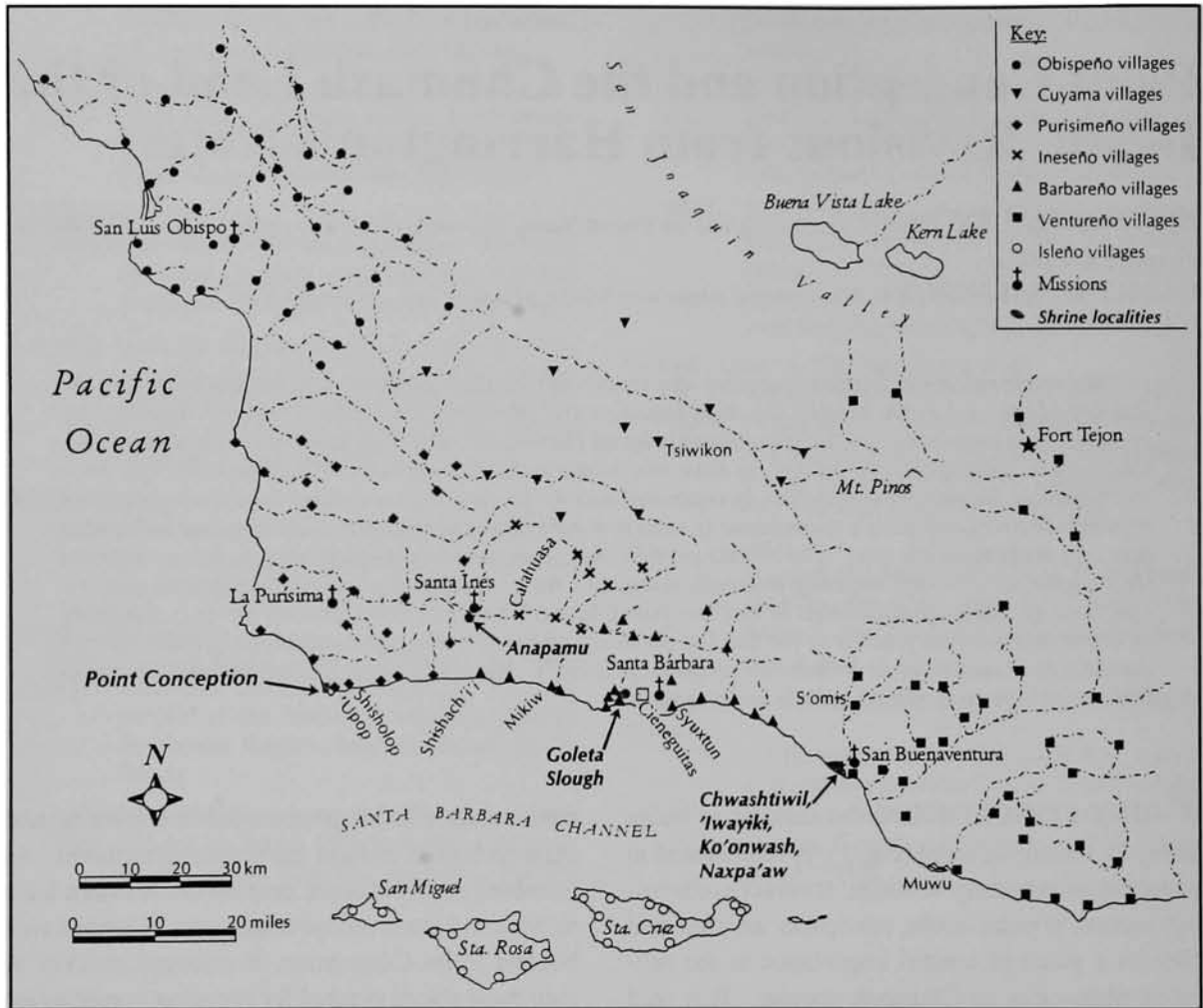


Fig. 1. Places mentioned in the text and Chumash village locations by language affiliation prior to missionization (after Johnson [1988] and McLendon and Johnson [1999]).

(1975:32-34) language implied that Solares' characterization of Point Conception applied to all Chumash peoples, so subsequent researchers followed suit and made the connection explicit. Blackburn's version of the Point Conception legend is often cited to justify today's Western Gate phenomenon, yet it is a composite of distinct statements and fragments of statements made by Solares at separate points in time, not all of which were about Point Conception, and thus not a narrative that she ever delivered in that form.

Blackburn warned his readers of this. After noting that "the Chumash were neither a cultural

nor a linguistic entity *per se*" (Blackburn 1975: 8), he cautioned that "a few of the 'narratives' in Section A of Part II were in a sense created by the editor" and risked "possible introduction of inaccuracies" (Blackburn 1975:16-17).<sup>1</sup> This applies to several of the most crucial narratives from his book that we consider here (T. Blackburn, personal communication 1998). Blackburn (1975:26-27) also stated that he was unable to distinguish "variation due to the individual background and personality" of Harrington's consultants from "geographical or subcultural differences." He noted that these differences might account for the "contradictory or

ambiguous" nature of Chumash eschatological concepts (Blackburn 1975:32). Blackburn's warnings went unheeded, even among scholars.<sup>2</sup>

Blackburn worked with Harrington's fieldnotes when they were still disorganized and spread between two archives, and his efforts to interpret them were made without the benefit of the genealogical and ethnohistorical data available today. Blackburn recounted that he and others first working with them "were just beginning to grasp the implications of Harrington's notes, and were giddy at our sudden ability to at least delineate the broad outlines of Chumash cultural patterns after years of being magisterially informed that 'there is no group in the State that once held the importance of the Chumash concerning which we know so little'" (T. Blackburn, personal communication 1998, quoting Kroeber [1925:550]). In this atmosphere of enthusiasm, scholars often recombined excerpts from the testimony of Harrington's consultants into new narratives that were thought to characterize these "broad outlines" of Chumash culture (e.g., Craig et al. 1978; Hudson and Underhay 1978; Hudson 1979b; Hudson et al. 1981). All told, these various efforts—albeit at times unintentionally—have synthesized an artificially homogeneous and pure Chumash culture.<sup>3</sup>

It may be difficult to sustain this synthetic representation. A careful review of the testimony of Harrington's Chumash consultants reveals that Point Conception was not unique in having the meaning and function Solares ascribed to it. Harrington's consultants identified a number of other such sites and disputed the status of Point Conception. In light of recent studies demonstrating a high degree of village autonomy among Chumash peoples at the time of contact and into the mission era (Johnson 1988; McLendon and Johnson 1999) and evidence of other similar shrines (e.g., Kirkish 1992), it seems likely that every Chumash-speaking village or cluster of villages had its own shrine with a meaning and function similar to that often ascribed today exclusively to Point Conception. Thus, whereas we could not have conducted this

study without the work of the first generation of Harrington scholars such as Blackburn, Hudson, and others, our revision might have been unnecessary had not previous scholars generalized so often at the level of Chumash.

Our reappraisal of these ethnohistorical materials recognizes that oral history and tradition are continuously reshaped by contemporary interests (Handler and Linnekin 1984; Tonkin 1992). We observe that Harrington's consultants were interpreting a past they had little direct familiarity with, and we consider what may have influenced their perceptions of it. Catholic and Yokuts influences appear to have been particularly important. Readers should be mindful that at some time in the past, some Chumash peoples quite likely attached special importance or sacredness to Point Conception and others unequivocally do so today. We do not wish to imply otherwise or denigrate such belief. However, Chumash in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries apparently did not behave as if Point Conception were sacred to them, and some denied that it had any significance to their ancestors. Our interest lies strictly in exploring the manner and extent to which these materials changed in the hands of the anthropologists who transmitted them to today's Chumash. Our principle source is Harrington's microfilmed fieldnotes (Harrington 1986), augmented by the major secondary sources.<sup>4</sup> Our presentation roughly follows the chronological order in which Harrington acquired information about Point Conception and similar places.<sup>5</sup>

Ethnographic fieldnotes are seldom written to be read by others. Harrington's fieldnotes—which are no exception—contain abbreviations, codes, Spanish vocabulary, misspellings, asides, and other features that hinder reading. This is one reason why scholars have edited the excerpts they have published. We also have found some editing useful, but since the editing of Harrington's notes is an important methodological issue in this article, it is important to clarify that our changes have been very few and quite limited relative to some previous publications. In the quotations, we have corrected

punctuation and spelling, translated most Spanish words, inserted names or pronouns for consultant codes and the ubiquitous "Inf.," and replaced most abbreviations. We have also replaced Harrington's idiosyncratic and inconsistent transcription of Chumash words with a standard orthography, but have retained spelling variations. All bracketed text is material we have added where words are missing or to clarify a preceding word or phrase. Text in parentheses within the quotations is Harrington's.

