

ALCATRAZ IS NOT AN ISLAND: RECOVERING THEMES OF PAN-INDIANISM  
FROM NEWS ACCOUNTS OF THE 1969-71 OCCUPATION

by

SHERRI LYNN MCLENDON

(Under the Direction of Ruth Ann Weaver Lariscy)

ABSTRACT

This paper considers news of the 1969-71 occupation of Alcatraz Island reprinted in Akwesasne Notes, the far-left New York-based Mohawk publication. Previously, media studies of the occupation consider it as a dramatic pseudo-event. However, speech communications studies suggest a consummatory perspective that honors the Native American view of the occupation as a critical event. This study illuminates the struggle for cultural survival and self-determination by Native Americans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century at its "watershed" moment. For the first time, this bounded case study applies the themes of pan-Indianism that are known to exist to the study of news. The study employs a content-analytic framework to identify the characteristics of the themes of self-determination, decolonization, transformation, mobilization, healing, survival, recovery and development.

INDEX WORDS: Pan-Indianism, Red Power movement, Native America, American Indian, Alcatraz Island, occupation, themes, consummatory

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the spirit of Yakima journalist

**Richard LaCourse**

BE RESOLUTE  
FEAR NO  
SACRIFICE AND  
SURMOUNT  
EVERY DIFFICULTY  
TO WIN  
VICTORY

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My heart to Scott Parker, whose belief in me helps me to walk in beauty as well as balance. I place my faith in us, stronger together than separately, yet each our own.

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Last but not least, thanks go to Travl'r cat, who tells me when to quit and eat, and to my beloved, smiling Sparkle dog who loyally watches my back, saves my sanity, takes me for walks, and keeps my face licked clean.

One day in the swamp,  
I listened and heard this song.  
As my ancestors taught,  
I wove a net of wiregrass to catch it in.  
It is hard to dance  
with all these words in my basket.  
So I am telling this song to you now.  
So it is said.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Occupation of Alcatraz .....	1
<u>Akwesasne Notes</u> .....	3
Justification for this Study.....	7
The Occupation and Me .....	11
2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	13
The Topic and Statement of the Research Problem .....	13
Purpose and Significance of This Study.....	14
Research Question .....	15
Definitions .....	15
Review of the Literature.....	24
The News Media and Reality .....	24
Native Americans and Reality in News.....	34
3 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS .....	52
Underlying Assumptions.....	52
Research Question.....	53

Co-cultural Reality in News .....	55
Data Sources and Forms .....	58
Recording Procedures.....	61
Sample Protocol .....	62
Data Collection: Document Selection .....	62
Data Analysis and Representation.....	63
Coding .....	64
Chronology of Events.....	67
4 ANALYSIS OF THE RECOVERABLE THEMES OF PAN-INDIANISM,	
1969-1971.....	70
The Theme of De-colonization.....	71
The Theme of Development.....	90
The Theme of Self-determination .....	97
The Theme of Mobilization.....	106
The Theme of Survival.....	125
The Theme of Recovery .....	137
The Theme of Transformation .....	144
The Theme of Healing.....	151
5 CONCLUSIONS.....	158
WORKS CITED .....	166

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1:1 Co-Cultural Reality in News .....	57

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969 is often considered a seminal event in modern Native American history and the impetus for indigenous peoples' movements worldwide. Numerous studies and essays have previously been written about the occupation. In journalism and mass communications studies, the majority of these have focused on the ways Native Americans were depicted by the mainstream press during the occupation. However, no study has previously been conducted that examines how Native Americans involved in and responding to the occupation represented their selves, peoples and actions. In order to consider this, I have used a methodology informed at every step by the work of indigenous scholars and peoples. My original methodology, which advances a co-cultural view of media studies, defines the characteristics of pan-Indian performative communication, and identifies for the first time the types of language associated with the eight themes of pan-Indianism known to exist, are unique contributions of this study. Using these criteria, not previously applied to an analysis of news stories, this study examines how native voices, as heard in the dominant liberal Native American newspaper of the time, Akwesasne Notes, present a different story of the event and its significance than has previously been told.

#### The Occupation of Alcatraz

The Native American occupation of Alcatraz Island began Nov. 20, 1969, and lasted for 19 months, ending June 11, 1971. The event marked the culmination of a series of symbolic occupations that had been previously unsuccessful. However, in the middle of the night on

November 19, 1969, about 78 Native Americans, mostly urban Indians from as many as 20 tribes, boarded unlighted trawlers to cross the San Francisco Bay. They landed on the island, laying claim to it the following morning using a loophole in Federal Indian law. The event marked the official inception of the national Red Power movement. (Nagel "American Indian" 958).

Made up mostly of college students, and identified with the leadership of Mohawk Richard Oakes, the group primarily wished to draw national media attention to the educational, economic and cultural problems facing Native Americans. The occupiers saw the rocky island prison as a "perfect symbol of their own confinement and oppression" (Loo and Strange 37). As well, they sought to promote unity among tribes and promote tribal self-determination. Self-determination is a concept which recognizes the rights of peoples (instead of tribes or populations) to "...freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (Churchill 328)." The occupiers had a convincing set of arguments explaining how and why the United States government had systematically denied Native peoples human rights. Finally, and most ambitiously, they envisioned Alcatraz Island as a center for Native American culture and studies. Writing in 1974, Vine Deloria said " 'Indianness' was judged by whether or not one was present at Alcatraz...the activists controlled the language, the issues and the attention" (qtd. in Nagel 958).

The new militancy and cultural pride exhibited by Native Americans was initially reported positively in the mainstream press. Overwhelmingly, these images depicted the good Indian or noble savage stereotype prevalent in the public imagination. These modern day warrior was said to be "fighting a modern conflict to preserve the ancient rights of his people" (Weston 137). Readers of the mainstream press were comfortable with these images. Other writers linked

the occupation of Alcatraz Island to earlier “American” causes, comparing Native Americans’ efforts to the American Revolution (Loo and Strange 38).

During the occupation, these meanings were brought to bear. Native Americans on Alcatraz challenged not only the images the world held of them, but also preconceived ideas about the way the world is ordered. However, as the occupation wore on, its allure waned. Richard Deluca suggests that the government's formerly defensive was forgotten as the movement lost offensive ground in the press in "We, the People!" Bay Area Activism in the 1960s: Three Case Studies, a book with a section on the occupation. The press’ denunciations of the occupiers and the chronicling of “wrongdoing” made a case for the U.S. government’s takeover of the island. For Native Americans today, the story of the occupation of Alcatraz may be considered a type of pattern recognition, a “mythic form of organizing experience”(Lule199), which connects and references Alcatraz with other direct actions of Native Americans.

The occupation, a media event from its conception, captured international media attention. Simultaneously, it constituted dramatic direct action for Native Americans. When Oakes and others occupied Alcatraz, they were hailed worldwide as quintessential 20th century warriors. The occupation, a form of direct action, was initially successful in attracting public attention to Native American issues. However, by the end of the occupation in 1971, it was considered a non-event by the mainstream press reporting the waning of the occupation in unfavorable ways.

#### Akwesasne Notes

When Akwesasne Notes appeared on the scene of Native American journalism in 1969, it did so amidst a flurry of activity in mainstream journalism to incorporate minorities into news

rooms nationwide. For the first time, culture had become an issue, and the revolutionary changes of the decade resulted in an emerging social consciousness among news organizations.

A project of the Indian Studies program at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., the newspaper was assembled on the St. Regis Mohawk Reserve, near Rooseveltown, N.Y. Its editorial staff, a committed "Indian communications unit" named White Roots of Peace, was made up of volunteers of the Akwesasne (Mohawk) Nation. These volunteers were spiritual traditionalists and generally opposed tribal leaders that had adopted the dominant culture's ways of living and doing. As a result of their efforts, Akwesasne, also called the "Land Where the Patridge Drums," became a center for information about Native Americans and indigenous peoples.

Circulation in November 1969 was at 7,000, and "an important voice," the paper's editors suggested. Subscriptions rates were not fixed; the paper was distributed Indian style, or "sent where it will be read whether people can help with printing costs or not."

In its early days, Akwesasne Notes focused on news of Native Americans: the occupation of Alcatraz, the American Indian movement, reservation issues and others, writes Margot Adler in Drawing Down the Moon, a journalistic account of neo-paganism in the United States. "It described with unparalleled excellence and accuracy the occupations, arrests, trials, shootings – all facets of Native American political struggles in North America. In addition, it combined religious traditionalism and political radicalism in a unique way" (377). This combination of spiritual reclamation with political action recalls Gandhi's commitment to spiritual unity across religious lines in India a few decades earlier. The readers' experiences as Native Americans were confirmed by the double shot of injustice reflected in the news in Akwesasne Notes. When

combined with the pan-Indian ideals of a spiritual ecology and living what one believes, the political agenda gained steam.

The impact of Akwesasne Notes on the Red Power and indigenous people's movements was a sterling example of media activism. Giroux, a cultural critic, says the media activist "excavates, affirms, and interrogates the histories, memories and stories of the devalued others who have been marginalized from the official discourse of the canon" (545)." The editorial staff at Akwesasne Notes sought out elders among their people and recorded their stories. They affirmed the individual and collective experiences of Native Americans as colonized peoples. They revitalized the people's relationship with the land and one another. They questioned the institutions of the colonizing society and paved the way for dialogues valuing Native voices and placing Native concerns at the center of the public agenda.

So if Akwesasne Notes was remarkable for what it did for the American politics and spirituality, it was also remarkable for what it didn't do. That is, the paper "did not romanticize the situation of Native Americans, as many whites tend to do" (Adler 378). The newspaper also pictured ancient traditions as fragmented, though holding "answers to the problem of how to live a human life on the North American continent" (Adler 378). Mainstream publications often tend to depict the diversity of extant Native American spiritual tradition as a complete, one-size-fits-all religion; nothing could be further from the truth. By 1971, the end of the occupation dawned. Within the 19-month span of time, Akwesasne Notes' circulation had swelled to 18,000 copies (Akwesasne 3:5 1)

This study focused on Akwesasne Notes for several important reasons. The far left voice of the Red Power Movement, its first volume appeared in 1969 and its tenth edition exactly coincided with the occupation. The occupation was featured on the front page of that edition and

took up much of the inside space. The newspaper was constructed of primarily of reprints from mainstream news about Native Americans. The paper also held Native-authored editorials, poems, letters and art expressing Native American views about the occupation. Therefore, this study is limited to Akwesasne Notes from November 1969 until July 1971 (one month after the occupation ended) and considered all stories, letters, editorials, poems, etc., containing information or opinions about the occupation of Alcatraz Island. This limitation narrowed the study significantly in scope, but the variety of forms provided rich, working text large enough for interpretation. The focus was furthered narrowed by concentrating only on the words and actions of Native Americans in items about the occupation.

