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TRIBAL POETICS OF NATIVE AMERICA

Kenneth R. Lincoln

An Eskimo poet told Knud Rasmussen, "Songs (poems) are thoughts sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices. . . . And then it will happen that we, who always think we are small, will feel still smaller. And we will fear to use words. But it will happen that the words we need will come of themselves. When the words we want to use shoot up of themselves—we get a new song."

—Paul Radin, in *Diogenes* (1955)

A Papago woman told Ruth Underhill, "The song is very short because we understand so much."

—Margot Astrov, *The Winged Serpent*

Once, over a time of 70,000 years, there were some 400 Native American tribes in North America. For the most part they lived as independent cultures. They spoke at least 200 languages representing the world's major language families. Except for the Mayan and the Aztec, these peoples evolved without written languages. They lived as oral cultures, tribal life passing mouth to mouth, generation to generation, alive only as the people lived. This oral tradition bound the people tribally, as it poetized the "common" speech. The art of language was a daily, shared activity, and the word was tribal bond. The names of 27 different tribes mean, in various forms, "the people." Winnebago means "people of the real speech."¹

These peoples' "literary history" is a function of memory, imagination, and ritual. They still live through spoken literatures. Only in the last century have translators recorded many poems, chants, dream visions, narratives, and life stories of Native America. The anglicized versions come doubly translated—from the native language into English, and from oral presence into print. Poets in the last decade (Snyder, Merwin, Olson, Levertov, Rothenberg, Creeley, Kelly, Berg, among others) have begun to help rework the

translated materials so that the poems still convey living origins.

It appears that the modern American poet is seeking to reinvent, on his own terms, an original relationship to the spoken word, a natural environment, and a tribal audience. His interest in America's first poetries signals an interest in the life and immediacy of his own language.

Tribal life centers in common blood, a shared heritage, a communal place, a mutual past and present. It is imaged in the circle, rather than in line segments. Relationships are at once personal and ceremonial, as a parent to a child or a brother to a sister; all tribal members are specially kin. The tribal values include sharing, reciprocity, loyalty, care, an extended familial identity for the individual, kindness (in the older sense of the word, that is, "of the same kind" and "kind" or generous within that bond, as though to be giving and gracious were natural among kind people). A common tribal language is essential. The Kiowa novelist N. Scott Momaday tells of the arrow-maker who sat working in his tepee with his wife. He held arrows in his teeth to fashion and straighten them, and the best arrows carried teeth marks. Once he saw a stranger looking in and said to him, in Kiowa, that if he understood the language spoken, he would give his name and be welcomed. The man remained silent. The arrow-maker casually bent his bow in one direction, then another, and then killed the outsider with a single arrow.² Words are arrows—the craft, ceremony, power, and defense of the tribal family. A well-made word pierces the heart.

Native American tribes and literatures differ radically. Despite their separateness, they share a tribal poetics resisting European traditions of the poet's primacy as wor(l)d-maker, his craft that orders nature, the fixity of his printed language. Native American literatures, given their diversity, intersect in a common and organic aesthetics—a poetic kinship that tribalizes "the people," creatures, the gods, and a natural environment. The Sioux holy man Black Elk sees all "leggeds" as tribally related. Their kinship extends through nature: "us two-leggeds sharing in it with the four-leggeds and the wings of the air and all green things; for these are children of one mother and their father is one Spirit."³ I wish here to explore that faith in a shared natural poetics among Native American tribes. Rather than isolating one region, tribe, or poet, I consider their literatures as a collective voice. The method is impressionistic, responding in kind to the

This essay first appeared in *The Southwest Review* (Spring 1975).

tones and states of mind implicit in the Native American literatures. The question at issue in this essay is not a documentary one, but whether the essential alertness, energy, and beauty of the poems is carried over to the reader.