What we have *not* done that others have done previously is delete text within quotations, combine separate statements into new narratives, or rephrase the testimony of the speaker. To save space and remain on subject, we have not reproduced all statements in their entirety. Readers interested in specific quotations should refer to the originals. In the few instances where the reference for a single quotation lists more than one location in Harrington's notes, this is because the entire item appears in both locations; it is *never* comprised of separate items pasted together by us.

### BEFORE THE SOLARES SESSIONS

Harrington probably first learned of Point Conception's placename from his predecessors in Chumash research. From Alexander Taylor's articles in the *California Farmer*, Harrington recorded Cabrillo's 1542 village placename: "Pt. Conception, Cancac or Caacac, or Cacat," and from Henshaw's 1884 (Henshaw and Kroeber 1907: 297) Ventureño vocabulary, Harrington noted, "Humkak (Humkak'). An important Chumashan village formerly near Pt. Conception . . ." (Harrington 1986:Rl.12, Fr.154). He also records from Kroeber's work with Chumash speakers, "Punta Concepcion—Humgák'a" (Harrington 1986:Rl.74, Fr.451). Harrington used these materials to prompt his own native consultants. The first time Harrington heard Point Conception associated with the land of the dead appears to have been on March 26, 1913, in San Francisco, from Barbareño speaker Juan de Jesús Justo. Justo (1858-1941) was born at Santa Barbara, but was descended from people who lived at the

village of *Mikiw* at Dos Pueblos on the coast east of Point Conception toward Santa Barbara (Blackburn 1975:20; Johnson 1988:8, 234-235).<sup>6</sup> Harrington recorded the following:

Shimilaqshan, land of the dead. Call it thus in the Ventureño dialect also, he thinks. They used to think it was at Humqaqa, Point Conception. Like a cuento [fable or story], he thinks. He thinks he has heard chiqneqch singing—does not remember, perfectly, but thinks so. He thinks [illegible word] Shimilaqshan was like a hearing of rancheria, but I heard him call it casa de los muertos [home of the dead] in Spanish [Harrington 1986: Rl.19, Fr.76, Rl.75, Fr.583].

Subsequently, Harrington resumed work begun in 1912 with Fernando Librado Kitsepawit (1839-1914).<sup>7</sup> Librado was born and raised at Mission San Buenaventura to parents originally from Santa Cruz Island. He knew both Ventureño and Cruzeño (Isleño) languages and provided Harrington with his best data on politics, ritual, and history (see Hudson et al. 1978, 1981; Hudson 1979b; Johnson 1982, 1988:3, 8, 232; Wilcoxon et al. 1986). Through his many years of ranch work in the Point Conception region with older Indian men, Librado was more familiar with the area's placenames and village history than Harrington's other consultants, and through these same men he was also familiar with aspects of the language and heritage of Isleño, Ineseño, and Purisimeño speakers.<sup>8</sup>

Librado corrected Henshaw's Ventureño placename for Point Conception to *Kunq'aq'*, characterizing the place as a "high cliff and very conspicuous point" (Harrington 1986:Rl.74, Fr.449). He also said, "Palo carajo is called Kunuq'aq' in Cruzeño: Point Concepcion is also called by this same name in Cruzeño" (Harrington 1986:Rl.12, Fr.153, Rl.74, Fr.450; cf. Craig et al. 1978:82). *Palo carajo* (a pole, post, tree, or mast and an expletive expressing disgust or displeasure) may be sailors' slang for a sailing ship's upper observation post or crow's nest (D. Elkin, personal communication 1994) rather than a "kind of tree" (Applegate 1975: 34). Immediately after describing a winter solstice mourning ceremony in Ventura to Harrington in



1913, Librado denied unequivocally that Point Conception was involved in the journey of the soul. His remark, as follows, appears to have been made in response to a prompt from Harrington using Justo's association of Point Conception with the land of the dead, an interview technique Harrington employed often.

Said dead went to the west. Did not go to Pt. Concepcion. No ghosts or anything about Pt. Concepcion as far as he has ever heard. On the other side of the Yndart Ranch there is a picacho [peak or summit] and that is the real 'Anapamu. This word means "al suvidero." Napamu = "suvidero." Makinapamu = "nuestro suvidero"—place you go up. Fernando appears not to know the Santa Barbara word sha'wil [shrine]. It was place of adoration for dead and alive. Ventureño call the place Chwashtiwil—west of mouth of Ventura river. Had only one here then. In 1869 Fernando saw that place—old shoes, caps, zapato de verucha [rawhide sandals] [Harrington 1986: Rl.69, Fr. 750-751].

The shrine hill known as 'Anapamu was located south of the Santa Ynez River and west of the old crossing to Mission Santa Inés. The Spanish *subidero* (suvidero) refers to a ladder, upward grade, or path, a way to go up (cf. Applegate 1975: 37). Librado concluded by lamenting how difficult it was to acquire knowledge about the past from the old men in the postsecularization mission communities. Hudson (1979b: 2) combined this last remark with other excerpts into a new statement that excludes mention of Point Conception. 'Anapamu was not the only shrine for making offerings to the dead, according to Librado, and his statement, "Had only one here then," suggests that there had been more than one such shrine near Ventura. Between 1912 and 1914, he described three or four places on the coast west of the mouth of the Ventura River: *Chwashtiwil*, *Ko'onwash*, *Iwayiki*, and *Naxpa'aw* (cf. Hudson et al. 1978:128 nt. 269):

There is a point on coast West of Ventura where there are high banks and people would take things of dead people in carrying-nets and pile them there—all sorts of things—beads, shoes, crutches, even. The place is about 1¼ miles from Ventura.

That practice was not very widely known. Father Jose Maria Rosales went out horseback riding once and came to a place where he saw a pole, the top of which was ornamented with feathers. He went to the place and saw a pile of things that had been placed there. Returning to Ventura Mission, he asked Carlos Teodoro, an old Ventura Indian, what is meant. The Indian said, "It is the goods of deceased folks, placed there by children or relatives." The priest had the Indian punished for disobedience—but that is all the old Indian would say. Persons of five or six families would carry the goods of a person to that place on case of death—all of one dead person. The place was called Chwashtiwil. To the Indians it was a sacred spot. The name means "Sacred." This was a substitute for burning goods on the fifth day.

In going to this place, the bearers would provide themselves with small bunches of sage brush, and on their ascent to this high place at about every thirty or forty steps would place one of the little bunches on the ground until they arrived at the spot. When they reached the place they sang a song or two and dumped all the goods out, and brought the carrying-nets back with them. Fernando thinks that this was not a primitive custom. He thinks that the original custom was to burn everything [Harrington 1986:Rl.79, Fr.543].

#### Land of the Dead.

Ko'onwash, "where there was water." This is the name of the place where the things of the dead were deposited, 1½ mi. west of Ventura on the shore. There was water there more than 100 years ago. The[n] it disappeared. Now recently it has come again and the spring is the favorite camping place for people traveling.

'Iwayiki, "mystery," is the name given to the places where things of the dead were deposited there.

At the top place, last visited, there was a pole of holly, 3 inches in diameter peeled of bark, with the feathers tied about the top, and 2 buzzard feathers projecting, one to the west and one to the east. The pole was 4 ft. high (the portion out of the ground was 4 ft. high), set in a hole lined with stones. The post was painted dark vermilion (not almagre [red ochre]). The Indians used to throw the things of the dead on the east side of this pole. There were 30 stations, distributed all the way up the slope. The paint with which the post was painted was made by grinding almagre with a kind of black rock. This black rock was a mystery, and Fernando does not know its Indian name nor where nor how they got it. The pole was called span kaqunup-mawa, "Sun pole" [Harrington 1986:Rl.79, Fr.562].

Hudson et al. (1981:62-63) used Librado's description of the location of Ko'onwash to describe that of 'Iwayiki, making it appear that Librado said 'Iwayiki was "about a mile and a half west of Ventura on the shore" (see also Hudson and Blackburn 1986:86, 95-97). Apparently quoting from elsewhere in the notes they added, "When Fernando visited this shrine in 1912 it had caved off till it was only about six feet across; the flat where the poles were erected was some twelve feet or more across" when he had seen it earlier. The 1912 date must refer to a placename gathering trip with Harrington. Librado used "mystery" to refer to anything pertaining to the supernatural (Hudson et al. 1981:101). Librado also said Indian canoemen "often fish near here, at the point by the Depository-of-the-Things-of-the-Dead" (Hudson et al. 1978:128). The spring of Ko'onwash is depicted as "Posos" on an 1870 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map.<sup>9</sup>

Another location was mentioned by Librado in connection with the sun festival/winter solstice ceremony held on December 26 (Hudson et al. 1981:61-62). A pole was erected at Naxpa'aw, "the nearest point of the mesa west of the mouth of the Ventura River, where they erected the first pole on top. They erected only one romerillo [sage] bunch there; the location at *Naxpa'aw* where the feather pole was erected is on the mesa top on the west side of the little arroyo that comes in from the north, cutting through the cactus mesa and emptying directly opposite the *Naxpa'aw* sanddunes" (Hudson et al. 1981:61). Hudson et al. (1978:128 nt. 269, 1981:62-63) interpreted Librado's description of Chwashtiwil, 'Iwayiki, and Ko'onwash as a single unique locality designated the "Depository of the Things of the Dead," but another possibility is that Librado was describing several separate localities. His remark of "Had only one here then" in the description of Chwashtiwil and the plural "places" in reference to 'Iwayiki make this a plausible alternative. Additional information will be needed to verify either of these competing interpretations.