Because this study is bounded by time (November 1969-July 1971) and space (Alcatraz Island), it is said to have a "bounded system." This is typical of descriptive, qualitative case studies. In this specific case study, the "case" is the occupation of Alcatraz Island by Native Americans. And, like other case studies, this one considers multiple sources of information including news stories, poems, letters to the editor, editorials, photos and handwritten comments appearing in Akwesasne Notes during the period of occupation. This data makes a holistic analysis of the occupation possible. Through the analysis and interpretation of the themes of pan-Indianism present in this data, a detailed, multi-layered description of the occupation becomes possible. Pan-Indianism refers to a shared culture and language between tribal communities, as a result of their experiences as conquered peoples. This definition is expanded and refined later in this study. The focus on this case is because of its uniqueness as the seminal moment of pan-Indianism in the modern era.

The narrative form for the analysis combines a chronological and a cyclical approach. It relies on thematic descriptions of the events of the occupation.

### Justification for this Study

Previously, the occupation has been viewed from two primary social movement perspectives: that of the dramaturgical pseudo-event on the part of Euro-Americans, and as a critical event by Native Americans.

Pseudo-events are planned events or happenings with their value dependent upon its coverage in the news media. False or contrived events which often appear to be real, pseudo-events are enacted by public actors. These actors may have an agenda or promote an ambiguous truth. Most importantly, says Boorstin, who coined the phrase in 1961, pseudo-events are “more dramatic” than real news, with discernible and/or elite actors, built-in newsworthiness, sociability and convenience, and which promote staged and repetitive events spawning other pseudo-events (40).

The occupation of Alcatraz, on the surface and from an outsider's perspective, fit Boorstin's description. The occupation was planned, as were its press conferences. Its success, organizers thought at the time, was dependent on news coverage. The dramatic press conferences, staged by attractive public actors, were designed to bring attention to the problems Native Americans faced in their relationship to society and the federal government. And, because of the romantic notions about Native Americans held by the mainstream, the occupation had built-in newsworthiness, sociability and convenience. Finally, other Native American occupations of abandoned federal land followed the first. It was, one might say, a textbook case.

The dramaturgical interpretation of the occupation by Euro-Americans assumes a certain point of view. In terms of mainstream news, the role of Indians in America had been scripted by a patriotic mythology of How the West Was Won. The press, familiar with the roles, assigned them accordingly, making it easy for the public to romanticize about and sympathize with the

mediated experience of the Indians. In this interpretation, the press conference constitutes the meaningful, newsworthy action. In this view, social consensus is maintained. For mainstream, white patriotic American audiences, the occupation fulfilled the entertainment function of news, providing modern "wild west" show for their edification and enjoyment.

A primary distinction for understanding the importance of the occupation of Alcatraz Island for Native Americans is its designation as a critical event in Native American history. Critical events are "contextually dramatic happenings, such as economic depressions, environmental disasters, intense physical confrontations, strategic initiatives by a social movement organization, or new public policies" (Pride 5). For Native Americans, the occupation was part of an ongoing, centuries long battle for cultural survival. In this context, the use of the pseudo-event, already proven successful in the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, was simply part of a strategic initiative. From the critical event perspective, the pseudo-event becomes a tool or mechanism, part a proven template for challenging the social order.

The understanding of the occupation as a critical event is fundamental when considering Native Americans views of the Alcatraz occupation. At Alcatraz, occupiers attempted – for the first time since the 1893 massacre of spiritualist Ghost Dancers at Wounded Knee - to integrate their traditional beliefs with their actions in the world. Certainly, the public action was "dramatic" and the press conference "scripted," but the experience on the island was a lived one, part of the everyday experience of the people, and was not mediated by the press reporting it. The occupation drew on a stock of shared cultural meanings growing out of the processes of colonization, removal, termination, relocation and survival. The messages of this dramatically presented news, was critical of the "American" way. The result was a shared cultural language of

pan-Indianism. Recognizing that language, and the themes around which it is organized, remains at the center of this project.

Pride notes that "A critical event focuses public attention, which is itself a scarce resource in the claims-making process. It invites the collective definition or redefinition of a social problem when movement activists, media operatives and others compete over the meaning assigned to the issues evoked. A redefining critical event occurs when the the perception of reality surrounding movement issues shifts markedly among elites and mass publics"(5). The critical event, for Native Americans, was cultural survival. The occupation of Alcatraz Island was a redefining moment in their histories. Centuries of economic, religious, linguistic and cultural repression by Euro-American governance had taken their toll. The problems Native peoples faced were contextually dramatic: they were threatened with genocidal policies, economic depression, environmental disasters and intense physical confrontations as part their everyday lives. Turning the tide would require a strategic initiative, a strong social movement organization and new public policies. Turning the tide would mean Native peoples would have to take back something stolen from them. The strategic initiative would have to be something big and bold. The strategic initiative would be the occupation of Alcatraz Island, a direct action against the United States government.

Direct action, or a physical, bodily action of protest against a government or policy, is a means of wielding power both within and as a community. The concept of direct action is rooted in the work of Georges Sorel, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century French sociologist, who analyzed direct action in terms of its effectiveness against economic and political power, most notably as sabotage and strikes. One type of direct action, civil disobedience, was introduced by Henry David Thoreau, and used successfully by Gandhi in India in the 1940s (Bernard 84). Civil

disobedience involves the obligation of the individual to deliberately and consciously break an unfair law to make an ethical statement. By the 1950s, civil disobedience had become almost commonplace in communities across the country as “sit-ins, demonstrations, marches, walks, vigils and disruptions became expectable ways of exerting power, the power of numbers and of access to the public by way of the media” (84-85). This was especially true of college-aged students, and the occupiers' relative youth and association with the new Indian studies department at San Francisco State College ensured their efforts would be linked with radical student movements of the time. Direct action and civil disobedience had been refined as tools in the civil rights movement, especially by African Americans.

Over the course of the next 35 years, activists would reference the occupation as having accomplished “important enduring objectives” as “it put Indians and the Red Power movement on the political map, and it became a watershed in indigenous politization and protest” (Loo and Strange 39). According to Deloria, the occupation of Alcatraz was the “master stroke of Indian activism” (qtd. in Johnson et al. 30). By the end of the occupation, Alcatraz Island had become sanctified, sacred ground for Native Americans (Loo and Strange 40) and, in a few years old stomping grounds for theorists interested drama and communication.

Missing from the literature on this seminal event in Native American history is analysis of its presentation by native voices. This analysis is the unique contribution of this study. Further, this study is uniquely justified for its application of a methodology not previously used for journalistic applications. While indigenous peoples' methodology has been previously used to construct and analyze narratives, it has not previously been applied to news stories. Finally, this study is an important contribution to the Native American literature on the occupation event

because it provides documentation of previously discounted voices and viewpoints about the occupation and its importance.

### The Occupation and Me

The occupation of Alcatraz Island is a significant event for me personally as a white American with seventh generation Native American heritage. The study is an outgrowth of my personal interest in my Cherokee and Creek ancestry and respectful ways to incorporate that heritage into my lived identity. My ancestors were forced to assimilate into white culture, particularly following the forced march of Native Georgians during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though this sounds like ancient history, it is not. Older members of my family hid their Native ancestry for decades for fear of social repercussions. Up through the late 1920s, individuals of Native American descent could be targeted by the federal government for the confiscation of their lands, deportation to reservations and the removal of their children to boarding schools. As a practicing journalist, and a journalism graduate student, newspaper coverage of major events is something I have been trained to follow, research and write about. These two primary interests led me to consider the occupation as a starting place for the integration of these interests, as the event inspired others of Native descent to reclaim their ancestry and identity.

I first learned of the occupation of Alcatraz Island in the late 1980s when I was a student of dance performance and choreography. This occurred through Michael Smuin's work for the San Francisco Ballet, A Cry For Dead Warriors, featured in the PBS Dance in America series for television. The ballet is essentially a romantic tragedy about a pair of star-crossed lovers who, like Romeo and Juliet, are separated through the cruelty of prejudice and bigotry. The work combined classical dance movement with Native American motifs and "realistic" depictions of the treatment of American Indians. The choreographer's inclusion of a documentary about the

occupation of Alcatraz Island the end of the reel caught my attention. My questions about the occupation eventually led me to this topic.

Throughout the last six years, my studies of the occupation of Alcatraz Island have challenged my own romantic notions about the way the world works and the roles Native peoples are assigned on the world stage. The process of writing about the occupation has taken that challenge to an additional level, changing the way I live my everyday life, the way I write and the way I relate to the world around me. This study has changed the pattern of my beliefs and has made it possible for me to tell another version of the "truth." Through this work, I have begun to hold a vision for the future of journalism, one in which all peoples are depicted equally and with respect.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Conceptual Framework of this project assumes it is possible to identify certain themes of pan-Indianism in the pages of Akwesasne Notes during the period of the occupation of Alcatraz Island. My intention is to apply a content analytic framework that delineates how to identify certain themes of pan-Indianism. Using selected words and phrases from the news stories, I hope to illustrate how Native peoples constructed and wrote about the event. Akwesasne Notes editors grouped news stories and other items about the occupation of Alcatraz Island into interrelated sets that take into account the relationship of the stories to one another and to the community. That is, the stories were grouped according to common themes, or underlying ideas communicating values and meaning drawn from the Native American experience after colonization. This way of constructing reality suggests that a thematic approach to the study of the Native American press is most appropriate to this study.

#### The Topic and Statement of the Research Problem

Journalistic objectivity and standard news gathering practices may lead to news stories drawing on stereotypes when depicting Others, in this case, Native Americans. The Native American occupation of Alcatraz Island in November 1969 was the seminal moment of pan-Indianism, a nationalistic movement uniting Indians across tribal lines (Smith and Warrior 26). The movement had a strongly articulated agenda for the advancement of Native peoples.

It is widely accepted that news writers have a responsibility to fairly represent the peoples they write about. Because the American experience and the Native American experience are not the same, American news writers need to constantly check their own perceptions and writing for adherence to the principles of fair representation. This work recognizes that the Native American experience in the modern era exists both within – and apart from – the American experience.

#### Purpose and Significance of This Study

The purpose of this study is to recover themes of pan-Indianism from Akwesasne Notes from news stories, poems, letters to the editor, editorials, photos and handwritten comments about the occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969-71. The use of a case study design and the application of a content analytic framework result in a description of themes and patterns of pan-Indian language and culture. The analysis of these themes makes possible a version of the occupation respecting the viewpoints and experiences of Native persons occupying the island or identifying with the Red Power movement. This is significant because news about the occupation, even news that was sympathetic to the objectives of occupiers, was told from the perspective of the American experience as opposed to the Native American experience.

This work hopes to contribute primarily to scholarly research and literature concerning Native Americans in the mass media and secondarily to concerns related to journalistic practice. The audience for this work is the journalism and mass media academic community and journalism practitioners working in the field.