Tribal Song

I
the song
I walk here⁴

This Modoc chant lives a sensate being. The people, in turn, come to it for life—tradition, spirit, meaning, play. The tribe walks in the song's presence, nurtured in living, daily song. The literature originates in people speaking ceremonially to each other day to day. Speech generates tribal song. The song's chanted rhythms rise with the heartbeat, drums, moving feet, the dance. Its pulse is human. Here lie the origins of language itself. The song lives in tribal time, in rhythm with nature's cyclic time. The lines are cadences—phrases—what written cultures label "fragments." These cadences balance one another, play against each other in running rhythms. They rhyme thoughts in the following Aztec verse:

The divine *quechol* bird answers me as I, the singer,
sing, like the *coyol* bird, a noble new song,
polished like a jewel, a turquoise, a shining
emerald, darting green rays, a flower song of
spring, spreading a celestial fragrance, fresh
with the dew of roses, thus have I the poet sung.⁵

The poet groups words in parallel phrases, as though words were also tribal, to rhyme a human condition with a natural phenomenon. The imagination discovers metaphors linking man to his animal origins. A Lakota singer laments,

I considered myself a wolf
but the owls are hooting
and now
I fear the night⁶

Or in wartime,

Soldiers,
You fled.
Even the eagle dies.⁷

The poetry implies a sensibility wise in nature. The images speak for themselves without explaining or exhausting the human parallels.

Oral poetry is kinetic ritual, an energy transference. Movement. The body dances and sings alive with the mind. The song harmonizes

the mind and the senses as it "minds" sense. Black Elk advises the singer to see and breathe from the heart's eye, *cante ista*. It is significant that most Hopi abstractions are verbs, not nouns (hence, "to love" or "to honor" are more humanly charged, more active than disembodied "love" or "honor"). Knowing is being, moving. To be alive is to be moved by song, to be alert, quick—as the Yaqui *brujo* Juan Matus speaks of wisdom, "light and fluid." A man of knowledge dances his wisdom.

Rooted Words

Words are genetic sources—first things at one with nature. They provide roots that hold both a beginning and continuing source of origin.

The literatures are grounded in an ecological language, often focusing on a single detail, as in this Ojibwa poem:

The bush is sitting under a tree and
singing⁸

A small bush sings its own poetry "under a tree," secure within nature, not above it. Words are spare, neither more nor less than the evoked "thing" itself. Words as things are left to their essential meanings as nature's less dramatic details receive attention and poetic care. The smallest detail sharpens our attention to the larger world; the smallest insect orders the night's darkness.

The water bug is drawing
the shadows of the evening
toward him on the water⁹

The poems sing the origins of people, creatures, things, in *local* revelations, exactly where they exist. We glimpse truths unexpectedly, out of the corner of the eye, as nature compresses and constantly surprises. All "things" are alive, suggestive, sacred.

Remember, remember the sacredness of things
running streams and dwellings
the young within the nest
a hearth for sacred fire
the holy flame of fire¹⁰

Flux and primal place, fire and nest—the poem's composure is not threatened by change, but accepts change as regenerative. Moving water and holy flame are co-present with the homing instinct. Passing away is coordinate with permanence. And having accepted change, to "remember the sacredness of things" brings a daily

sacredness into the tribal center, despite cyclic change, memory inspiring and connecting the tribe with imaginative origins.

A Sioux holy man addresses a stone with reverence, "Tunkashila," a word that means Grandfather. On the Great Plains, where everything exists through vast emptiness, an isolate rock provides the world's cornerstone, a resting place for restless spirits:

unmoved
 from time without
 end
 you rest
 there in the midst of the paths
 in the midst of the winds
 you rest
 covered with the droppings of birds
 grass growing from your feet
 your head decked with the down of birds
 you rest
 in the midst of the winds
 you wait
 Aged one¹¹

"You rest . . . you rest . . . you rest . . . you wait/Aged one." The rock's patience serves as the poem's refrain. "Base" nature grounds wandering spirits that cast droppings on origins.

Tribal language lives in the natural world, is natural. Words do not come after nature or apart from nature. Words themselves are natural sources, tribal history in the bodies of the people. Words derive from the natural world and remain in it, so the singer feels no split between a word and the thing it names. Language remains experiential, not descriptive; primary, not secondary.