Librado equated the Cruzeño word *Nimalaqopok* with the Ventureño *Shimilaqsha* for the

name of the land of the dead (Harrington 1986:R1.68, Fr.499). Other information he provided demonstrates that Cruzeño and Ventureño Chumash peoples envisioned the soul traveling toward the setting sun (Blackburn 1975:98; Harrington 1986:R1.69, Fr.889-890). Therefore, the association between the sun and the name of the pole at 'Iwayiki is not incidental, and may have applied widely to the poles erected at shrines to the dead. There was a broad consensus among Harrington's consultants that their ancestors placed the land of the dead in the west, a belief shared with some neighboring peoples who spoke other languages.<sup>10</sup> Craig et al. (1978:87-88) used Librado's testimony on the direction the soul travels as if it supported Solares' information on Point Conception. But, as we have seen, Point Conception did not figure in Librado's understanding of these matters. The following excerpt illustrates Librado's detailed knowledge pertaining to death, compounding the evidence against the interpretation of Craig et al. (1978):

The Indians did absolutely nothing at the moment of death. They believed that the soul stayed about the old living place for five days after death and that is why they fed it every night. The soul of a burned corpse went west taken by the blazes. Did not stay for five days like the others. But the soul of a drowned person always stayed in sea, wandering and never reached west-land or was born again. The soul of a baby before or after birth went west also, but never reached the place that the soul of adults did. They explained that the small fish of the surf never reached the place that the fish of deep water did. Old man never explained to Fernando whether these souls were reborn or not. They told Fernando that the soul was eternal. The matter was governed by its deeds in life. The memory of the deceased depends upon his acts in life. If the deceased was a good man and did many kind acts, his memory would be held in high esteem—but if unjust would remember him as such, showing that the people had proper regard for good and bad [Harrington 1986:R1.79, Fr.542; cf. Blackburn 1975:97].

In the next excerpt, Librado repeated information on the shrines to the dead provided to him by the Ventureño-speaker José Sebastian Naiyait when he was near death and staying at the house of

his step-granddaughter, Petra Rios (Hudson 1979b: 37-39). Echoing the hints of potential Catholic influences in the statement above, Sebastian's information suggests that the old man may have embraced Catholicism to some extent.

Five old men used to administer toloache [datura]. When 3 had died, two were left. One of these died, his lamp of life giving out, and shortly after the other one who was still left [Sebastian] was at Petra's house and Fernando was there and he told Fernando and Petra about Toloache. He said when Petra gave him his supper, that it was not to him that she gave that food, but to the creator, and that as long as they observed those rules it would be well for them. Old man said there were men who gave the toloache. But do not believe in them. Some say that god will punish one who does not believe what the old men want you to do, but it is not true. And never meddle with the things at the Depository of the Things of the Dead, for there is poison at that place in the ground and on the things. If you are incredulous, go up there and shit at the place, and if anybody knows that he will get a prenda (take one of the things from up there) and the person who shit there will have sickness from which there is no cure [Harrington 1986:Rl.69, Fr.1024-1025].

Librado's descriptions of death and mourning ceremonies include the use of the shrines near Ventura on the Cañada de San Miguelito grant, but not Point Conception (see Hudson 1979b:173-174; Hudson et al. 1981:55-63; Harrington 1986:Rl.69, Fr.251-255, Rl.79, Fr.544-546). His extensive discussions of reincarnation, in which he cited Ventu-reño and Cruzeño sources, similarly exclude Point Conception (cf. Craig et al. 1978:1-2). In one example, he spoke of

The future life.

The soul of a dead person went to the west and at the end of 12 years it would return and live here reincarnated, born again. Fernando is pure Indian. When he was a boy and went out hunting the Indians used to tell him to be careful about shooting, because the time was going to come, to be careful because there would be many young children. Those were pure spirits. Those spirits never slept. They were constantly on guard, watching, waiting for the spirits that were coming, some spirits would go about the world, observing the nature of

all others during those 12 years they inhabited another sphere, far in the west, very far from here [Harrington 1986:Rl.79, Fr.567; cf. Blackburn 1975:97].

Librado did not explain where or how reincarnated souls reenter the world of the living, only that they do so at the next new moon (Harrington 1986: Rl.69, Fr.342). In his story about a drowning at sea, the survivors talked about "resurrecting their dead companion," and planned to watch for a resemblance to the drowned man in "the next one who reincarnates" (Harrington 1986:Rl. 69, Fr. 534). The similarity to Christian resurrection may not be coincidental. In fact, much of his information on reincarnation clearly is shaped by the colonial setting:

Fernando's grandfather used to say: "The time is coming when we shall have many people in the other world, for this body that we lay in the grave will turn into dirt, but the soul will go to the golden west." (These last two words were given by Fernando in English although the rest of the information was given in Spanish).

husiyalinane alkulul. Said this when buried a person. It means "those that travel to the west," referring to the soul. Sang it. Ventu-reño. . . .

"The Indians," Fernando's grandfather would say, "said that the white people are a reincarnation of the souls that had gone west. They had a different color, were reincarnated in a lighter color, and spoke a different language. Color and language of whites and Indians are different, but the noble principles of the soul would be the same," Fernando's grandfather would say [Harrington 1986:Rl.80, Fr. 454; cf. Blackburn 1975:97-98; Craig et al. 1978: 87-88].

This use of reincarnation to make colonization intelligible also emerges in material Librado attributed to Silverio Qonoyo. According to Qonoyo, an old man had said, "He who has died has to resurrect with the same feeling in his heart, but to a house of a different color (dead will be born same but different color) . . ." (Harrington 1986:Rl.69, Fr.889-890). Using a sand dollar to illustrate the path of the sun and the souls that followed, the old man had shown his audience that the movement of the sun governed when souls resurrected (Harrington 1986:



RI.69, Fr.889-890, RI.76, Fr.455-456; also see Blackburn 1975:98).

Librado's sources on Indian beliefs included Raymundo T'ümü from the village of *S'omis* in the Ventura River Valley, who Johnson (1982) identified as the man Librado called his grandfather. Carlos Teodoro (1764-1849) of Mission San Buenaventura also told him about shrines to the dead. José Sebastian Naiyait at Ventura, who was listed as 67 years old in the 1852 census, took part in Indian ceremonies (Hudson 1979b: 153). Fellow ranch hand Silverio Qonoyo, whose parents were from Santa Rosa Island, also told him about the history of villages in the Point Conception area. Qonoyo was one of 60 La Purísima Indians who, under the orders of a mission priest and the leadership of a San Miguel chief, set sail in 30 canoes from Cojo Viejo (*Shisholop*) for San Miguel Island in ca. 1812-1815 in an ill-fated effort to bring the islanders to the mainland (Hudson et al. 1978:148-150, 178). He lived at Cojo Viejo as a fisherman and canoe-maker in the 1840s and 1850s and may have been the "old Indian" who in 1850 lent a U.S. Coast Survey crewman at Point Conception the "last Chumash canoe" (Hudson 1984).

Evidence that Purisimeño speakers conceived of an afterworld named *Shimilaqsha* also comes from Fernando Librado. A story he told in November 1913 described advice given him by Pastor Shoy'ama, an alcalde at Mission La Purísima: "Courage. Don't desire what there is in Shimilaqsha. When you are weak of spirit you are going to abandon your well being" (Harrington 1986:RI.69, Fr.1030-1031; also see Hudson et al. 1981:14-15, 19, 66-67). Hudson et al. (1981:19) stated that Shoy'ama opposed the traditional shaman and "other Indian mysteries." We found no other relevant material in Harrington's Purisimeño fieldnotes.

Harrington (1986:RI.95, Fr.93) confirmed elements of Librado's characterization of 'Iwayiki and Chwashtiwil while working in 1916 or perhaps later with Ventureño speakers Simplicio Pico (1839-1918) and José Juan Olivas (1858-1936). Both men verified the general location of 'Iwayiki be-

tween Ko'onwash and Pitas Point, and Olivas confirmed that it was a shrine. Pico added that it was in a willow grove and there were "lots of mussels there." Both men also knew Chwashtiwil, and according to Pico it was the place of reckoning, "Onde echaban las cuentas." Librado said that Pico stole all the valuable things from the depository of the things of the dead (Hudson 1979b:124). However, Olivas and Pico did not confirm Librado's characterization of Ko'onwash as a shrine (see also Hudson and Blackburn 1986: 86-87, 97). The fact that both men distinguished Chwashtiwil and 'Iwayiki provides added weight to our suggestion that there was more than one shrine to the dead in the area west of Ventura and that Hudson et al.'s (1978:128 nt. 269, 1981:62-63) interpretation of these as a single "Depository of the Things of the Dead" may be in error.