### Research Question

RQ1: To what extent did Akwesasne Notes editors choose news that represents the themes of pan-Indianism known to exist?

### Definitions

Key terms are defined here to provide a working knowledge of concepts needed to understand the underlying assumptions of this work. Other terms will be defined as introduced.

Pan-Indianism has three working definitions depending on context. Smith and Warrior write that pan-Indianism in 1969 was an emerging political movement uniting Indians across tribal lines (26), with a strongly articulated agenda for the advancement of Native peoples in the United States. This usage is the one used in this paper unless otherwise noted. However, Smith and Warrior note that by the late 1980s and early 1990s, critics accused the American Indian Movement, or AIM, of "diluting tribal differences into a generic, pan-Indian culture almost as harmful as assimilation" (279). Assimilation is generally understood as the absorption of Native Americans into white culture, though in this context it could also be applied to the blurring of lines between differing Indian cultures. Such a definition of pan-Indianism would ignore the important differences between Indian nations and communities. Though this latter definition is not one I personally advance in the context of this work, it does appear to shed light on the confusion of identities by Native peoples in the Red Power movement. Although some writers use the term supra-tribal as a synonym for pan-Indianism, I consistently use pan-Indianism, unless cited in a direct quotation from a source.

Today, the term pan-Indianism may also be used to describe an international agenda for the advancement of indigenous peoples. The term indigenous peoples refers to the native peoples inhabiting a land prior to colonization by Europeans and includes the native peoples of North America as well as the native peoples in other parts of the world, such as South America, Africa and New Zealand, among others. The use of the term "internationalizes the experiences, the issues and the struggles of some of the world's colonized peoples," according to an expert on indigenous methodologies, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (7). Its use is predicated on the basic assumption that indigenous peoples have a common, shared experience of being "colonized," with similar difficulties arising from that experience. The term's use originated in the United States and Canada in the 1970s, and its plural form, peoples, recognizes the differences between different indigenous nations (7). This usage retains the spirit of the original usage of the term of pan-Indianism, satisfies the later critique of the term, and may be used interchangeably in discussions of strategies of native peoples to further the object of self-determination.

A social movement is most simply defined as "a group of people wanting change who have banded together for that purpose" (Combs 170). The Red Power Movement, which banded Native Americans together for change, had political, religious and social objectives intended to revitalize Native peoples and cultures. However, this study recognizes that while the Red Power movement utilized the tactics of social movements, it actually had a human rights agenda (Churchill 327) and is more accurately considered from that perspective. Instead of considering themselves a minority populations, or subparts of a parent nation, Native activists considered themselves representative of

sovereign peoples, with inherent rights to self-determination, who had been dominated, exploited and subjugated against their wills by colonizers, in this case, the United States.

From this perspective, we may begin to understand an additional interpretation of the occupation that is often implied but rarely stated. In some sense, the occupation of Alcatraz may be seen as a sort of "coup d'etat... a planned movement of moderate duration, which seizes power and overthrows the existing government" (Combs 169). This position has not been previously advanced in literature about the importance of the occupation, though it is borne out Smith and Warrior's account of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's now-historical attempts of silencing Native activists during this era.

Occupation is defined as a "dramatic tactic in which the protestors take over or invade a place, usually one of symbolic significance" (Combs 189). Occupations are considered a quasi-violent tactic, that is, they are not necessarily violent, but are effective because they may provoke acts of violence against the occupiers (187-188).

The occupation of Alcatraz is often referred to as revolutionary. A revolution is "a political drama in which members of the audience invade the political stage of 'normal' elite drama, take over the play, and change the script," according to Combs (180). Some writers compared the occupation to the American Revolution, stressing its revolutionary nature. This contrasts with the conception of the occupation as an attempted coup d'etat.

The Red Power Movement refers to the human rights movement for the recognition of the rights of native peoples. It predates the American Indian Movement, a radical activist social movement organization "founded in 1968 to promote civil rights for Native Americans" (100 Questions 10). The occupation of Alcatraz is most aptly portrayed as part of the Red Power Movement, as the occupants may or may not have

been members of the AIM organization. The Red Power Movement may be best defined as a revitalization movement "that attempts to regenerate through dramatic action, the values, institutional force and 'vigor' of a group" (Combs 183). The group of American Indians on the island said they felt their peoples were in danger of dying off and one of their objectives was to bring their cultures back to life.

Throughout this work, I have generally used the term culture in an anthropological sense. That is, I refer to a "pattern of beliefs and values, reflected in artifacts, objects, and institutions, that is passed on from generation to generation" (Berger 136). In this study, the artifact being studied for the patterns of culture is a culturally oriented Native American newspaper.

Another term with multiple levels of meaning is text. In its simplest sense, I use text to describe a physical document made up of signs and codes that have meanings. There are four types of texts in this study. The following describes how they are conceived in the context of this study. First, there is the overview text comprised of all editions of Akwesasne Notes. Second, there is the working text of stories and items in Akwesasne Notes communicating news, opinions and views of the occupation of Alcatraz. Third, there is the fragmented text consisting of the coded raw materials, the words and actions of the occupiers. Fourth, there is the narrative text constructed from the fragmented text, which attempts a thematically organized version of the news of the Alcatraz Island that respects a Native American viewpoint.

Throughout the 1950s, during the Truman years, efforts were made to end the relationships between the United States and its Native. These efforts were through the general policies of tribal termination, assimilation and relocation. The first of these,

assimilation, refers to the government's continued efforts to mainstream Native Americans as quickly as possible, making them more and more like white Americans through the disciplines of religion and education, among others.

The second of these, termination, would erase certain tribes' "government-to-government relationship to the United States," according to Smith and Warrior (7). The former reserve areas would then "fall under the jurisdiction of whatever states and counties they were in..." (7). The third policy, relocation, supported these objectives. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, or BIA, offered Native American individuals "a one-way bus ticket, assistance in finding work, and housing and free medical care for one year" (7). The policy of relocation "encouraged Indians to abandon their lives on reservations for supposedly brighter futures in America's booming cities" (7).

American Indian and Native American are used as interchangeable terms in the context of this paper. Generally, Native Americans maintain membership in a federally recognized tribe or maintain a relationship with a tribal community. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the occupation inspired young Native Americans who had lost contact with their communities to reclaim their Indian identity.

Native American identity is layered. Joanne Nagel suggests ethnic identity as American Indian or Native American is a social construction. Most Indians who refer to themselves as American Indians generally do so when they choose not to specify their tribal affiliation or when talking with non-Indians ("American Indian" 950). Layered identities may be "sub-tribal (clan, lineage, traditional), tribal (ethnographic or linguistic, reservation-based, official), regional (Oklahoma, California, Alaska, Plains), supra-tribal or pan-Indian (Native American, Indian, American Indian)" ("Constructing Ethnicity"

152). Layered identity is naturally occurring in Native American culture, as opposed to legislated identity, which is determined by federal policies related to blood quantum, or percentage of Indian blood, and tribal registration.

The term urban Indian describes bicultural, multi-tribal Native Americans living in U.S. cities. These individuals are seen as “worldly sophisticated...more independent of tribal strictures, more accepting of Pan-Indian ideas, and more politically active and militant than their elders” (Olson and Wilson 163-66). The occupiers of Alcatraz were mostly from this group.

A tribe is a "society of people bound by blood ties, family relations and a common language...their own religion and political system" (100 Questions 7). Many Native Americans, like Ward Churchill, a Native American scholar and Creek/Cherokee Metis, dislike the use of the word “tribe” to describe Indigenous peoples because of its context, drawn from the language of animal husbandry. Instead, Churchill suggests that Indians be "...identified as members of peoples understood to constitute nations in our own right" (293). He contrasts this identification to "...being cast as members of groups commonly perceived as comprising something less – a community, say, or a family, a clan, a "minority group," or a "tribe..." (293). Though tribe is a common-in-usage word, I prefer and advance Churchill's definition and more often describe Native Americans as peoples who are members of nations. During the occupation, Native activists often did not make these distinctions. Today, there are more than 550 federally recognized tribes in the United States (100 Questions 7). Enrollment in a tribe is a type of legislated identity and many Native Americans do not register as a form of protest.

Tribal sovereignty refers to the rights of native peoples to autonomous self-governance. In the United States, Indians can "govern their own territory and internal affairs...affirmed and upheld by treaties, case law and the Constitution" (100 Questions 8). The ongoing issues related to the concept of sovereignty leads to conflict between Native peoples and the governments of the countries in which they are located. In the United States, the idea is that Indian nations are "inherently sovereign" because they pre-existed the U.S. government, but that they have in the interim ceded their autonomy for U.S. protection. In the 1800s, three Supreme Court cases upheld the right of Indian nations to self-governance as "domestic, dependent nations" (100 Questions 8-9). The occupiers of Alcatraz would challenge this notion of sovereignty in favor of a more liberal, radical interpretation of independent self-governance incorporating self-determination, governmental independence and economic and self-sufficiency. In the 1980s, these ideas were incorporated into international human rights laws protecting the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination.

Native American religions are as numerous as Indian nations and no two native religions are exactly the same. However, there are several general concepts useful for understanding Native spirituality. First, there is the concept of a "Great Spirit that reveals itself through nature and influences all life" (100 Questions 13). Some Native persons practice a traditional religion with this underlying concept. Others practice Christianity. Still others practice both faiths or combine the two life" (100 Questions 13), as in the case of the Native American Church. However, due to the influence of the Red Power Movement and AIM, there are some shared practices among many Indian nations. These include smudging with sage, sweating and praying in a sweat lodge, fasting and vision

questing, singing and dancing, passing the peace pipe, keeping of medicine bundles and ceremonial uses of eagle feathers.

Pan-Indian culture refers to this shared ceremonial culture between tribal communities, together with the shared experiences of Native peoples under U.S. policies of termination and assimilation. The occupation of Alcatraz allowed the time and space for the shared practices and stories of these experiences to develop and gain strength.

Reservations are "areas of land reserved by the federal government as permanent tribal homelands life" (100 Questions 8). Though tribes and individuals may own the land, the federal government holds the title and the Department of the Interior acts as trustee. Many historical studies show that from the 1880s to the 1950s, the federal government depleted tribal reserves as part of the ongoing policies of termination and assimilation. Many rich mineral resources are located on these reserves life (100 Questions 8-9).

Colonialism is the manifestation of imperialism, that is, a general policy of exploitation and subjugation of "others" ensuring European control of lands beginning in the 1400s (Smith 23). Native Americans were subjugated during the period of Euro-American colonial expansion. It views institutions such as the reservation system and tribal education, especially boarding schools, as instruments of colonialism. Native peoples often reference the time before colonization to suggest natural order.