The natural world is tribally kin(d) to man. It is sacred, magical, generating itself despite man. The natural world is timeless, before and after man. People are born *into* their heritage, the tribal tongue, as they enter the world. People do not make up words as they do not make up nature. Words as nature convey their heritage and generate the people in that continuing tradition. The wor(l)d makes people, and to study the word is to study the culture itself.

Instead of rhyming words (the poem as unifying technique) the songs rhyme perceptions, moods, natural objects, the world (the poem as unifying association). Words live in the mouth. Singers chant the songs, drawing tonally on the voice as an interpretive instrument, a human instrument. Pitch changes, modulates, brings out meaning. As in traditional musical forms, a lyric or narrative line threads a story line through poetic time—the "plot"—(musically or narratively, who did what, when, where, how, and

why). At the same time symbolic chords tie the song together harmonically, as vertical chording in music harmonizes a lyric song line. The Tewa sings to the Mother Earth and the Father Sky, and a weaver's loom appears:

Then weave for us a garment of brightness;
 May the warp be the white light of morning,
 May the weft be the red light of evening,
 May the fringes be the falling rain,
 May the border be the standing rainbow.¹²

The formulaic repetition of "May the" ritualizes the song's interweaving, as symbolic resonances between rhymed "things" stretch the song taut (fringes—falling rain, border—rainbow). The craft is organic, discovered in a natural sky. The imagination of a true nature tribalizes all being through association. The Navajo poets sing of "Correspondences":

cotton
 motion
 clouds
 frog
 hail
 potatoes
 dumplings
 cloud water
 fog
 moss
 smoke
 cloud
 rain
 acceptance
 breathing in¹³

Minimal Presence

The tribal poet feels himself a keeper of the sacred word bundle. He inherits rhythm, vision, craft, nature, the word, as truths larger than himself that continue when he does not. He discovers nature's poems and nourishes them, never pretending to invent the "poetic" world apart from nature. Oral tribal poetry remains for the most part anonymous. A poet sings his place in the tribe and nature, taking no credit. He gives his song back to those who gave him the song, humbling himself before the tribe and nature. This anonymity leaves him both unassuming and still dignified, twice honored. His visions feed into public rituals vital to tribal health—communal, open, of use to the people. His aesthetics prove utilitarian, for he believes that tribal life necessitates beauty.

Among the Pueblos "good" and "beautiful" are represented in one word.

The poetries suggest a philosophic awareness of things, their resonances, and their defining

spaces. Objects are defined at their circumferences, where they cease to exist. Space shapes objects; silence defines sound. Shadows and echoes, in turn, silhouette their origins. "Listen!" the poets repeatedly sing, invoking silence as the initial chord of a song-poem. Essential words depend on the silence from which they come. The true poet listens as he sings. As Momaday has said:

There is in the Indian towns also a sense of timelessness and peace. No one who has watched the winter solstice ceremonies at Jemez can have failed to perceive the great spiritual harmonies which culminate in those ancient rites. None who has heard the deep droning concert of the singers and the insistent vibration of the drums can have mistaken the old sacred respect for sound and silence which makes for the magic of words and literature.¹⁴

The strengths of the very young and the very old are the poet's—sensing words in silence, being in nothing, meaning in confusion, the return of the summer sun at the winter solstice.

Only the right word can improve on silence, by respecting silence. Ohiyesa, a Sioux doctor, wrote:

The first American . . . never claimed that the power of articulate speech was proof of superiority over the dumb creation; on the other hand, it is to him a perilous gift. He believes profoundly in silence—the sign of a perfect equilibrium. Silence is the absolute poise or balance of the body, mind, and spirit.¹⁵

Listening is opportunity for learning when poetry and morality fuse in storytelling. Morals remain inherent in the tales, not abstract or announced. The storyteller avoids glossing his truths, for if he tells too much, the listener fails to discover anything for himself. The listener is granted space for his own imagination in the story.