Harrington spent part of September in 1913 with Rosario Cooper (1841-1917), an Obispeño Chumash speaker. Cooper shared the little information her classificatory aunt, Juana Lucia, told her about premission religious beliefs: "Lucia told Cooper that before they were baptized the Indians believed in sun, moon, stars. Cooper does not know of the land beyond the sea in the west, but she thinks it likely that they believed that" (Harrington 1986:RI.2, Fr.446). This is the only pertinent material we encountered in the Obispeño rolls of Harrington's notes. Thus, before Harrington interviewed María Solares, he had already learned that his consultants linked past belief about the soul's journey to the afterworld to different places, including shrine sites near Missions Santa Inés and San Buenaventura, as well as Point Conception.

### SESSIONS WITH MARÍA SOLARES

In January 1914, Harrington held sessions with María Solares and Juan de Jesús Justo in Santa Ynez, from which most of the now widely reprinted Point Conception legend emerged. Blackburn's editing not only enhanced its readability, but also removed Harrington's parenthetical doubts and So-

lares' analogies to Christian concepts (Blackburn 1975:98-100; cf. Harrington 1986:RI.7, Fr.142-144, 200-202, 250-251). Harrington's notes of this story consist of a handwritten original and typed copy of the central parts of the legend where he noted Justo's presence and a typed second part elaborating on the soul's journey to Shimilaqsha. The typed portions may represent a single session; in any event, they are merged in Blackburn's version. Material from sessions in 1919 when Harrington and Solares reviewed the topic is also incorporated into Blackburn's version (Harrington 1986:RI.13, Fr.19). In telling the Point Conception story, Solares referred to a legend about Coyote, Thunder, and Fog that she had told Harrington in 1914, and Blackburn incorporated excerpts from this story to add detail to the description of the soul's journey (Harrington 1986:RI.07, Fr.233-234; also see Blackburn 1975:104-112). Solares began the legend by linking the journey of the soul to Point Conception.

It was said that the spirit of the dead before leaving for Shimilaqsha went to Point Conception. That was a wild, stormy place, and there was no rancheria there. It was called Humqaq. There, below the seacliff in a place which can be reached only by lowering a man by a rope down the seacliff from above, is a pool of water, like a basin—water, fresh water, keeps dripping down from above. And there on the surface of the stone beside the pool of water are footprints of women and children to be seen. There the spirit of the dead bathes and paints itself and then it sees a light to the westward and goes towards it and thus reaches the land of Shimilaqsha, going through the air—not through the water. In ancient times no Indians ever went near Humqaq—they only went to a place near there for the purpose of making sacrifice by depositing things at a great sha'wil.

The people (such as we) at La Quemada (Shishach'i'i) rancheria [village on the coast between Point Conception and Santa Barbara] sometimes in the evening time used to see a soul passing on its way to Point Conception. These souls were souls of persons not yet dead, who had temporarily left the body of a person; but sometimes they were the souls of people really dead. The people of La Quemada would motion with their hands to the soul for it to return east, and they would talk to the soul

saying, "Arriendate! Go back!" etc., and they would clap their hands. Sometimes the soul would turn back but other times it would go around (make a deviation in its course to avoid the intercepting person) and go on straight for Shimilaqsha. If the soul passed La Quemada it would go straight to Point Conception—always. The soul when it was seen by the people at La Quemada was shining like a light, and it left a blue trail behind it. And its disease was seen like a ball at its side—a fiery ball. That was the disease of which it died. In case a soul was prevailed upon to return and was recognized by the person or persons of La Quemada (which was a big rancheria) the person recognizing it would hasten to the rancheria where it lived and if the sick person whose soul it was would then drink a lot of jimsonweed, there was a chance that the person might recover and not die.

Maria heard that a short time after the soul passed La Quemada the people of La Quemada would hear a report like a distant cannon shot, and knew that that was the sound of the closing of the gate of Shimilaqsha as the soul entered.

There was no village at Point Conception, but La Quemada was this side (sic) of Point Conception and the people of La Quemada saw the souls pass [Harrington 1986:RI.7, Fr.250-251].

María Solares (1842-1923) was born at Mission Santa Inés to an Ineseño Chumash father and Hometwoli Yokuts mother (Johnson 1988:8, 227, 236, 238-239). Twice in her presentation of the legend, she credited her knowledge of Shimilaqsha—and what she termed "Indian religion"—to her paternal grandfather's nephew, Ygnacio Telenahuit (1789-1865), a ranch hand originally from the village of *Calahuasa* in the Santa Ynez Valley. She claimed, "Not all the Indians knew the details about Shimilaqsha. But Ygnacio did for he was a relative of Estevan. Estevan was thoroughly educated in the Indian religion" (Harrington 1986:RI.7, Fr.201). Estevan Colocutayuit (1775-1846) was her paternal grandfather and was also from Calahuasa (Harrington 1986:RI.7, Fr.138; also see Blackburn 1975:300). We must not misconstrue Telenahuit simply as a follower or practitioner of the "Indian religion," however. The ambiguity in his religious beliefs emerges when Solares followed her statement on Point Conception and La Quemada with this one:

Maria's grandfather [*sic*], Ygnacio, would not believe the myth of the pool at Point Conception, and he and a number of other Santa Inés Indians went down to the coast at the Point to investigate. That was years ago. They lowered Ygnacio over the cliff from above, and he saw the pool and dripping fresh water and footprints as described. He climbed up the rope, and then another man of the party descended and saw all [Harrington 1986: Rl.7, Fr.251].

After hearing this, Justo said that Solares had altered Telenahuit's reason for going to Point Conception in the version she told Harrington: "At Point Conception those who investigated the place were two vaqueros. Last night Justo told me the story of the investigation of Point Conception as Solares had told it to him. He had it that the Ineseños went down to the coast to gather abalones and that the investigation of the place there was incidental to abalone gathering" (Harrington 1986: Rl.13, Fr.37).

This tells us several things. First, it indicates that Justo had heard the Point Conception legend from Solares previously, raising the possibility that he had learned it from her. Second, it indicates that Solares changed the story at least enough to alter meanings in subtle yet important ways. Justo's correction also suggests that Ygnacio was even less of a believer in the legend than Solares had implied to Harrington. Lastly, it challenges Solares' claim that Indians only went to Point Conception to use a shrine. Other sources confirm this last flaw in her story. There are seven prehistoric habitation sites at Point Conception, and one is typical of long-term and intensive use (Glassow 1978). According to Fernando Librado, the abundance of fish, shellfish, and nearby islay at Point Conception gathered by the residents of nearby 'Upop gave the village its name (Harrington 1986:Rl.74, Fr.515). When George Parkinson, the first lightkeeper, arrived at Point Conception lighthouse in 1855, he found a group of Indians using the building as a hunting base (National Park Service 1976).

Solares' understanding of "Indian religion" was not thorough. She frequently employed Christian

analogies, and there are many signs of Yokuts influences on the legend's content. For example, she completed the initial description of the Point Conception legend by identifying "three lands in the world in the west: Shimilaqsha, Wit, and 'Ayaya. Maria compares this voluntarily with the Catholic idea of infierno, purgatorio and cielo [hell, purgatory, and heaven]. But, alas, Maria does not know which is which—does not know what or where Wit and 'Ayaya are except that they are near Shimilaqsha" (Harrington 1986: Rl.7, Fr.251; cf. Hudson and Underhay 1978:119).

Elsewhere, Solares stated that *Wit* ("to pass quickly") and 'Ayaya ("alas" or "oh my") are places at Shimilaqsha (Harrington 1986:Rl.7, Fr. 201). In 1919, she remembered that it was Joaquin Ajala who told her "when we die we go to Wit, 'Ayaya" (Harrington 1986:Rl.13, Fr.18). Ajala was a dancer and singer of the Seaweed Song and Bear Dance from Santa Inés who observed the winter solstice at a shrine in the mountains north of Santa Ynez (Hudson 1979b: 139; Hudson et al. 1981:91-92; Hudson and Blackburn 1986:87-88).<sup>11</sup> He was from the Cuyama Chumash village of *Tsiwikon*, and Solares said he was a relative of her Yokuts mother (J. Johnson, personal communication 1998).