Nationalism is a type of identification by individuals with a nation-state. In this study, this term refers to American nationalism, or the relationship of mainstream American citizens of European descent to the United States government. In this context, nationalism carries two, simultaneous meanings, says Virginia Wright Wexman in her

book Creating the Couple: Love, Marriage and the Hollywood Performance. First, in colonial terms, it "bind[s] together people in a particular territory as an endeavor to gain and use state power" (71). This bond gives the governing body, and those who support it, dominion over land and its use. Second, it produces "a body of people who are loyal to the imagined community established by national discourse" (71). In other words, Americans are compatriots who feel a common bond by virtue of an ongoing discussion of what it means to be an American. In this sense, American nationalism may be said to be patriotic.

De-colonization is an ongoing intellectual critique by women and indigenous peoples of the attitudes and practices of colonialism. This critique suggests that Native peoples did not ask to have their life ways subverted and that the effects of colonization both in the past and future must be considered (Smith 24). It is an effort to illuminate the thoughts and ways of knowing of indigenous peoples despite the shadows of colonization. It is also an effort to regain the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide. It usually communicates that something has been taken back from the colonizers and reclaimed. The occupation of Alcatraz Island may be the seminal act of de-colonization of land and culture in the modern era.

Post-colonialism is a term used by scholars believing the colonial era has ended. Other scholars who reject this position prefer the term neo-colonialism, suggesting that the colonial project is ongoing. Today, the word globalization is often seen as a synonym for imperialism in a neocolonial discourse (Smith 24). In this light, the removal of Indians from Alcatraz may be considered as part of a neo-colonial agenda, as the U.S. physically re-colonized the island, taking it back from the de-colonizers and restoring the

federal government's dominion over it by use of force. This action denied the rights of Native peoples to take back their lands, culture and legal, economic and governmental autonomy. It also suggests strongly that colonization remains an ongoing project in the modern era.

### Review of the Literature

Bell and Howard's reference guide to microfilm, Contemporary Newspapers of the North American Indian, is prefaced by the following statement. "It has been stated by one of the foremost Indian scholars in the United States today, that if the problems, frustrations, animosities, and what might appear at first glance to be unwarranted aggressiveness on the part of Indians is to be truly understood, the best answers can be found in the contemporary Indian press."

This project searches for those answers, the "real viewpoints and feelings" of Native Americans in the pages of Akwesasne Notes. And, though the editors issuing the above statement do not suggest where those seeking should begin their search, this study begins with a review of the literature.

### The News Media and Reality

Most news media studies of the occupation consider the construction of reality instrumentally, that is, Native Americans were seen as using language as an instrument and/or agent of change. This view is consistent with a dramaturgical view of reality in news, that is, a view of news as drama. To discuss the ways news media construct differing realities, we consider its use of (1) stereotypes, (2) the propaganda model of news, (3) objectivity, (4) balance, (5) news as story or myth, (6) Orientalizing others, (7) American mythologies, and (8) white interpretations of Indians.

(1) Stereotypes. Most journalistic discussions of the way news media constructs reality begin with Walter Lippmann's classic work on stereotypes, Public Opinion, written in 1922. In Lippman's essay, he distinguishes between the pseudo-environment, or the picture in our heads we use to make sense of the world, and the environment itself. In this sense, news represents and makes sense of the world, but it is not to be confused with reality. When constructing reality about people in the news, we tend to map our way through the use of stereotypes. Stereotypes are "excessively simple, easily grasped images of racial, national or religious groups," according to Boorstin (37). This definition suggests a propaganda model of news.

(2) The propaganda model of news. The propaganda model of news suggests news reporting is the result of systematic propaganda or distribution of disinformation" (Lippman 134). The most widely cited work in this vein may be Herman and Chomsky's Manufacturing Consent, in which they set forth a propaganda model of communication. This model focuses on inequality of wealth and power and the ways it influences the production of news and marginalizes dissent. This is accomplished through the use of five filters: size, ownership and profit orientation of the mass media; advertising sales practices; news sources and credibility; flak; and anti-communism (29-31) as control mechanisms. Herman and Chomsky suggest that the five filters operate so smoothly or naturally, such that news producers of "complete integrity and good will are able to convince themselves that they choose and interpret news objectively and on the basis of professional news values" (2).

(3) Objectivity. The journalistic standard of objectivity is a critical and oft-critiqued news practice used to construct versions of reality. Objective news is defined as news that

is "free from bias and individual perspective" (Koch 20). Under critique since the 1930s and most stringently in the 1960s, objectivity is widely considered among news critics to be an unobtainable goal.

Schudson's discussion of news criticism in the 1960s addresses the shortfalls of objective reporting. News critics of the decade found that objectivity "reproduced a vision of social reality which refused to examine the basic structures of power and privilege" (Weston 131). Schudson considered three primary critiques of objectivity from era and found "the starting point of objective stories was an assumption of the validity of the essential status quo" (Weston 131-132). In other words, it did not consider the validity of challenges to the social order or government. Next, he noticed that objective stories privileged observation and undisputed facts, tended to be written in an impersonal style and were organized in an inverted pyramid format. Inverted pyramid orders information so that information deemed most important appears first and the least important, last. This formatting favored the depiction of "events rather than processes." Finally, he found that objective news practice resulted in the position of official sources being reported in a inactive way (Weston 132).

(4) Balance. In mainstream news, balance is a concept within objective news practice used to create the illusion of an unbiased mediated reality. In objective news stories, writers use technical devices, such as opposing paragraphs, to compensate for the need for balance (Koch 20). Opposing paragraphs demonstrate two points of view. Rosen notes the weakness of these polarized extremes. He writes, "The easiest way to produce the impression of balance is to take those two extremes and run them together. Part of the advantage of doing that is you claim to be in the middle. So objectivity understood as

balance helps journalists claim the authoritative middle ground..." (48). Objectivity is breaking down, says Rosen, because it conflicts with the "most basic thing about journalism as an activity, which is storytelling"(48).

(5) News as story or myth. The understanding of news as story is another way the news media constructs a version of reality. In his book Daily News, Eternal Stories, Jack Lule says "News comes to us as story, the telling of a happening...written or spoken with the intention of entertaining or informing"(3). News, then, constructs a story of reality that draws on other stories we already know about the way the world works called myths.

Lule defines myth as "a sacred, societal story that draws from archetypal figures and forms to offer exemplary models from human life" (15). Myths are culturally significant, they reduce human experience to symbols, they maintain the social order, encourage participation or coerce consent, and can suggest social behaviors or actions which may be unreasonable or illogical (Lippi-Green 41).

Archetypes are "original frameworks" comprised of patterns and motifs, images and characters "...taken from and shaped by the shared experiences of human life, that have helped structure and shape stories across cultures and eras" (Lule 15).

When archetypal stories "represent important social issues or ideals," Lule says they become myth which "offer(s) exemplary models that represent shared values, confirm core beliefs, deny other beliefs, and help people engage with, appreciate, and understand...life" (15). News stories may represent shared values, reflect core societal beliefs, and offer a version of reality for individuals to understand the world in which they live. Therefore, the archetypal stories they invoke to construct a given version of reality are mythological in their origins.

In Myth and Reality, Mircea Eliade also notes the relationship between myths, archetypes and the ways reality is constructed. Eliade believed that myth, like religion, gives “meaning and value to life” precisely because it supplies sacred, exemplary models for action in the real world (1-2).

Eliade also saw this tendency in the mass media. He wrote that “myths and mythological images are to be found everywhere, laicised, degraded or disguised; one only has to be able to recognize them” (qtd. in Lule 18). He called these stories disguised mythologies. In other words, he saw hidden or disguised in news stories versions of age-old myths. Eliade cited the daily newspaper (Lule 19) as the primary vehicle for the “survival and camouflage of modern myth” (qtd. in Lule 18). In the newspaper, what was an old myth would be recycled and made new again. This ability of myth to repeat and reinforce itself, and therefore, repeat and reinforce history, is its value, Eliade suggests (Lule 19). In news, meanings become reiterated, and news “like myth, tells us...what has always happened” (Lule 20).

(6) Orientalizing others. To understand the ability of myth, and therefore news, to repeat and reinforce itself through disguised mythologies, this study considers the 1979 work, Orientalism, by Edward Said. Said noted a practice he called orientalizing, a “cultural enterprise in the West used to dominate, restructure and have authority over the Orient” (qtd. in Newton 1004). Said considered the way non-Westerners were represented by Westerners, or Euro-Americans. The resulting phenomenon may be seen as part of a systematic way of representing Others such that one's own point of view, perspectives or ways of communicating are privileged. The emphasis on domination and restructuring of Other cultures speaks directly to the ongoing practice of colonialism by

the West. The ensuing relationship between the Euro-American West and Oriental Other produces a discourse imposing what Said termed "limitations on thoughts and action" (qtd. in Newton 1004). In other words, not only are points of view privileged, the range of outcomes in a given set of circumstances becomes restricted based on these relationships.

The way journalists use myths to shape the construction of reality in news is discussed most fully by Lule, who identifies seven master myths in modern newspaper stories. One of these, the myth of "The Other World," explains the workings of Euro-American, nationalistic mythologies that depict Others. The American myth of "How the West Was Won" falls into this category. Lule says the Other World may be depicted in terms of place: on the one hand, as a veritable paradise of foreign charm, or on the other, as a dark, fallen land where enemies reside (24). Over time, both of these depictions of place have been employed to describe lands inhabited by Native Americans. Additionally, depictions of place may depict social position or lack thereof, or create boundaries between Americans and Others. Lule writes that the "Myths of the Other World offer neat, dramatic contrasts that affirm a group's way of life, position or place" (24).

These contrasts usually depict the place others inhabit as a lawless, primitive land, full of un-Christian or pagan rituals and sacrifices, ruled by a rogue leader with no respect for order, reason or privatized industry. Too, Spiritual salvation is doubtful, as psychotic priests guide the helpless people who probably need a keeper. It is easily recognizable, located in a different, uncivilized place filled with danger and chaos (171).

(7) American mythologies. To understand the ways in which the news media

construct realities about Native Americans, it is also useful to talk about American mythology, the common stock of stories and meanings from which news is made sense of. This mythology was popularized by 19<sup>th</sup> century popular fiction, most specifically, the works of James Fenimore Cooper, Robert Bird and the Beadle dime novels.

Cooper's works, most notably Last of the Mohicans and the Leatherstocking Tales, have been purported by some theorists to be sympathetic toward Native Americans, according to Kilpatrick. However, nothing could be further from the truth. In the midst of public confusion about the relationship of the firmly-entrenched Euro-American colonizers with the Native populations, Cooper's fiction mirrored a set of political objectives. Through his writings, Cooper "was building an American nationalist mythology through identification with the natural landscape and its original inhabitants," according to Raymond William Stedman in his 1982 book Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American Culture (87). Stedman describes Cooper's work as a type of imperialist discourse. That is, it draws the differences between the Euro-American colonizer and the Native Other with a heavy line. Then, by maintaining a connection or identifying with that Other, the distinction of difference grants the Euro-American psychic and physical control or dominance of the discourse. (87). Thus, Cooper's work condensed an ongoing American nationalist mythology that served the interests of the colonizers. This mythology is readily recognizable and referred to as "How the West Was Won" (Kilpatrick 5).