Just as silence speaks primarily to the imagination, so space is fertile without objects. "Nothing" can be suggestive presence. A tribal people learn richness in a sense of less. They know, through a necessary tribal economy, that more is not always better. People in tribal cultures learn to give to live, hence the ceremonial "give-aways" and potlatches. The Iroquois practiced a "busk" ritual of burning all possessions every 50 years to begin anew. Their world could not be diminished or depleted by the loss of property, only rejuvenated. Nature is ever alive with spirits, mystery, surprise, non-ordinary powers, sacred objects, and sacred spaces.

Sacred Play

A sacred world, on the other hand, allows for a sense of mockery and play. Sioux *heyokas* sport sacramentally as clowns, just as the trickster gods play with men. To become a sacred clown, a tribal member must dream a power vision of lightning, for laughter is charged with "the power of lightning" in Sioux mythic lore. Southwest gods called *katchinas* tap into related magic license; they regard laughter as sacred cleansing. Those touched by the gods at play—saints, clowns, priests, idiots, children, the elders—become holy and foolish at once. (In like manner English *silly* traces a double lineage back to the Old English *saelig*, meaning holy and foolish.)

Laughter, song, dance, and chant move humans dynamically into nature. Expressive movements give the spirit an external self, moving from place to place, touching the outer world spiritually. A storyteller mythologizes holy foolishness to release light spirits into their own place next to dignity. Tribal people joke to liven their feelings, to loosen an encumbering seriousness. Their play at once tempers and includes the serious.

The people dance to free themselves, to attune themselves with natural energies. They grieve, in turn, to vent sorrow, cry to air despair. "You have noticed," Black Elk says,

that the truth comes into this world with two faces. One is sad with suffering and the other laughs; but it is the same face, laughing or weeping. When people are already in despair, maybe the laughing face is better for them; and when they feel too good and are too sure of being safe, maybe the weeping face is better for them to see.¹⁶

Tribes discover common secrets in stories that play out hidden selves—desire, fear, shame, shyness—in tribal stories tracing human origins. A Delaware chanter sings,

in the beginning of the world
all men had knowledge cheerfully
all had leisure
all thoughts were pleasant¹⁷

Stories of the "primitive" beginnings pivot on acceptance of contrasts. They release sorrow, spark laughter, inspire imagination, purge fears of sex and excrement and death. The stories give humankind a range from the animals and the earth to the gods and the sky. Black Elk grieves for the broken sacred hoop of his tribe and the withered flowering tree after the Wounded Knee Massacre—"a people's dream that died in bloody

snow"; a Nez Percé narrative poem is entitled "Coyote borrows Farting Boy's asshole, tosses up his eyes, retrieves them, rapes old women and tricks a young girl seeking power";¹⁸ in a Cochiti story, Coyote talks Beaver into exchanging wives, to Coyote's chagrin;¹⁹ in a Hopi tale, Coyote Old Man deflowers the tribal virgin who is courted by men and gods, he escapes, then the rain god hunts him down to his death;²⁰ the Maricopas tell how the Creator gave teeth of the sun's fire to the gentle snake, protecting him from an abusing rabbit, and the creatures in revenge of the bullying rabbit destroyed their Creator.²¹ Gods walk the earth, living in animals. A reverse form of anthropomorphism appears: instead of projecting human forms on animals and the gods, men take their personal characteristics, family names, and clans from the animals—Black Elk, Crow Dog, Lone Wolf, Eagle Heart, Crazy Horse. The natural animal world defines points of reference for the imagination.