As the story continues in Harrington's 1914 notes, Solares described details about the challenges souls faced in reaching Shimilaqsha (Harrington 1986:Rl.7, Fr.200-202). After crossing the sea, the soul first reached the Land of Widows, women who smelled their food without eating it, and remained young by dipping themselves in a spring. Past them is a canyon through which the souls must pass with two giant ravens (*qaq'*) perched on opposite sides that peck out the eyes of the soul as it passes. The soul replaces its eyes with two poppies and restores its sight. Beyond the canyon, the soul encounters a woman with a stinging tail called *La Tonadora*. She kills living persons who attempt to pass, but only annoys souls. Then the soul reaches a shoreline where there are "condemned" persons" who have turned to stone,



including "women who knew the mysteries of yerbas." Also on this shore is the *palo*, the rising and falling pole which provides the bridge to Shimilaqsha. In the water are people who are "undergoing penance," who fell off the *palo* and whose lower bodies have been transformed into those of turtles, lizards, frogs, snakes, and fish that must crawl from the water to eat *cacomites* (bulbs). The soul crosses the *palo* to "a good country" where two roads lead away in separate directions.

At this point, Harrington interjected, "Maria does not know where the gate referred to in the La Quemada legend is situated, but supposes that it lies beyond the *palo* (a mixing of Tulareño [Yokuts] and Costeño [coastal Chumash] mythology?)" (Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr.201). Evidently, Harrington was not convinced that the *palo* and gate motifs originated among Chumash peoples, but his doubt is removed in Blackburn's version of the story. Solares continued, noting that the *palo* and the poles erected over graves share the name *sq'oq'om*.<sup>12</sup> She thought there was no belief in reincarnation, nor a belief that children's souls had a different journey than those of adults. In Shimilaqsha, the souls are given eyes of abalone (*t'aya*) shell, and enjoy an abundance of foods. Old Indians had said that those "who drank toloache always passed the *palo* all right for they were strong of spirit." The "bad" people who fell into the water and suffered "like those in the Christian hell" did so because they did not know the Indian religion (Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr.201-202). On another occasion, Solares stated that the Indians had no word for penance, but they "had a similar idea . . ." (Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr.930-931, R1.8, Fr.775). Here she also said the *palo* touched "el puerto del cielo," which may be translated either as the door of heaven or the door of the sky (Harrington 1986: R1.7, Fr.930, R1.8, Fr.775). In his translation from a February 1919 retelling of the story in Ineseño, Harrington wrote simply, "door hole" (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr.837-841).

Harrington's doubt regarding Solares' source of mythical elements in the journey of the soul de-

serves further scrutiny. Parts of the story have striking similarities to stories that almost certainly came to Solares from her mother's Yokuts kin, with whom she lived for a time at Tejon as a young girl in the early 1850s and visited after her mother's death in 1868 (Blackburn 1975:11, 18-19, 27; Johnson 1988:222 fn. 4, 227, 236, 239). At those times, Tejon was a multiethnic community of Yokuts, Chumash, Kitanemuk, Tataviam, Fernandefio, and other peoples (Johnson 1995, 1997a). Two of the three myths from Chumash narrators in Harrington's notes which describe a journey to Shimilaqsha were told by Solares in 1914, and all three have been published (Blackburn 1975:104-112, 172-175, 249-251). The journey of Coyote, Thunder, and Fog to Shimilaqsha that Solares referred to in her Point Conception legend shares elements with many California groups, and Yokuts myths in particular (Blackburn 1975:333). Neither Point Conception nor any other locality in the non-mythical world is named in the myth. In the story, Coyote joins the brothers Thunder and Fog on their travels around the world and a series of encounters with dangerous beings (Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr. 233-234). They reach Shimilaqsha by passing first through the land of the widows, whose food turns to manure before they can eat it, then past La Tornadora (Blackburn 1975:111).<sup>13</sup> After killing her, they enter Shimilaqsha, where they meet *Shaq*, or Turtle, who is the chief. They challenge him to a race, and win through trickery. Turtle is burned on a pile of wood for losing the race.

Solares' second story is a standard California Orpheus myth of Tejon origin (Blackburn 1975: 249-251; Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr.241-243). Orpheus myths portray the trip to and from the land of the dead in a failed attempt to resurrect a prematurely deceased spouse. They are ubiquitous and consistent from one tribal group to another in the south central region of the state (Kroeber 1907a: 272-274; Gayton 1930; Blackburn 1975:29). Orpheus myths were incorporated into the Ghost Dance religion when it appeared among Yokuts and neighboring San Joaquin Valley peoples in 1871-



1875. According to Gayton (1930), Ghost Dance Orpheus myths share the following components: (1) a "father" or chief of the land of the dead; (2) an unsteady bridge connecting this world to the land of the dead; (3) only people of character can cross the bridge; (4) one must not sleep; and (5) transformation of the nearly rescued spouse into a log. Told by Solares in June 1914, the myth conforms perfectly to Gayton's outline. It is a potential source of many details in Solares' description of the soul's journey from Point Conception. It occurs in Tejon "about a century ago, when the Indians there were not yet Christians" (Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr.241), according to Solares, and places the land of the dead to the north down the San Joaquin Valley, its standard location for Yokuts and other San Joaquin Valley peoples (Kroeber 1907b:216-218, 228; Gayton 1930:78).

In this story, a young newlywed husband at Tejon accidentally killed his wife. After the wake and funeral, the bereaved husband vowed to follow his wife to the land of the dead, and waited by the grave for her soul to appear. She arose as a "spirit of the other world" on the third night of his vigil: "She started north and came back; then she started east and came back; then she started south and came back; then she started west and came back. Then she started north again and did not return" (Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr.241-242). Eventually, she allowed her husband to follow her. They passed the land of the widows and reached the long pole stretching across a body of water full of dangerous creatures. The far end of the pole continuously rose and fell, touching the gate of the land of the dead when it fell. Good souls could cross safely, but bad souls would fall into the water and perish when two large creatures rose from the water on either side of the palo and shouted at whoever passed. Bad people turned to stone, and toads, snakes, and turtles with human upper bodies who subsisted on cacomites were in the water or on its shore. The woman crossed first and held the far end of the pole down for her husband to cross. He crossed safely, then they followed separate courses, the man going to

negotiate with the old man in charge for her release and return to the land of the living. The old man agreed, but warned the young husband not to fall asleep. The young man did so on the third night, causing his wife to turn into a log. The old man directed him to return home, but warned that people would die if he spoke of where he had been. Unfortunately, he could not restrain himself, and his friends and mother died when he answered their questions (Blackburn 1975:249-251; Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr.241-243).

The details both myths share with her Point Conception legend suggest that Solares' nineteenth century Yokuts ties may be why her version is more elaborate than those of Harrington's other Chumash consultants.

María Solares visited Point Conception at least twice, once probably in the late nineteenth century to serve as a midwife to a caretaker's wife at the lighthouse station, and again probably in the first decade of the twentieth century on a camping trip with her granddaughter's family. Both trips were described in 1916 or 1919, and the descriptions make it clear that Solares did not follow the practice of avoiding the point except to use the shrine. The first account touches on the tracks of the souls Ygnacio Telenahuit had spoken of:

The rastros [tracks] at Point Conception are at the base of the cliff. When camping there, María and others descended the stairway on the cliff in front of the lighthouse every Sunday. Very steep. The waves break on the rocky cliff below. María and other ladies descended the trail. One place had to sit down. At last got down to bottom. To the Santa Barbara side of the base María saw the foot prints. There was a pool (pila) of water there with a big rock to plug the entrance. They each took a bath in that pool, removing the rock and letting the waves fill it again with water after each had bathed. The footprints were just below (south of the pool) on a rock. María put her foot in the bigger one and it just fit. Behind or near it was the smaller one, as of a child. Both were pointed west across the sea. It is a beautiful place there. María was three months there tending a woman who was going to have a baby but se equivocó [she made a mistake] and María stayed there three months until the baby was born. María lived in the house above the farol

[lighthouse]. The lighthouse is part way down the cliff. Men at night took two hour shifts tending the lighthouse. Nobody slept at the lighthouse. The woman who bore the baby was named Marta (---). The baby was a girl. The woman's husband was lighthouse cuidador [caretaker] [Harrington 1986: R1.12, Fr.151; cf. Craig et al. 1978:86].

Part of this story was presented by Craig et al. (1978:2, 86) to construct an argument for the persistence of religious beliefs and practices from pre-colonial to modern times. Others have uncritically promoted this argument with the contention that Solares practiced traditional Indian religion (e.g., King et al. 1985:96-97). Absent in Craig et al.'s (1978) excerpt was Solares' explanation for why she was there, or any acknowledgement of the Catholicism which is so much in evidence in her work with Harrington. Contrary to Craig et al.'s (1978: 2) interpretation, she did not describe her act of bathing as ritual, and given her insistence that past practice was to avoid Point Conception, her action was the act of a nonbeliever.