To individuals among whom the Indians and Indian Wars of the 1830s were a current event, the works of Cooper and others created a Nationalist discourse of what it means to be American, according to film critic Jacquelyn Kilpatrick. By the late 1830s – the decade of Indian removal - it became increasingly obvious that if Cooper had influenced newspaper journalists, then newspaper journalists had also influenced future novelists. Cooper was followed by Robert Montgomery Bird, whose 1837 fictional Nick of the Woods featured aptly-named hero Nathan Slaughter, who showed little sympathy for the Bloodthirsty Indians and found their genocide justifiable (7). Dime Novels published by Irwin P. Beadle & Company in the 1860s solidified the racial or ethnically defined rank of Native American peoples as significantly below that of whites (9).

The impact of the works of Cooper, Bird and the Beadle Dime Novels is not to be underestimated. The myth of How The West Was Won prescribes the way the Others, in this case Native Americans, are constructed in news. Since their publication, the way journalists construct reality about Native Americans has been reinforced and reproduced through the use of stereotypes. Here, it proves useful to recall Boorstin's definition of stereotypes as “excessively simple, easily grasped images of racial, national or religious groups” (37). Stereotypes are familiar, faulty images that hook readers into stories.

(8) White interpretations of Indians.

Stereotypes of Native Americans prove commonplace in the mass media and numerous works relevant to this study have addressed the issue of stereotypes of Native peoples. Among these are works by historian Robert Berkhofer Jr., newspaper journalism critic Mary Ann Weston and film scholar Jacquelyn Kilpatrick.

The White interpretation of Native Americans as “Indians” is faulty on three primary counts, according to historian Robert Berkhofer Jr. in his landmark essay “The White Man’s Indian,” first published in 1979. First, whites tend to generalize “one tribe’s society and culture to all Indians” (265). Second, whites tend to conceive “Indians in terms of their deficiencies according to white ideals rather than to their own various cultures” (265). And, finally, whites use “moral evaluations as descriptions of Indians” (265). Berkhofer says that “...modern Native Americans and their contemporary lifestyles have largely disappeared from the white imagination - unless modern Indian activism reverses this historic trend for longer than the recurring but transitory white enthusiasm for things Indian” (266).

Among these is Mary Ann Weston's 1996 book, Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Press, is a definitive work used in college classrooms for teaching journalists to identify stereotypes about Native Americans in the press. Weston's work is based on the ways news writers framed, or imposed order on, news stories. She focuses on writers' use of tone and language, organization of information, form (straight news or feature), and editorial selection (13) to understand the ways images of Indians in newspapers and magazines were presented. Inherent in her work is an ethical criticism of journalism practice, or the ways news is defined, written and selected (14). She says "Widely accepted journalism practices, such as emphasizing the eye-catching and unusual, reporting on events more than trends or issues, writing with verve and color, can also stereotype, misrepresent and trivialize" (14). While the facts were seldom wrong, she argues, the stereotypical images of Native Americans over time have been reinforced rather than dispelled (14).

Weston is the primary print media critic who speaks directly to stereotypes of Native Americans generated during the occupation of Alcatraz Island. She found that the stories she considered "...depicted the Alcatraz occupiers romantically as good Indians, idealistic and noble, dedicated to restoration of their traditional lands and cultures" (139). As the occupation wore on, she found that the depictions of Native Americans shifted. "The romantic portrayals of 1969 and early 1970 were replaced by menacing images of violence and savagery" (139). These latter images, she found, constituted "...a revival of images similar to early views of bad Indians as brutal savages...the dark image of people bereft of civilization was clear" (140).

One thing, however, was different than it had been in the past. News media began to pay attention to what Native peoples had to say, even if they framed it in time-honored ways. "Generally, stories of the era differed from previous times in the attention they paid to Indian voices. These voices – often militant and angry – came from people with names, personalities, and causes, people who were often taking on the white establishment, people who required the press to deal with them on their own terms" (133), writes Weston. For the first time, news about Native Americans generated by Native peoples began to be covered in the mainstream press. Also in the late 1960s, Native American communities began to be served by the birth of the modern Native American press. Despite these trends, Native American speakers and viewpoints continue to be consigned to the margins in news depictions of reality. Even today, suggests Weston, "...real Native Americans, because of their small numbers and relative lack of political and economic influence, are often unseen and unheard" (16).

While Weston tends to group her discussion stereotypes of Native Americans into the categories of good/bad Indian, film critic Jacquelyn Kilpatrick goes a step further to identify a variety of stereotypes readily identifiable in film and mass media. Kilpatrick notes images of Native Americans communicate ideas about mental, sexual or spiritual incapacity. The first of these, mental, tends to make Native Americans appear stupid. The second, sexual, suggests Indians are full of bestial impulses. The third, spiritual, tend to develop around the mental (makes Native Americans appear stupid), sexual, depicts Native Americans as idealistically noble and naturally attuned to the earth (xvii-xviii). These appear in mainstream media as a variety of stock characters Kilpatrick identifies. Easily identifiable are the Noble Savage or Good Indian, the Bloodthirsty Savage or Bad Indian, the Vanishing Indian (a member of a dying breed which is sometimes used as a metaphor for the genocide of other peoples), the Inferior Indian (who is depicted as inherently and genetically lacking), the Stupid Indian (who uses pidgen speech and is rendered inarticulate), the Sidekick (Tonto), the Childlike Indian (who needs the protection of the Great White Father) and the Natural Ecologist, who is uniquely attuned to the earth and its rhythms.

#### Native Americans and Reality in News

Though stereotypes in news cannot be said to serve anyone well, additional literature suggests the values communicated by news may not be transferable from one culture to another. In the case of news transference from Euro-Americans to Native Americans, a small but significant body of work suggests that Native Americans construct their version of reality in news in culturally specific ways. These culturally determined values extend to the way the Native American media construct its version of

reality in news and influences the norms of news practice. The literature in this vein considers (1) consummatory construction of reality, (2) Native American mythologies, (3) Native American time, (4) Native American news practice, (5) the journalist as storyteller, (6) respect as a journalistic standard, (7) ethnicity and journalism roles, (8) economic constraints on Native American journalists, and (9) Native American design norms.

(1) Consummatory Construction of Reality. Most extant studies, though few in number, deal with the way Native American protestors construct reality through a consummatory use of language, that is, a perspective of language as a form of ritual self-address. The implications of this function for the study of news calls into question the unilateral, long-held view of the occupation solely from an instrumental or dramaturgical perspective. Though these additional studies consider selected texts, including quotations from newspapers and magazines, they do not solely consider news texts nor do they consider the themes of pan-Indianism originating in the Alcatraz occupation with the depth and scope attempted by this study.

Nevertheless, the work of several speech communication scholars considering the consummatory function in Native American rhetoric during the period of the late 1960s and the 1970s are useful for understanding the way activists communicated a view of reality in news. These include the works of Randall A. Lake, Richard Morris and Phillip Wander, and John Sanchez and Mary Stuckey. Together, these works establish the consummatory function of language in rhetoric of the Red Power movement, consider myth as a form of organizing experience, and examine Native American concepts of time rendering protest rhetoric effective.

In the 1983 study, "Enacting Red Power: The Consummatory Function in Native American Protest Rhetoric," Randall A. Lake argues that "...militant Indian rhetoric is more appropriately viewed from a perspective which examines its significance for Indians themselves" (128). According to Lake, the primary function of Red Power rhetoric was to reach Native Americans who already agreed with movement goals. All other communication, including that with whites or the government, would have been a secondary function (132). This is inconsistent with the traditional assumption among media scholars that Native American protesters tried to reach whites and influence public opinion. Lake suggests that previous studies have deemed Red Power objectives unsuccessful because analyses have not considered this alternative perspective. In this consummatory view, protesters would have "purposes prescribed by traditional Indian religious/cultural precepts" consistent with "necessary and effective techniques of Indian self-address" (128). The occupation of Alcatraz Island in November 1969 can be seen as a ritual enactment, or symbolic act taken to "enact tradition and thereby defeat threats from white society" (139). From this perspective, consummatory rhetoric in the Red Power movement may be seen to ritually enact "both Indian tradition in general and movement demands in particular" (140). The results sought by the movement included the spiritual rebirth of Indian culture" (142), including beliefs, ceremonies and customs (130); the restoration of a land base (130); self-determination and legal sovereignty (131); and the enactment of the ritual function of language and myth as a rhetorical resource (136, 137). In this way, Native American protest speech acts become self-actualizing and achieve movement goals by ritually bringing themselves into being.

When constructing a view of reality in news, Native American mythologies are often used to challenge American mythologies. In Native American mythology, ritual language demonstrates patterns of usage passed from one generation to the next. These patterns, according to Lake, are the same as those "used primordially by supreme beings in calling the universe into existence" (137). These patterns show up as myths, or living stories of organizing experience that contain and enact tradition. Often, these myths describe creation (137) or invoke a living history, or "story that 'belonged' to and could best be interpreted by Native Americans (Morris and Wander183). Sacred or ritual enactment of the story provides a relevant means of organizing personal and collective experience in the modern era. The myths or living stories shared by peoples of different tribes that help construct a Native American version of reality in the modern era include the creation of Turtle Island, the Ghost Dance, and the Indian Wars. These examples are among those found in the news about the occupation of Alcatraz Island.

(3) Native American time. Another way Native peoples construct reality is by a unique conception and enactment of time. When used by Native American protesters to challenge history, time becomes a "contested symbol (Lake"Between"124). Lake differentiates between linear time, which he calls "time's arrow" and circular or cyclical time, which he calls "time's cycle" (123). Linear time defines the past and differentiates it from the present. What is past becomes history and we evolve, progress or move forward into the future. This is sometimes seen as an outgrowth of a Christian view of creation and the perception mankind's linear movement through and out of primitivism into modernity. A returning of traditional ways, that is, ways from the past, is considered regression and a betrayal of American values. However, the concept of cyclical time, the

type of time evoked by Native peoples during protests, is a concept of a sacred, shared time that is recurrent, such as the seasons or cycles of the year. This understanding of the way time works differentiates the Red Power movement from other social movements, says Lake. Sacred time is enacted by the ritual functions of language and myth and is shared by Native peoples engaging in ritual behaviors. In this way, it may be seen as an important rhetorical resource which "... articulates a time grounded in ritual that challenges prevailing Euramerican metaphors of time itself..."(125). In this way, it became a valuable asset in which to challenge the notions of reality constructed by the dominant society and oppose the American myth of How the West Was Won. Cyclical time also reflected the lived experiences of the Native peoples whose "cultures were closely attuned to the cyclical rhythms of organic life" (130). Indian nations did not keep time by the Gregorian calendar. Instead, the four seasons, the four directions and animal migrations or crop rotations defined daily life. The life spans of persons followed the idea of four cycles, as well, making the journey from birth to aging, death and rebirth. These cyclical patterns of time also extended to the spirit plane and the mythologies and stories of the tribes" (130-131). The ritual invocation of cyclical time, then, aligns and harmonizes the life of the Native people to important natural cycles. It sustains the Native people practically and spiritually by maintaining sacred balance in relationship to the Earth. And, if "[c]orrectly performed...ritual ensures communal life in perpetuity. To accomplish this, the symbolism of ritual must recapitulate the archetypes found in nature and rationalized in myth" (131). The ritual use of cyclical time renders the experience of the people timeless and their survival inevitable. This phenomenon strongly suggests that when constructing a version of reality in news, Native peoples would have invoked a

different set of shared mythologies, completely foreign to the Euro-American experience, to tell the story of what has always happened.