No single mood corners nature's temperaments. No single curiosity exhausts the possibilities of surprise. Given a respect for nature's range, the people are free to experiment with nature's rules. They discover inherent truths by trial and error, their own investigation of traditions. Trusting tribal boundaries and a local natural origin frees them to explore within their heritage. The Pueblo tribal member moves over a primal space as small as a mesa top, down through kivas, among family and extended kin, back into a communal past. A plainsman, in contrast, once roamed a thousand miles a season on horseback. This "traditional" freedom, unlimited by environmental boundaries, empowers the tribal member to celebrate his life beyond restriction, momentary suffering, dislocation, or self-pity. Even massive defeat fails to lessen his natural dignity, his rightful place in nature. Sitting Bull told reservation bureaucrats in 1883: "I am here by the will of the Great Spirits, and by their will I am a chief. My heart is red and sweet, and I know it is sweet, for whatever I pass near tries to touch me with its tongue, as the bear tastes honey and the green leaves lick the sky."²²

Sense Magic

The world is magic through symbolic detail. Lame Deer, a Sioux medicine man, says of the contemporary world:

But I'm an Indian. I think about ordinary, common things like this pot. The bubbling water comes from the rain cloud. It represents the sky. The fire

comes from the sun which warms us all—men, animals, trees. The meat stands for the four-legged creatures, our animal brothers, who gave of themselves so that we should live. The steam is living breath. It was water; now it goes up to the sky, becomes a cloud again. These things are sacred. Looking at that pot full of good soup, I am thinking how, in this simple manner, Wakan Tanka takes care of me. We Sioux spend a lot of time thinking about everyday things, which in our mind are mixed up with the spiritual. We see in the world around us many symbols that teach us the meaning of life. We have a saying that the white man sees so little, he must see with only one eye. We see a lot that you no longer notice. You could notice if you wanted to, but you are usually too busy. We Indians live in a world of symbols and images where the spiritual and the commonplace are one. To you symbols are just words, spoken or written in a book. To us they are part of nature, part of ourselves—the earth, the sun, the wind and the rain, stones, trees, animals, even little insects like ants and grasshoppers. We try to understand them not with the head but with the heart, and we need no more than a hint to give us the meaning.

What to you seems commonplace to us appears wondrous through symbolism. This is funny, because we don't even have a word for symbolism, yet we are all wrapped up in it. You have the word, but that is all.²³

The world, as tribal seers know it, suggests endlessly.

The seer's awareness remains in nature; his imaginings are realities. Momaday's muse cautions him; if dreams are unreal, then so are dreamers.²⁴ The seer feels the world "real" enough to be guided by and trust what he feels. He heeds intuitions, believes in a perceptual reality cognate with nature's reality. His feelings carry his thoughts. He walks the Yaqui *brujo's* "path with heart."²⁵ Images, colors, texture and shape, sounds, taste, and smell embody tactile responses to nature's force fields. "Feelings" generate a spiritual sense of the world, the sixth sense, imagination. This sense is felt, though it remains intangible, immeasurable, non-ordinary. Imaginative sense does not negate the natural world or make it secondary; it fuses thing, seeing, feeling, sensing, and knowing. The senses and spirits are tribally one.

The world contains magic. Seers know the world with care, attune themselves with natural magic. The spirit world and the natural world interpenetrate for seers through dreams. A thought is a magic thing, a word the power to actualize spirits. Words are magic. " 'The world is all that is encased here,' [Juan Matus] said, and stomped the ground. 'Life, death, people, the allies, and everything else that surrounds us. The world is incomprehensible. We won't ever understand it; we won't ever unravel its secrets. Thus

we must treat it as it is, a sheer mystery!' " Castaneda, the anthropologist and Western apprentice, must be surprised into knowledge by the Yaqui shaman. " 'We have exhausted nothing, you fool,' he said imperatively. 'Seeing is for impeccable men. Temper your spirit now, become a warrior, learn to see, and then you'll know that there is no end to the new worlds for our vision.' "26

"Go to a mountain-top and cry for a vision," the Sioux holy men say.²⁷

Dreams relay power visions from the gods. "Sometimes dreams are wiser than waking," Black Elk believes.²⁸ Sacramental songs ritualize the dream myths, bearing visions into the world (a shaman is midwife to the gods). Song-poems serve as tribal conductors of dream power. In dreams the gods speak to men, giving their daily lives a sacred strangeness, a "non-ordinary reality," as Castaneda learns. Dreams heighten awareness, as does fear, positively regarded. Dreams prove medicinal, therapeutic. They cleanse and energize the psyche. Dream visions, incantations, totems, imitative magic—all seek well-being and power through forces imagined beyond human limitations. The word-medicine of a Navajo chant, for example, heals a patient soliciting health from the gods. The formula: chant, learn, be healed, remember—

The singer stroked the patient's body
and pressed his body to the patient's body.