Solares returned to the area with her granddaughter Clara Miranda's family on an outing she described on May 3, 1919, in "Escape from Drowning at El Cojo" (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr. 506-514). This recollection suggests in part why Solares viewed Point Conception as "wild" and "stormy," and indicates that at least some of the women she bathed with at the point in her previous stay were not Chumash. The caretaker at Cojo Ranch provided them a room to stay in, because "It is all sagebrush there and rattlesnakes everywhere" (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr.509), so "One can't camp at Point Conception. Nor is there water either" (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr.508). The lighthouse captain, Harry, his wife Carolina, and a Portuguese woman observed Solares and her companions approaching from Jalama through a telescope from the house at Point Conception, and identified Solares as the woman "who had been working there previously" (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr.508). They made plans to visit with Solares at Cojo over bread and wine, and offered Solares and her party flour and other supplies. Harry was also the game war-

den, so Solares asked, "Harry, may we gather abalones here and other sea products?" (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr.510). Clara, her son, Sisto Gaspar Miranda, and others left from the house at the point for the beach at low tide "to see what it's like" (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr.509). They were soon troubled by the rising tide.

At the first wave Clara said to her son: "Let's go! Grasp on to the stones!" And Virginia had been following them (was still some distance Santa Barbara-ward of them downshore) barely escaped drowning, too. Isn't it a pity [that we were] on a rock that was wet? We were as good as drowned. There is no place to ascend there [Harrington 1986: R1.9, Fr.512-513].

They escaped unharmed and made plans to depart: "We were already going to return home [from] where the light is. I was already familiar with Pt. Conception's sights but they weren't, none of them had seen it. We stayed looking at the light only a couple of hours and then came and started home" (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr.513). The trip occurred between about 1889 when Sisto Gaspar was born and, according to Solares, before the birth of her great-granddaughter Isabel in 1910. Like her previous visit, this one included no religious activities and none of the visitors avoided Point Conception. Instead, after sharing wine and food with old acquaintances, hoping to collect abalone, and being frightened by the tides, they lingered to see Point Conception's "sights," which centered on the lighthouse itself. In closing, Solares said the tides where they slept that night at Jalama were also dangerous, and that she knew this because Fernando Librado later told her so (Harrington 1986:R1.9, Fr.514).

Three Ineseño placename entries for Point Conception are attributed to Solares and were obtained in 1916 or 1919 (Harrington 1986:R1.12, Fr.151-152), and a fourth entry from 1918 seems like it might have come from Solares, given that it mentions the lighthouse, danger of rattlesnakes, and giant ravens (Harrington 1986:R1.13, Fr. 446). Each of the four etymologies for Kumqaq' or Qumqaq'a derives the placename from the mythical ravens, qaq', that pecked out the eyes of the soul.

Thus, they differ from Librado's etymology. However, Craig et al. (1978:82) appended the last two sentences of the following Solares etymology to Librado's previously described "palo carajo" placename, giving an erroneous impression of agreement between them:

Qumqaq'a=Point Concepcion. This is the o.k., clear carefully pronounced form of the word. It has two q in it and one q'. Allí habia el qaq'—por eso decian Qumqaq'a [There was the raven—that is why they say Qumqaq'a]. The qaq' that lived there was a qaq' of the other world. They pecked out the eyes of the soul as it passed—hence the placename [Harrington 1986:Rl.12, Fr. 151-152].

In 1919, Harrington used data he obtained in the preceding few years from Pacífico Gallego to prompt Solares on details of the soul's journey. Gallego was a Migueliño Salinan who worked as a shepherd with Fernando Librado on ranches near Las Cruces (Hudson et al. 1978:176; J. Johnson, personal communication 1998; cf. Mills and Brickfield 1986). Details about the soul's journey were elucidated this way that were not mentioned previously by Solares. The first entry is the source of the clashing rocks motif in Blackburn's (1975) version. Harrington (1986: Rl.13, Fr.19) recorded that "When I tell María of Gallego's two clashing rocks, she says that it is true that there are two pedrones in the cañada where the souls pass, which would desmoronar [crumble] any person who got caught between them, but how could they kill a spirit, she philosophizes. These rocks part and then clash together, part again and then clash together. It is near that place that there was a monster on each side. . ." (cf. Blackburn 1975:99). In the second entry, Harrington (1986:Rl.13, Fr.21) inquired about reincarnation, so Solares reintroduced the motif of the land of the widows—this time forgetting that the women were widows or what the place was called—to touch on the way the women made themselves young again. The entry closes with "Told María of Gallego's mention of breal [tar seep?] as place on the way to Shimilaqsha. María never heard of this (but heard of the clashing stones)."

María Solares did confirm some of Fernando

Librado Kitsepawit's information on 'Anapamu, near Mission Santa Inés. She said the hill was named *Napámu'u*, and on top of it was a type of shrine called an *'ush'akm'u* (Craig 1979). She did not elaborate on *'ush'akm'u* shrines, which suggests she may not have known what their meaning and function were. Solares (and Justo?) also described death and burial ceremonies of the Santa Inés Chumash, noting the marking of graves "of those who could afford it" with a pole, but not mentioning the use of feathered pole shrines in this ceremony (Harrington 1986:Rl.7, Fr.139-146, 219, 245-246, 249-250; Hudson and Blackburn 1986: 79, 97-98). In 1961, an elderly descendant of Solares remembered hearing it said that "as the soul is traveling across the ocean it may fall; that there is a bridge over the ocean and if a soul falls on this side of the bridge, it turned to stone; this happens to the worst people. The good souls pass the bridge and if they fall into the ocean after passing the bridge, they become animals. The good then stay on the other side." He said he doubted this was true (Gardner 1965:293).

#### SESSIONS WITH THE YGNACIO FAMILY

The third important source for Harrington on the journey of the soul was the Ygnacio family of Santa Barbara: grandmother Luisa Ygnacio (1835?-1922), her daughters Lucrecia García (1877-1937) and Juliana Ygnacio (1878-1925), and Lucrecia's daughter Mary Yee (1897-1965) (Blackburn 1975: 19; Johnson 1988:8, 237; Ygnacio-DeSoto 1994). It can be assumed that the younger Yee learned the story from her mother, grandmother, or aunt. Luisa Ygnacio did not reveal her source for the story; but, if she learned it from older family members, then it traces back to villages in the Santa Barbara area (Syuxtun), a half-dozen upper Santa Ynez Valley villages, and/or Dos Pueblos (Mikiw), whose populations coalesced at Mission Santa Barbara (see Johnson 1988:84-85, 237). However, Luisa Ygnacio and her daughters knew both Juan de Jesús Justo and María Solares—they feared Solares for her



mother's reputation for using poisons (Harrington 1986:RI.21, Fr.34)—and may have learned the story from them. Although more elaborate than Justo's brief remarks, Luisa Ygnacio's also lack the detail found in María Solares' story. On January 21, 1914, Luisa Ygnacio gave the placename for Point Conception to Harrington. The second paragraph is dated March 14, 1914:

Humqaq(a)=Point Concepcion. Said that a person who was about to die would be seen by Concepcion people before they died. Atajan el que se ya se va a morir [They grab the ones that are already going to die] and make them return, so they will not die. Dead went west. Dead go to Shimilaqsha. Concepcion Indians tell them to come back and wash their faces and paint them and toloache [Harrington 1986:RI.19, Fr.608-09].

Before soul gets to Shimilaqsha it passes a place where there is a bad woman, who whistles to it and soul comes, but she turns soul into a fly ('aunpes). It is soul of men that she beckons to, and she wants to have them cohabit with her and she turns them to flies. But if soul pays no heed to that woman, it goes on and reaches Shimilaqsha o.k. Luisa knows no name for that woman. Luisa knows nothing of a teeth in vulva myth or anything like that [Harrington 1986:RI.21, Fr.42, c.f. RI.19, Fr.862-863].

The Ygnacios' knowledge of the material did not extend much further. In an undated entry that seems to be in response to prompts using Solares' data, Luisa denied knowing of Wit, 'Ayaya, or the place of the widows; "[s]he knows only Shimilaqsha," Harrington summarized (1986:RI.21, Fr.34). Luisa and Juliana Ygnacio described the festival of the dead (*salismón*) put on by José Venadero Silinahuwit in honor of his daughter Leveráta (Harrington 1986:RI.19, Fr.679-680, RI.54, Fr.312). In the midst of the description, they paused to define *sha'wil*: "shrine for alms. Call the palo and pluma [feathers] Xaxu' " (Harrington 1986:RI.19, Fr.680). That is, they put feathered pole shrines in the same context of death and mourning ritual as Librado did. Luisa also told Harrington about a weather-beaten feathered pole shrine which she had seen at the Goleta Slough east of Mescalitan Island, where beads and other things had been thrown on

the ground (Hudson et al. 1981:105 nt. 69).