(4) Native American news practice. Culturally determined values may extend to the ways Native American media construct its version of reality in news and influences the norms of news practice. Any serious discussion of the way Native American media constructs reality in news begins with James E. Murphy and Sharon M. Murphy's 1981 landmark book, Let My People Know: American Indian Journalism, 1828-1978. In its pages, they describe the presence of a "...system of communications...among native tribes as a traditional, historical, and necessary part of their society" (v). This communication system was part of the natural structure of Native societies and constitutes a starting point for the study of the ritual practice of news sharing and gathering among Native peoples. Native newspapers trace their history to 1928 with the publication of the Cherokee Phoenix at New Echota, Georgia, and continued in a myriad of forms. "Newspapers have come and gone. The life they enjoyed varied from a brief year to as long as thirty years. Often they were confined to a mere mimeographed sheet, and they varied in professional technique and content from excellent to very poor. But there was always a string of print media either living or being born" (vi). From this information, we can arrive at the understanding Native Americans have a cultural history of sharing stories and news, both in the oral narrative tradition and through the adoption of print media techniques. In 1968, the Indian Civil Rights Act extended freedom of the press to Native American peoples, and opened the door to ongoing considerations of the way Native traditional life may or may not conflict with the American concept of free speech.

Just as there are many tribes, there are many voices and viewpoints represented in the Native press. Murphy and Murphy find it impossible to "...speak about a homogenous Indian press, speaking as 'with one voice' for all the people. It just isn't there. Indians, like all other people the world over, differ in their opinions, their policies, and their solutions to situations affecting the life and death of a tribe and its people" (xiii). Each tribe maintains its own distinct culture and own distinct challenges when faced with survival. The implication is that each tribe must find its own unique solutions.

This study acknowledges the diversity of Native peoples and the diversity of its media, but considers what Native peoples have in common during a specific place and time and the way that information – about the experience of colonization by Native peoples - was shared. The occupation of Alcatraz Island was a critical event involving people of many tribal origins. In the mainstream press, Murphy and Murphy find in the crisis-activated coverage in the late 1960s and early 1970s "little to further the ongoing story of Indian life and needs in this country" (7). On the other hand, the Native publication Akwesasne Notes was read by Indians all over the country and was the most widely disseminated Native newspaper of the day. It addressed integrally the story of Indian life and needs in the United States. It fulfilled the Native newspaper's "special mission...correcting or putting into perspective the Indian news that is covered – or ignored – by the majority media" (72). Basically, it called for Indian problems to be solved by Indians themselves and in doing so, helped create a shared language of pan-Indianism. It is this shared language this study considers.

Native newspapers are unmistakable, say Murphy and Murphy. They describe a Native American media that is "...Indian to the core. One finds news items of interest to

the American Indian alone. This is true to a fault" (viii). In order to distinguish important distinctions between the Native press and the mainstream, this study considers what constitutes standards of news practice for editors and reporters in Indian country. It considers the organizational roles of Native journalists, the impact of economics on publishing, and design as a visual manifestation of these normative processes.

In 1981, Murphy and Murphy find editorial coverage of Native news was almost entirely English language oriented. Editors were often non-Indian, writing was often advocacy-driven, and there were few examples of objective journalism (71). Stories were told from a uniquely Indian point of view (72). Traditions considered too white may have been ignored (75). Specific content areas of interest included legal, educational, health, political and entertainment news, profiles of local personalities or politicians. Important community news included tribal social and cultural activities, intertribal cultural news, interracial and environmental news. Government news originates with the tribe, the county, the state, the nation and the Department of the Interior (73).

(5) The journalist as storyteller. Native American journalists may construct reality in culturally specific ways even when operating within the norms of standard journalism practice. These culturally specific ways may vary from tribe to tribe, but consideration of certain key ideas about journalistic ethics are transferable between Native journalists of varying backgrounds. These include the assumption of the ritual role of journalist as storyteller and concepts of respect and truth telling replacing the mainstream standard of objectivity.

Tom Arviso Jr., the respected editor of the Navaho Times, a daily newspaper, says "Native journalists and the tribal media have now largely inherited the role of the

original storyteller" (34). He, like James and Sharon Murphy, suggests that this means of sharing news is an integral part of the life of Native peoples. "...it is through the telling of stories that the history, legends, myths and customs of Indian people have been preserved and passed on through the centuries" (34). Storytellers have two innate abilities in this tradition: the "power to heal" and the "talent to communicate" (34). In news coverage, this means steering away from gossip and the coverage of misery and tragedy in order to be more profitable. In Native American communities, good journalists are those who "will not sacrifice our own personal ethics or violate our cultural beliefs and tradition in order to tell a story" (35). Whereas the mainstream news story situates the writer in some authoritative, anonymous center, Native American storytellers demonstrate a "lack of presumption" of authority. Instead, they often place themselves in relationship with the community. The story has value precisely because it belongs to everyone, not just to the teller.

The role of journalist as storyteller also enacts a sacred, ritual function that is tantamount to an ethical creed for Arviso and like-minded journalists. "We believe that the Almighty Great Spirit has blessed us with the gift to communicate in the written language as a means to help people, not to hurt them. We feel that if you abuse this blessing, then ultimately it will lead to hurt and sorrow for yourself and those close to your heart" (34). As part of this ritual role, the journalist accepts an inherent responsibility for the well being of the people as a part of his personal ethics. He is a healer, one who restores social patterns that have been disrupted. To betray this trust will betray one's self and one's people. It is a responsibility that requires respect for the community one is a part of.

(6) The journalistic standard of respect. Considered by many Native journalists to be an antidote to the mainstream journalistic standard of objectivity, respect is a concept recognizing the "reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct" (Smith 120). Respect as an ethical standard for the press may offer strong alternatives to objectivity as a professional journalism standard, especially when constructing news stories about Native peoples and communities. The concept of respect places the health and well being of the community and its members ahead of the need for a dramatic front page. This practice communicates a significant difference in media practice from the mainstream. It means, in very real terms, that the tribe's beliefs and customs are observed before news is gathered. It means that "we will not report on some subjects in full detail, or not at all, and those include death, religion and traditional ceremonies" (35). This standard means that photos will not be taken or printed of those subjects. It also means that stories about sensitive issues are not gathered from second or third hand information and that those stories are not sensationalized. An instance of this, conspicuous by its absence in Akwesasne Notes, is the lack of coverage of the death of a child, Yvonne Oakes, during the occupation of Alcatraz out of respect for the family.

The concept of respect is balanced by the concept of truth. Mark Trahant is a member of the Shoshone–Bannock tribe of Idaho and a columnist at the Seattle Times. He stresses "...the importance of a voice that serves a community best by telling the truth, even when the truth is uncomfortable" (107). Telling the truth requires courage and there is always an element of risk because if an editor or reporter makes an undesirable truth public, or assumes a controversial editorial position, he or she might be out of a job.

Therefore, the construction of reality in news by Native journalists could be said to be a balance of "the cause of truth with community politics and everyone who believes in discourse as the best way to inform a community" (113). Reality, as a version of the truth, is somewhere in the balance between the facts of a matter and the values and traditions of the community.

(7) Ethnicity and journalism roles. There is an inherent assumption in many news studies that the ethnicity of reporters and editors changes the ways news is practiced, and therefore, the way reality is constructed in news. For decades, and certainly since the 1960s, ethnicity has remained a factor in reader perceptions of newsroom credibility. Shiela Reaves' 1996 study considers the influence of news organization on the roles of Native American reporters and editors. The study compares the normative attitudes about journalism of Native American journalists employed both in the mainstream and Native American media. Reaves recognizes the tribal level of ethnic identification and the pan-Indian identity that is shared between tribes. She views Native media systems as "structurally and culturally distinct from the mainstream system" (9).

Reaves found that Native journalists "attach more importance to the adversarial and interpretive roles for the Native media system, which they see as a smaller, more focused media system promoting Native culture" (17). The Native journalists are less concerned with getting information to the public quickly than are their mainstream counter-parts (17), a finding that is attributable to the Native ethical concept of respect. Reaves also found that Native journalists "uphold the Western norms of reporting" regardless of where employed and they "value ethnicity and increased ethnic reporting in the mainstream media" (17). This indicates that ridding media coverage of unfair

stereotypes continues to have relevance for Native peoples when constructing reality in news. These results indicate that Native American journalists construct news in culturally specific ways in a variety of mediums and systems, and under a variety of conditions.

(8) Economic constraints on Native newspapers. The economic conditions of newspapers that serve Native communities influence publishing norms. Censorship of news printed by the Native press remains a concern throughout most of Indian Country. Murphy and Murphy's survey of Native papers show that though a few Native papers are independent, many have tribal officials as publishers or receive funding through the government. This circumstance means that tribal officials may try to restrict news coverage that is critical of the council's governance. Some papers are not profitable, due to the relative poverty level of the people, and the outside support is often needed. Publication schedules, and therefore circulation, is erratic. Staff may be limited along with the budget. The publications themselves are often tabloid style rather than broad sheet, or may be photocopied onto white paper. These considerations make it difficult to appeal to advertisers. And, because of the isolation of Native communities, the reporters and editors may also feel isolated in their efforts to report news fairly (71). Numerous articles and studies addressing the economic concerns associated with news practice suggest that these constraints often impacted the way reality was constructed in Native news media in 1969 as well as today.

(9) Native American design. Another view about the way Native American media constructs reality in news is through design, or the way information is placed on the page. In the article "Living Picture: Design and the Native Press, Lucy A. Ganje suggests the existence of an underlying Native paradigm that guides the way news is chosen and

presented (31). This way of constructing reality takes into account certain pan-Indian influences, such as a bias in favor of visual approaches to media that honors the uniqueness of communities. This means the Native press can choose to incorporate indigenous concepts into its design. Among these may be concepts about what is sacred to the people. For example, colors and the four directions may have special meanings within the community. Use of design elements inspired by the landscape places the individual and community in relationship to the earth. Arrangement of stories on the page considers the cyclical order of life, which is symbolized by the medicine wheel, or hoop. Though crudely drawn, Akwesasne Notes, the newspaper was often assembled with four related items on a page, suggesting a cruciform organization of space, that is, the use of a circle with a cross in the center that marks the four directions.