Have you learned? they asked him
and he answered, Yes.

They sang all night, and the patient learned
and was well.

Then he was told to be sure and remember all that
he had been taught, for everything forgotten went
back to the gods.²⁹

The poet trusts the healing power of his words. His insights are divinely inspired and yet communal, so that the word *sacred* is again kin with *common*. Black Elk's vision from the gods is of no healing use until the people perform it tribally—that is, locate it ceremonially in the daily life of the people.

A singer works at dreaming and seeing, but needs not dwell on the work. Smohalla established the Dreamer Religion among his people. "Men who work cannot dream, and wisdom comes in dreams," the Nez Percé warns. "You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's breast? Then when I die

she will not take me to her bosom to rest."³⁰ Work for its own sake exhausts men pointlessly. The work can be transcended by a dream ethic, an intuitive morality inspired by gods.

The natural world speaks for itself without shame or self-consciousness. The dancing intercourse of the agaya crab articulates a special body "sense":

... the agaya crab will crawl up a girl's leg
and make her pregnant for him
oh it likes women
the agaya

so sing
touk-teka-touk
cric-crac
tim-tim³¹

The animals' sensuality can be translated into the decorous sense medium of blossoming flowers, the "orchidean" poetries of the Mayan and Aztec, so admired by William Carlos Williams.³² The crab dances and sings its sex, while Aztec flowers bloom on the poet's lips, singing: a word is a flower is the dawn is a quetzal bird is a dewdrop is human life—beautiful, perishable, sexual. "The flower in my heart blossoms in the middle of the night."³³ Passion. And human sacrifice.

Poetry and Survival

The Sioux doctor Ohiyesa says that Native American poetry survives as "a perilous gift." It lives humanly, in the mouth, the torso, the heart. The songs live and are alive by necessity. As oral poetry, they compel listeners immediately, or lose their audience, their right to be. The language is by definition, Momaday says, one generation from extinction. A Wintu singer chants:

Down west
Down west we dance
We spirits dance
We spirits weeping dance.

The lament works its way to health, healing the "down" thrust of death through "dance." While the chant moves "down" to "weeping," it moves simultaneously out toward life, against death's descent. The poem is chanted over and over, ringing with "dance." The true healing nature of dance endures beyond novelty, bears repeating; the singer has no fear of redundancy. The poem ritualizes pain through repetition and accretion, stylizing grief to metamorphose into the dance's life force. Ceremonial movement here counters

the threat to life, the pulse itself answering death's stasis. An ancient Kiowa woman sings as she prepares the earth for the Sun Dance,

We have brought the earth.
Now it is time to play;
As old as I am, I still have the feeling of play.³⁴

Age and encroaching death elicit a resilient human counterstress, ritualized in dance, song, play, laughter, and story. The older the old woman grows, the more she frees herself, by necessity, in playing to live.

Even a warrior meets death with the dignity of poetry and philosophy; his battle with death takes on a metaphysical significance. A Pawnee warrior asks, "Let us see, is this real,/This life I am living?"³⁵ Life is a warrior's perishable gift, the world his mystery. Fear inspires him, brings him to life in humility before his task. His songs request power and courage from the gods. He respects the interdependent powers that Black Elk learns from his grandfather in the western sky, "the power to make-live and to destroy." The spiritual grandfather gives Black Elk a bow and a wooden cup filled with water—the terror of a thunderstorm, the gentle life force of its rain. The warrior's bravery grows out of self-recognized smallness in the face of the universe, accepting that fate will take back the life it gives him for the moment. "Have pity on me," sings the Assiniboine warrior, chanting his vulnerability. He acts from a tribal and religious sense of war, defending his kin.³⁶