A few more descriptive elements appear in the third myth depicting a journey to Shimilaqsha. It was told by Lucrecia Garcia around 1928-1930 (Blackburn 1975:172-175; Harrington 1986:RI.55, Fr.398-406). It contains the dangerous water crossing by means of a rising and falling pole, as well as the generally happy state of affairs in Shimilaqsha that appears in the other stories. It does not specify what direction the land of the dead is in, nor does it mention any places in this world besides Syuxtun (Santa Barbara) and Tular, the Yokuts region in the southern San Joaquin Valley. This Yokuts presence in the story suggests a potential parallel to the likely Yokuts influence on María Solares. In this lengthy tale, Coyote visits the Tular where, to obtain some food, he tricks Duck into thinking he, Coyote, is a beautiful woman. After revealing himself to be male to the now angry and sexually frustrated Duck, Coyote returns to Syuxtun, where he marries Toad. Toad later ventures to Tular country to gather seeds, whereupon Duck obtains revenge by killing her. After verifying Toad's death, Coyote begins mourning, when suddenly Toad's spirit appears to him on three successive nights. On the third night, Coyote follows Toad toward Shimilaqsha. This takes them through dense tule thickets in the middle of an unspecified sea, and across this sea to the pole "the far end of which rises" (Harrington 1986:RI.55, Fr.403). Toad crosses the pole to the other side of the river, and Coyote follows. There in Shimilaqsha, the spirits laugh, dine, talk, and dance. Owl offers Coyote water which Coyote is unable to drink at first because it fades away (Harrington 1986:RI.55, Fr.403-406). According to Blackburn (1975:175), after some games in which the spirits try to kill him, Coyote returns to Syuxtun.

One can also see the Point Conception story change over time within the Ygnacio family. Mary Yee worked with Harrington from the 1920s to the 1960s. She echoed the remarks of her grandmother, Luisa Ygnacio, while elaborating and remaking the land of the dead in popular mid-twentieth century



terms. According to Yee, "the Indians said that the moment a person dies, his spirit at once goes visiting all the places that the person has visited in life" (Harrington 1986: R1.59, Fr.70). Sometimes, the living person even began wandering, and this was a sign of impending death, "before he goes to the happy hunting ground" (Harrington 1986:R1.59, Fr. 63). She mentioned Shimilaqsha and *Humokak* in an incompletely translated Barbareño text describing the soul's travels (Harrington 1986:R1.59, Fr. 137-151). Yee also specifically linked Point Conception to the soul's journey.

The spirit of a person has the same appearance as the person. The spirit can go through a wall and appear to one anywhere. When the person is about to die, sometimes the spirit leaves the body and wanders about. That is because he already wants to go to Shimilaqsha, that is why he is wandering about. When a person dies, his spirit goes at once far to a far country—to the Happy Hunting Grounds. In all this country the spirits swim to Point Conception. From there goes off the trail to the Happy Hunting Grounds [Harrington 1986:R1.59, Fr.286].

## DISCUSSION

In retelling the Point Conception legend and its components, contemporary anthropologists have reshaped both its content and meaning. Previous attempts have suffered not just from incompleteness, but also from the methods of editing and recombining into new narratives, which have introduced significant errors into representations of past beliefs and practices. Our analysis reveals three central points of correction. First, the Point Conception legend had a circumscribed distribution among Chumash peoples. Additionally, other known shrine sites appear to have had similar meaning and function. Third, Harrington's consultants position Point Conception's special use and meaning exclusively in the past by their use of past tenses and the specifics of their tales. It was not contemporaneous with their own lives, and not part of their own religious or spiritual beliefs and practices. These central points are consistent with the archaeological, historical, and ethnographic evidence of cultural di-

versity within the broad anthropological category of Chumash (e.g., Kroeber 1910, 1925; Glassow and Wilcoxon 1988; Hudson and Blackburn 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1987). These points are also consistent with the argument—originating with Powell (1891:67), revived by Johnson (1988:289-297), and more fully developed by McLendon and Johnson (1999)—that Chumash peoples were organized principally at the village level, both sociopolitically and in terms of group identities. These three central points have additional implications.

All of the consultants who tied Point Conception to the soul's journey had some link to the mainland coastal villages between Gaviota and Santa Barbara. These villages were almost due east of Point Conception and near enough for their residents to be aware of that. Justo's ancestry tied him to Mikiw, Luisa Ygnacio's to Syuxtun, and Solares' story is explicitly linked to *Shishach'i'i* (La Quemada). It is noteworthy that Harrington called Solares' story of Point Conception the "La Quemada legend" (Harrington 1986:R1.7, Fr.201). The populations of these villages were drawn into the Santa Barbara and Santa Inés missions, and it is only from those communities that the legend comes to us. If members of these villages believed their souls traveled toward the setting sun upon death, the idea of passing Point Conception might not have been as farfetched as it could have been for most other Chumash peoples. We should not really be surprised, then, that there are no sources for the Point Conception legend from Obispeño, Isleño, Ventureño, and inland dialect speaking villages. Harrington (1942: 41) indicated that an Emigdiano (Castac Ventureño) speaker placed the land of the dead across the ocean. This was Juan "Coluco" Valdez, second cousin of María Solares, who was the son of a Cuyama Chumash father and Hometwoli Yokuts mother. Born at Cieneguitas in 1844 and baptized at Mission Santa Barbara, he spent part of his childhood at Cieneguitas (Johnson 1997b), where he might have learned of the land of the dead.

The absence of the story among Purisimeño speakers is curious, however. There is no reason to

expect the villages north of Point Conception to have had the legend, but the villages immediately east of Point Conception and closest to it also joined Mission La Purísima. Had they shared the belief, we might expect to have some record of it, perhaps in Librado's testimony, since a number of his sources of information on the region were from La Purísima. The catastrophic smallpox epidemic of 1844 and subsequent dispersal of surviving Purisimeños may have eliminated those who might have known the legend (Johnson 1995).

Even though none of Harrington's consultants had seen a shrine at Point Conception, Solares is likely correct that one had been there. The prominent hill at the point provides a setting much like other known shrine sites. If this was the case, the shrine almost certainly was established and used by the neighboring villages at 'Upop and Shisholop. It seems most likely, then, that the Point Conception legend incorporates historically accurate elements as well as misinterpretations of the past. The limitations of the ethnohistoric data do not warrant a stronger statement of finding than that.

The evidence does not sustain all interpretations, however. Point Conception was not the "only passageway" to the land of the dead for Chumash souls, as Craig et al. (1978:1-2) have asserted. Fernando Librado Kitsepawit's testimony, with support from José Juan Olivas and Simplicio Pico, indicates that there was a variety of places where Chumash souls departed for the afterworld. That these exit points correspond to known shrine sites opens other interesting issues. First of all, unlike a Point Conception shrine, these include shrines that the consultants had seen, in some cases when they were still in use. Feathered pole shrines had a number of uses, but some shrines seem to have been primarily for the dead. This is true at least of 'Iwayiki, Chwashtiwil, and 'Anapamu, quite possibly Point Conception, and probably many others linked to winter solstice activities. The Ventura shrines were linked to death and mourning ceremonies held at the winter solstice, a pattern replicated at Santa Barbara, according to the Ygnacio

family (also see Hudson and Blackburn 1986:85, 88-89, 94-97). Not only are there many hilltop and mountaintop shrine sites from historical and ethnographic sources (see Applegate 1975; Horne 1981; Hudson and Blackburn 1986:84-90, 93-98), but there are also some identified archaeologically (Hudson and Underhay 1978:70; Kirkish 1992; L. Spanne, personal communication 1994; J. Johnson, personal communication 1997). Given a precolonial village level of sociopolitical organization and identity, it is reasonable to suspect that each village or village group had its own shrine to the dead which provided a link to the afterworld.

The shrines observed by Harrington's consultants were erected during the brief revitalization movement at the postsecularization Indian settlements that lasted until 1870 or so, when most of its elderly participants had died (Johnson 1995:7, 9). Luisa Ygnacio's Goleta Slough shrine probably was associated with the nearby postsecularization village resettled by Santa Cruz Islanders (Hudson et al. 1978:178-179; Johnson 1995). Thus, it might have been a shrine which did not exist previously, or at least had not been theirs. The Ventura residents Librado witnessed erecting a shrine to the dead were originally from *Muwu* (Hudson and Blackburn 1986:96), and may have been establishing a new shrine site or reviving an old one. Franciscan priests in 1813 to 1815 felt that the sites where shrines were erected "in time came to be regarded as sacred places" (Geiger and Meighan 1976, as cited in Hudson and Blackburn 1986:85). These scraps of information raise the possibility that shrines to the dead were established where convenient and as needed, even by people who resettled outside their original home village territory. The presence and use of a shrine may have conveyed sacredness to a place, rather than an intrinsic sacredness of place determining where a shrine should be erected. But, once again, the data provide for little more than speculation on this issue.

Chumash consultants' placement of Point Conception's religious meaning and use exclusively in the past contradicts many interpretations of Har-

rington's data (e.g., Craig et al. 1978; Matthiessen 1984; King et al. 1985; Gibson 1991). Wanting to find a pristine, authentic, aboriginal Chumash past in Harrington's field notes, sometimes anthropologists have paid insufficient attention to how Harrington's consultants knew and interpreted the past. Harrington's Chumash consultants were born and raised after secularization of the missions, and their testimony on past lifeways often reflects later influences (Johnson 1982, 1988). What they told Harrington about aboriginal religious beliefs and practices was passed on orally to them over two or more generations and reinterpreted at each step. As with all oral history narrators, Harrington's consultants were "simultaneously bearers and makers of history" (Tonkin 1992:97), interpreting the past for themselves and their audience according to the circumstances of the moment and their contextualized understanding of their received knowledge.