(10) The concept of balance. Native American design innovation can communicate visually the Native concept of balance as an organizing principle for news presentation. In mainstream news, the concept of news is communicated by the juxtaposition of polar extremes in objective news accounts that appear in an inverted pyramid format, or upside down triangle. Conversely, the Native principle of balance communicates a consideration of issues existing in relationship to multiple perspectives in the same place and time. "...to be in balance is to have respect for the interconnectedness of all things" writes Ganje (31). This integrative principle is central to Native life and teachings. This principle is manifested in the real world in the use of the number four throughout Native community and spiritual life. Applying this concept to the study of text suggests that Native Americans may construct reality in news thematically through a series of repeating concepts that reinforce each other.

In this way, the design of newspapers serving Native communities should be a map that guides readers "through it using familiar signs and landmarks" (31). In other words, it orients the reader to the lay of both the physical terrain on which the community is oriented and the psychological terrain of the issue that is of concern. Ganje further suggests that "seemingly unrelated stories are unified by elements that only those who understand the culture and community will recognize" (31). These underlying elements communicate reality in news by communicating ideas about morality and meaning drawn from the Native American experience. The values reflected in Native American stories and parables (31) maintain balance and harmony between all things. Underlying elements of news stories that communicate pan-Indian ideas about morality, meaning and values are considered themes for purposes of this study.

#### The Themes of Pan-Indianism

As a basis for answering the second portion of Research Question 2, it is necessary to next examine the scholarly literature that deals with the themes of pan-Indianism that are known to exist. These include (1) Morris' "discursive characteristics" of pan-Indian rhetoric, and (2) the eight themes of pan-Indianism.

(1) Morris' "discursive characteristics" of pan-Indian rhetoric. The first attempt to identify themes, or an interpretive framework, for the way Native Americans construct reality in modern discourse may be found in the work of Richard Joseph Morris. In a speech at the 1982 conference on the Native American Press in Wisconsin and the Nation, Morris unveiled an interpretation that had both its weaknesses and its strengths. The inherent weaknesses in the article may have resulted in its being overlooked by those who study the Native press. First, he considered Native American discourse from a

historical, Euro-American context and identified three ethoi, or strains of discourse with a "characteristic spirit, prevalent tone of a sentiment of a people" (Morris, 15). This assumption negated the diversity of Native peoples as distinct nations and lumped them into one categorical group. He also identified only three periods of time to consider, 1890, post-1900 and post-1950, and did not note that Native conceptions of cyclical time may not support a historical framework. The emergence of the Red Power Movement onto the national scene in 1969 and later is merged into the post-1950 category. Perhaps if he had considered it as a fourth period, his study may have seemed more balanced to Native journalists and scholars. The way Morris presents and frames his research indicates he did not understand basic concepts of the Native peoples whose discourse he attempts to interpret. These underlying, apparently common sense decisions undermine the value of his study for considering the ways Native peoples construct reality in news. Though not enthusiastically received by Native journalists in attendance, the strengths of his argument nevertheless have relevance for this study.

Morris observes three important things that are useful for a consideration of a thematic approach to understanding pan-Indian discourse in news. First, he noticed that the ethoi of the time periods he studied had certain overlapping themes, which he called "discursive characteristics" (18). These themes recur in different contexts at different points in time. Second, he notes parallels in discourse between the Ghost Dance Movement in 1890 and the post-1950 period. Most markedly, these include advocacy of a peaceful resistance and the "experience and expression of widespread deprivation" (24). He identifies a total of twelve themes in Native American discourse, which I draw from his 1890 model as it describes all twelve. These are numbered: "(1) an effort to mobilize

support, (2) the experience and expression of widespread deprivation, (3) the incorporation of special ritual practices, (4) reliance upon an ostensibly peaceful doctrine, (5) the expression of hope for the near future, (6) a militant discursive texture, (7) a clear tendency to be outspoken, (8) an immediate return to tribal life, (9) reliance upon a messiah, (10) the anticipation of an imminent golden age, (11) the restoration of earthly values, and (12) an intense religiosity" (18). Despite its flaws, Morris' is the first study that clearly identifies themes within Native discourse that communicate the possibility of a constructed version of reality in news not communicated to the Euro-American mainstream.

(2) The eight themes of pan-Indianism. Central to the discussion of the themes of pan-Indianism in news is the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a Maori scholar and author of Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. In her 2001 work, she identifies eight themes of pan-Indianism and suggests that they are now rendered accessible by virtue of hindsight. "Looking backwards, it is possible now to identify themes and sub-projects which have come to engage different groups of indigenous peoples" (115), she writes. These themes, she says, emerged in the late 1960s. This suggests pan-Indianism as a discourse emerges concurrently with the occupation of Alcatraz Island. The themes include self-determination, transformation, de-colonization, healing, mobilization, survival, recovery, and development (116). Together, the themes communicate and constitute an "agenda for action" (115). The themes provide Native peoples with a map of techniques for furthering the ongoing project of self-determination.

Smith augments her circular, process-oriented model with a working metaphor for understanding the dynamics of the way the eight themes work together to create a version

of reality. Four of the themes are identified with the four directions, and four of the themes are identified with the metaphor of ocean tides.

The four directions, or cardinal directions, are commonly shared among indigenous peoples as north, east, south and west. In Smith's model, the four directions correspond with processes of healing, de-colonization, transformation and mobilization. Smith does not go so far as to define the characteristics of the types of language typical of these themes, nor does she offer definitions of the themes. As part of this study's unique contribution, the types of language communicating these themes will be identified in the methodology section of this study. As processes, these themes are said to "connect, inform and clarify the tensions between the local, the regional and the global," and can be "incorporated into practices and methodologies" (116). In this way, the themes may suggest sets of relationships between peoples and actions that inform the way reality is constructed in the indigenous world and in news about indigenous peoples.

The tides in the model also occur in a set of four as survival, recovery, development and self-determination. Smith uses the metaphor of ocean tides to suggest that "...the sea is a giver of life, it sets time and conveys movement" (116). Indigenous peoples on the coast, for example, maintain an ongoing relationship to the sea. Here, I also advance another metaphor, that of the spider weaving a circular web, that may be more appropriate for inland cultures but which communicates a similar ebb and flow in relationship to cyclical time.

Again, language for each of these themes will be discussed in the methodology section of this study. As ongoing projects, they may be interpreted as "...the conditions and states of being through which indigenous communities are moving The tides in the

model also occur in a set of four as survival, recovery, development and self-determination. (116). The survival of peoples, languages, social and spiritual practices, social relations and the arts are prevalent topics in these thematic areas. Among these processes, that of recovery is described as "selective...often responding to immediate crises rather than a planned approach...related to the reality that indigenous peoples...are subject to a continuing set of external conditions" (116). This observation speaks directly to the type of circumstances that led to the occupation of Alcatraz Island and its perception as a critical event by Native peoples.

Following Alcatraz, more than 40 additional actions by Native peoples adopted the occupations' rhetoric and tactics, often expanding them or adapting them to new purposes. This study interests itself in the communication of these shared, pan-Indian values through news. It considers the eight themes of pan-Indianism at the time of their emergence on the national and international scene. It focuses on the ways in which Native Americans construct versions of reality in news at a seminal moment, considering both historical time and cyclical time. It specifically considers these themes in content of Akwesasne Notes published during and immediately following the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island. This study considers a set of approaches by indigenous peoples intended to further the objective of self-determination. I hope this study might yield a new understanding of the ways Native peoples, working together, construct a version of reality in news.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This study has the characteristics of a case study. Merriam (1988) defines a case study as a methodological exploration of a case or "bounded system" (qtd. in Creswell Qualitative 61). This study has this type of bounded system because it is bounded by time (November 1969-July 1971) and space (Alcatraz Island). This is typical of descriptive, qualitative case studies. In this specific case study, the "case" is the occupation of Alcatraz Island by Native Americans at this place and time. The use of a case study methodology is particularly well suited to this case because of its uniqueness as the seminal moment of pan-Indian speech action in the modern era and the introduction of intrinsic issues into the public domain through the vehicle of news. Like other case studies, this one considers multiple sources of information, in this case, documents. These documents include news stories, poems, letters to the editor, editorials, photos and handwritten comments appearing in Akwesasne Notes during the period of occupation. This data makes a holistic analysis of the occupation possible.

A set of underlying assumptions have guided the methodology of this study, while the research question has provided the means for narrowing its focus.

#### Underlying Assumptions

Certain underlying assumptions have guided the methodology of this study:

1. News constructs particular images of reality and those images have meanings.

2. Literature on the ways Native American peoples construct reality in news is under-researched. This study contributes to existing research and considers a pan-Indian viewpoint and perspective.
3. Native Americans bring a different set of cultural assumptions to the construction of reality in news than do Euro-Americans. Cultural assumptions are those "taken for granted, 'seen but unnoticed background features and expectancies' by means of which people share a collective world of cultural meanings" (Hall Introduction 19).
4. Akwesasne Notes' radical editorial position and voice renders accessible a version of reality in news from a Native American, pan-Indian perspective.
5. The methodology itself is part of my contribution to the literature. The fact that I am using a methodology not previously used in mass communications is a contribution of this study.
6. The perspective of this study allows us to look at the ways Native Americans constructed a version of reality in news reflective of their own history, mythology and experiences.

### Research Question

The research question provides a means for narrowing the focus of this study. The research question driving this study is RQ1: To what extent did Akwesasne Notes editors choose news that represents the themes of pan-Indianism known to exist?

A review of the literature situated previous studies about the occupation of Alcatraz Island in news into the larger arena of dramaturgy, or news-as-drama. This is consistent with an instrumental view of the way reality was constructed in news. That is,

Native Americans were seen as a social minority using language as an instrument and/or agent of change within a larger set of mainstream objectives. In this vein, studies about the ways reality is constructed in news considered the ways Native peoples were depicted in news. Many of the most well-known of these studies considered the ways Euro-Americans constructed reality of Native Americans in news through the use of stereotypes. Few of the studies, if any, considered the ways Native Americans constructed a version of reality in news.

I already understood, from my overview reading of existing research about Native Americans in news, that there were significant, though not clearly delineated differences between the ways Native American and Euro-American journalism scholars viewed the occupation. Finally, I began to grasp that the answer to this question ultimately lay within the content of the mainstream news, even if it was not apparent on the surface. Since Akwesasne Notes was compiled by Native Americans for Native audiences, I reasoned that the newspaper's editors would have chosen articles which most strongly represented the ways Native peoples constructed reality in news. However, given the dominant framing of the news, which supported the prevalent instrumental or dramaturgical interpretation advanced by media scholars, I knew I was looking for the latent, or hidden, meanings in news.