The warrior confronts the defining fact of life, not-life. An Omaha warrior chants,

No one has found a way to avoid death,
To pass around it;
Those old men who have met it,
Who have reached the place where death stands
waiting,
Have not pointed out a way to circumvent it.
Death is difficult to face.³⁷

The warrior meets death directly, honestly, with no illusions. White Antelope, a Cheyenne war chief, stood with folded arms and sang this death song as he was surprised and killed at the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864:

Nothing lives long
Nothing lives long
Nothing lives long
Except the earth and the mountains³⁸

One of the Colorado Volunteers made White Antelope's scrotum into a tobacco pouch.

Tribal Circles

"You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round."³⁹ The singers of a tribally poetic world live in the rounded presence of immediate words. The mouth rounds out in speech, while the printed page remains fixed, rectilinear. The holy man finds his power in natural circles—sun and moon, stars, nest, tepee, tree, flower, rainbow, whirlwind, human orifices, nature's cycles. Black Elk laments that "civilized" grass is imprisoned in squares.

The private vision quest is circular, requiring solitude but not corners. The visionary leaves periodically in order to return. Like the warrior, the poet lives individually for the sake of the tribe. His singing is a matter of life or death for the people. He does not celebrate himself separately, but sings his kinship in the tribal circle.

NOTES

1. Vine Deloria, *God Is Red* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1973), pp. 365-66. Deloria tells me that more than a hundred tribes had names referring, directly or indirectly, to "the people."
2. N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), p. 46.
3. *Black Elk Speaks*, ed. John Neihardt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 1.
4. William Brandon, ed., *The Magic World: American Indian Songs and Poems* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1971), p. 3.
5. A. Grove Day, *The Sky Clears: Poetry of the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 176.
6. Brandon, *The Magic World*, p. 93.
7. Margot Astrov, ed., *The Winged Serpent: An Anthology of American Indian Prose and Poetry* (New York: John Day Co., 1946), p. 124.
8. Brandon, *The Magic World*, p. 96.
9. Quechuan; *ibid.*, p. 96.
10. Hako; *ibid.*, p. 69.
11. Omaha: "The Rock (Fragment of a Ritual)"; *ibid.*, p. 83.
12. Astrov, *The Winged Serpent*, p. 221.
13. Jerome Rothenberg, ed., *Shaking the Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry of the Indian North Americas* (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 310-11. I have rearranged the structural spacing to bring out what William Carlos Williams calls the variable foot in these lines.
14. N. Scott Momaday, lecture at UCLA, May, 1970.
15. Astrov, *The Winged Serpent*, p. 128.
16. *Black Elk Speaks*, p. 192.
17. Brandon, *The Magic World*, p. 100.
18. Rothenberg, *Shaking the Pumpkin*, p. 105.
19. Brandon, *The Magic World*, p. 54.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

21. Astrov, *The Winged Serpent*, p. 267.
22. Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1970), p. 424.
23. John Fire/Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, *Lame Deer Seeker of Visions* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), p. 108.
24. N. Scott Momaday, "An American Land Ethic," *Sierra Club Bulletin* 55 (February 1970): 9.
25. Carlos Castaneda, *A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971), p. 105.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 187.
27. Rothenberg, *Shaking the Pumpkin*, p. 197.
28. *Black Elk Speaks*, p. 10.
29. Brandon, *The Magic World*, p. 64.
30. Astrov, *The Winged Serpent*, p. 85.
31. Dominica Carib; Brandon, *The Magic World*, p. 34.
32. *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
33. Nahuatl; *ibid.*, p. 32.
34. Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, p. 88.
35. Astrov, *The Winged Serpent*, p. 109.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
38. Brandon, *The Magic World*, p. 92.
39. *Black Elk Speaks*, p. 198.