What might Solares and the other consultants have contributed to the characterization of past beliefs and practices generally and the Point Conception legend in particular? One of the significant ingredients in the consultants' interpretation of Point Conception's significance may be Solares' Yokuts kin. Solares seems to have joined elements from Yokuts and Chumash stories to Ygnacio Telenuhuit's description of the pool and passage of souls at Point Conception. Without those elements, her Point Conception story is short and lacks detail, and more closely resembles Luisa Ygnacio's version. The possibility of the mixing of Yokuts and Chumash aspects in Solares' testimony is not far-fetched; Johnson (1988:236) found that Solares conflated Yokuts and Chumash kinship systems. Thus, when Blackburn (1975:98-100) added mythical elements to Solares' description of Point Conception, he may only have been following Solares' lead. A Yokuts connection reappears in Lucrecia Garcia's story. Indeed, stories like Solares' and Garcia's flourished with the spread of the Ghost Dance among Yokuts peoples in the late nineteenth century.

The other significant influence on the characterization of past beliefs and practices by Harrington's

consultants is Catholicism. Scholars have debated the extent to which older practices persisted among Chumash peoples or were displaced by Christianity (Sandos 1991; Flynn and Laderman 1994). It is noteworthy that Librado said Solares' Yokuts kinswomen rejected her uncle's request that she be trained to follow her mother as their next medicine woman, because Solares was "brought up among white people and could not be the same as Brigida" (Harrington 1986:R1.69, Fr.997-1000; also see Blackburn 1975:267-269). Harrington's wife, Carobeth Laird (1975:18), who joined him during his work with Solares in 1916, minced no words in describing Solares and her relatives as "all very good Catholics." Librado also admitted his own limitations. He recounted that the old chief of the postsecularization Goleta Slough community, José Sudon Kamuluyatset, told him, "Ah, it is too bad you have not lived with us. If you had been brought up with us, you would have learned many Indian things . . ." (Hudson et al. 1981:67-68).

In Barbareño Chumash, the words for heaven and hell are Spanish loan words, so there probably were not precisely comparable concepts among Barbareño speakers before missionization (Beeler MS:42, 46; Whistler 1980:65). Feathered poles occurred in threes at some postsecularization shrines, suggesting possible use of the Christian trinity (Hudson et al. 1981:104, 106). The "stations" of the Ventura shrines are reminiscent of the stations of the cross. Reincarnation/ resurrection is another potential Christian influence. Librado stated that elements of mourning ritual changed "[a]fter the Indians were christianized," from what they had been in "heathen days" (Harrington 1986:R1.79, Fr.544). Harrington (1986:R1.7, Fr.145) noted Solares' disapproving "pain and disgust" regarding a mortuary ritual "not performed by Christians." Luisa Ygnacio reported that her mother-in-law, María (1798-1865), had been at Santa Barbara when the Virgin appeared at the mission site (Harrington 1986:R1.55, Fr.74).

Further, we know that Solares and Luisa Ygnacio had seen few feathered pole shrines, and



those few were unique in their experience (Hudson and Blackburn 1986:84-90, 93-98). The Ventura Indians, especially Librado and Pico, had more experience with shrines, but they, too, noted the rarity of seeing them erected or used. These were matters in which the consultants' knowledge was often no better than secondhand. Solares' source on Point Conception, Ygnacio Telenahuit, was a secondhand source himself. Neither Telenahuit or any of the consultants engaged in ritual at Point Conception, saw others do so, or saw a shrine there. The Catholicism of Harrington's Chumash consultants has often been shortchanged, and its influence on their interpretations of the past underappreciated. Although some syncretism undoubtedly occurred, we cannot help but note the irony that it was practicing Catholics who told the Point Conception story in the twentieth century.

By revisiting J. P. Harrington's fieldnotes, we find less uniformity of belief and practice among Chumash peoples and less religious persistence than has been reported previously. It is worth reminding readers that our revision applies only to anthropological representations of ethnohistorical materials. Although recognizing that the distortions of Chumash ethnohistory in recent anthropological reporting may help us understand how the traditions of persons who assert Chumash identities today were formed, it does not imply a judgment of current traditions, which are shaped by contemporary sociocultural circumstances (Handler and Linnekin 1984; Haley and Wilcoxon 1997), just as Harrington's consultants' understandings of the past reflected their own life experiences. What Harrington's consultants believed about the past ought not to be presumed to dictate the content of current traditions, least of all by anthropologists.

## NOTES

1. Indeed, Blackburn provided copies of Harrington's original notes to some researchers so they would not mistake his creations for the actual words of Harrington's Chumash consultants (e.g., Johnson 1988:x).

2. The evidence of this oversight is considerable. See, for example, Hudson (1976:35, 1979a), Stickel

(1977), Craig et al. (1978), Hudson and Underhay (1978), Lee and Horne (1978), Matthiessen (1979, 1984), Nabokov (1980), California State Lands Commission (1982), Bracher (1984), Hudson and Conti (1984), King et al. (1985), KCET (1987), Flynn (1991), Gibson (1991), and Erlandson (1998).

3. A significant exception to this pattern is Hudson and Blackburn's (1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1987) monumental five-volume work, *The Material Culture of the Chumash Interaction Sphere*.

4. With Harrington's notes now on microfilm, it was possible to inspect a large quantity of this testimony for mention of Point Conception and stories, beliefs, or practices regarding the dead or the land of the dead. Twenty-nine roles of microfilm were examined. This effort focused on those labeled Field Notes, Slipfiles, and Texts. Rolls designated as Slipfiles were systematically examined for the presence of headings for Astronomy, Placenames, and Religion, then the contents of these categories were thoroughly examined in detail. In the case of the Ventureño data, these latter categories are entire rolls of film. The following roles and frames were examined: RI.1, Fr.1-837; RI.2, Fr.1-761; RI.6, Fr.1-613; RI.7, Fr.1-1011; RI.8, Fr.1-900; RI.9, Fr.1-1154; RI.10, Fr.1-596; RI.11, Fr.1-633; RI.12, Fr.1-684; RI.13, Fr.1-506; RI.19, Fr.1-1006; RI.20, Fr.1-1147; RI.21, Fr.31-45, 64-501; RI.50, Fr.278-469; RI.54, Fr.224-816; RI.55, Fr.1-143, 193-559; RI.59, Fr.1-708; RI.64, Fr.1-1003; RI.68, Fr.537-712; RI.69, Fr.1-1107; RI.72, Fr.147-167; RI.74, Fr.1-666; RI.75, Fr.1-163, 508-588; RI.76, Fr.1-871; RI.77, Fr.1-639; RI.78, Fr.1-596; RI.79, Fr.1-744; RI.80, Fr.1-737; RI.95, Fr.1-85.

5. Since we already have addressed in detail the support for our thesis from contemporary ethnography and the potential ramifications of this historical revision, we do not discuss either here (see Haley and Wilcoxon 1997, 1998).

6. John Johnson was our principal source for the biographical data on Chumash individuals, especially birth and death dates, genealogies, and villages of origin.

7. The individual dates for Harrington's work with his consultants are taken directly from Harrington's notes when available. Otherwise, they are based on Mills and Brickfield (1986).

8. See, for example, Harrington (1986:RI.12, Fr.70-71, 308-309, RI.69, Fr.498-500, RI.74, passim, RI.79, Fr.347, 458, 631, 728, RI.80, passim).

9. If a shrine did exist there, it is unlikely that any physical evidence of it survives, due to the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad and three successive coast highways on the narrow marine bench.

10. For example, see Mason (1912:183, 195), Kroeber (1925:549, 625), Harrington (1942:41), Hei-



zer (1968:55-68), Hudson and Underhay (1978:122-123), and Hudson and Blackburn (1978). In the 1860s, Taylor observed, "The historian of the [Viscaino] expedition mentions the existence of a rude temple and worship of the sun" by Gabrielino speakers on Santa Catalina Island in 1602 (Heizer 1973: 47).

11. According to Johnson (personal communication, 1998), Ajala is the Spanish spelling for 'Axala, Joaquin's Chumash name, and Hudson, Blackburn, and their coauthors mistakenly changed Ajala to Ayala.

12. As Hudson and Blackburn (1978, 1986:82) suggested, the pole erected at a grave may have represented the palo which serves as the bridge to the land of the dead, and not merely among Chumash peoples. This symbolism may have extended to the feathered pole shrine, as well.

13. Hudson and Underhay (1978) and Hudson and Conti (1984) proposed that elements of this myth were associated with astronomy and rock art among Chumash peoples.

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