Through the literature review, a second view of the way Native American peoples construct reality, called a consummatory view, emerged from studies of rhetoric. The consummatory or performative view is applied less frequently by journalism scholars to the study of news than the instrumental or dramaturgical view. However, the consummatory perspective has been applied to the study of media by scholars of speech

communication interested in the ways pan-Indian rhetoric constructed a different version of reality in news that had relevance for Native peoples.

The use of the word "performative" in this context is a deliberate recognition of the indigenous perception of speech as an action with repercussions in the real world. In his work on Kenneth Burke and symbolic language, Henderson finds that performative speech actions occur when "the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action" (108). Performatives are often used in community or social rituals, such as weddings, to manifest or make real a social and legal action by speaking it in public. Thus, what is said and done at a public ritual, such as a press conference, would also constitute an action. In other words, "...the doing of an action (including the uttering of a performative) has...the consequence of making ourselves and others aware of facts" (110). These facts about actions include the information that we performed the action, our motives in doing so, our character, or other things which may be "inferred from our having done it" (110). The performative speech acts at press conferences communicated facts about Native peoples both to the mainstream public and to Native Americans. These performatives also offered information about the occupiers' motivations and character. As performatives, the occupiers' statements carried important information about the occupiers' values and beliefs. Finally, performative speech acts gave Native peoples a means by which they could bring thought and intention into being. This view of communication is the same as that suggested by a consummatory view of the construction of reality in news.

#### Co-cultural Reality in News

The boundaries between Euro-American and Native American cultures are often imprecisely delineated and function as sites of negotiation, interpretation and conflict

over meanings and identities. However, in the news discourse analyzed in this study, the way these co-cultures represent or characterize reality in news contrast sharply. Co-cultures may be said to simultaneously exist together with, and apart from, one another. This provides a means of contrast that makes it possible to identify the ways Euro-Americans and Native Americans construct different versions of reality from the same news. To clarify these positions, I extended these research streams to suggest two views of ritual communication in news. This comparison, which has not previously been made prior to this study, lays valuable groundwork for analyzing news for and about Native Americans. I have called the resulting, emergent view of the ways Native peoples construct a common reality in news pan-Indian performative. This distinction is a natural application of existing research to the study of events in news and illustrates unique qualities of the way reality in news is constructed for Native Americans and indigenous peoples during the occupation of Alcatraz Island.

I have depicted these contrasting, co-cultural views of the way reality is constructed in news about Alcatraz Island in Figure 1:1, on the following page.

The co-cultural view of news suggests that multiple versions of reality can be constructed simultaneously from the same news. The construction of in news may vary dependent upon the culture and experience of peoples. In a diverse, pluralistic society, there may be more than one public, resulting in more than one version of news reality originating from the same news content. A pan-Indian construction of reality in news operates on the assumption that diverse Native peoples shared information about common issues through the mainstream news, which was gathered and condensed, on the pages of Akwesasne Notes.

<u>Co-Cultural Reality in News</u>		
Euro-American Dramaturgy		Pan-Indian Performative
Occupation as a Pseudo-Event	I	Occupation as a Critical Event
Instrumental View of Language	N	Consummatory View of Language
Imitates Life (Not real, mediated)	T	Lived Experience
Maintains Status Quo	E	Transformative
Rehearsal	N	Based in "practice"
Entertainers/Roles	T	Critical of Status Quo
Theatrical/Scripts & Settings		Dramatic, real-life speakers
Press Conference IS the action		Occupation IS the action
Fragmented Self		Re-Integration of Self
Private face vs. Public face		Walk one's Talk
God is Above (hierarchical/dominion)		Creator is in All That Is (balance)
"American" (patriotic)		"un-American" (pan-Indian nationalism)
Individual emphasis		Community emphasis
event-driven news information		issue-driven news information
linear time		sacred time

Figure 1: 1

The co-cultural view of news suggests that multiple versions of reality can be constructed simultaneously from the same news. The construction of in news may vary dependent upon the culture and experience of peoples. In a diverse, pluralistic society, there may be more than one public, resulting in more than one version of news reality originating from the same news content. A pan-Indian construction of reality in news operates on the assumption that diverse Native peoples shared information about common issues through the mainstream news, which was gathered and condensed, on the pages of Akwesasne Notes.

This research considers a co-cultural view of reality in news with emphasis given to the pan-Indian performative view of the construction of reality in news. This intention suggests that the methodology employed for this case study will combine the methods generally associated with traditional thematic content analysis with an indigenous methodology. This study is the first time Smith's process-oriented approach with its emphasis on the eight themes of pan-Indianism has been applied to news media. This methodology will help me answer RQ1: To what extent did Akwesasne Notes editors choose news that represents the themes of pan-Indianism known to exist? This question is at the heart of the primary analysis of this study.

#### Data Sources and Forms

The case study of the occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969-71 is a classic example of a bounded system. Because it concerns itself with the study of news, and specifically, the way Native Americans constructed a version of reality in news, the forms of data analyzed by this study are the public, primary source documents of news. News, in this case, the newspaper, is considered as evidence of material culture which

"expresses deep belief and values through written texts and artifacts" (Rossman and Rallis 187). The use of a newspaper as an artifact for a bounded case study has both advantages and disadvantages. In this case, the advantages, made it possible to:

1. "obtain the language and words of informants" (Creswell Research Design, 150).
2. access information retrospectively, rendering intelligible the themes of pan-Indianism readily apparent by virtue of hindsight.
3. represent a rich selection of news data that Native journalists specifically compiled.
4. provide written evidence about the occupation of Alcatraz Island.

However, the use of public documents, such as news, may also present difficulties for the researcher. Those disadvantages encountered during this research included:

1. Due to the relatively scarce availability of early editions of Akwesasne Notes, it was necessary to arrange for the loan of microfilm and the viewing of microform. The primary source of newspapers for this study was the microform collection of Akwesasne Notes at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, listed under the call number of MICFICHE 115. Fortunately, all issues of the publication for the period of time being studied were available through this avenue. The University of Georgia houses a partial collection of these editions in their underground newspaper collection in the main library microform area under call number Mic Area/AN/58/.U552. The combination of all editions considered are from the following volumes:

Volume 1, Numbers 5-10, May through November 1969

Volume 2, Numbers 1-7, April through November 1970

Volume 3, Numbers 1-9, January through December 1971

Apparent gaps between publication dates reflect the indeterminate nature of the paper's publication schedule. Due to the age of the publication and the relatively unsophisticated print job (photocopy) of the original publication, some articles were difficult or impossible to make out in both available versions. Some were painstakingly transcribed to enhance readability, but a few were so illegible as to be excluded from this study.

2. Because the bulk of the forms considered were reprinted from other publications, some citations and page references for the original appearance of the work may be missing.
3. Due to the strength of its radical pan-Indian editorial position and voice, critics of Akwesasne Notes have suggested the publication may not be accurate or may not authentically represent reality.

I have previously referred to the body of document forms as the overview text for this project. As researcher, I personally read and looked at every edition, story and item in this series of print runs for the publication, selected and printed all those with a reference of any sort to the occupation. All stories identified were printed both singularly and in the context of page and placement, then filed chronologically for future reference.

From these issues, extensive forms of data were collected. Because Akwesasne Notes compiled its news for Indians and about Indians from clippings of articles, editorials, cartoons, and other mainstream publication and similar news forms from other Native American publications, it uniquely concerned itself with news that had import for Native peoples. It combined these previously published news stories with in-house editorial content: editorials, hand-written observations and slogans drawn from the Red Power movement, interviews, letters from readers and important documents. Visual elements

such as original art, cartoons and photographs, were introduced. The seemingly crude paste-up design nonetheless incorporated organizational groupings of four, which often privileged the center of the page. Additionally, creative elements were added as original fiction or poems that reflected first-hand experience of current events in the Indian world. Because of the rich, varied assortment of document forms available in the pages of Akwesasne Notes during the period of the case being studied, the data collection is extensive and draws on multiple sources of information (Creswell Qualitative 62). The resulting collection of forms has previously been referred to as the working text.

### Recording Procedures

To record my observations about the news being studied, the following recording procedures were developed and adhered to. These procedures establish a protocol, or form for recording information or observations gathered in the field (Creswell Research Design 152). This protocol establishes a procedure for noting information about the news item under consideration. Each document or record was organized according to title, originating publication, type of news form, frame, stereotyping, placement, kickers and headers, and other criteria as applicable. Additional notations included my own attempts to organize my thoughts about these items.

A sample entry adhering to this protocol follows. Each item was assigned a story number for easy referencing. Story numbers considered relevant to this project are coded in bolded type. All stories were considered as potentially relevant to this project during the first and second read-through of the working text. A protocol was completed for each document before the document selection process began.

### Sample Protocol

Protocol citations include the kicker and/or title of the piece; the author, source and date of original publication if provided, and the reprint publication citation in Akwesasne

### Notes.

**1** Kicker: 'Silent too damn long'

Title: Alcatraz: Taken Back (all caps, big type)

Author: Earl Caldwell

Source: New York Times

Date: December 10, 1969

Akwesasne Reference: Vol. 1, No. 10, November 1969 edition

Page: 1

Notes: "They, the Indians, are in the offensive position, controlling the information and the slant. This is a straight news story with themes of de-colonization, self-determination, transformation, recovery, survival and mobilization" (McLendon).

This protocol was observed in the consideration of each story. Approximately 130 items identified were referenced under this protocol.

### Data Collection: Document Selection

I purposely selected documents to best answer the research question: To what extent did Akwesasne Notes editors choose news that represents the themes of pan-Indianism known to exist?

Accordingly, the parameters of the documents chosen for categorization were limited to those that contained information or descriptions:

1. about the occupation of Alcatraz Island during the period of the occupation and its immediate aftermath, with the island mentioned specifically by name;
2. gleaned directly from a Native American speaker as at least one source cited. Those stories not originating with native voice speakers at any level were rejected.
3. of Native activists on the island, what they were doing, or what they said when they were interviewed about a variety of topics;
4. of the ways Native peoples on the island understood the process of events;
5. of associations with the Alcatraz occupation due to placement and/or topicality.

#### Data Analysis and Representation

Through data collection and analysis, a description of the occupation of Alcatraz emerges. The analysis of these data is intended to be a holistic analysis of the entire case (Creswell Qualitative 63). Analyzing the text drawn from multiple forms of data, in this case, news items, requires a set of analytic strategies. Among the strategies I employed was working through ideas and ethical concerns in a personal journal. I later worked through many of these issues and refined my understandings. These efforts are reflected throughout the work. While reading and evaluating the literature and the material under consideration, I took copious notes to clarify meanings and concepts. I wrote and rewrote, read and reread, thought and rethought, positioned and repositioned. I talked with my peers, professional colleagues and professors. I consulted with individuals experienced in direct action and with Native American activists, spiritualists and educators. I climbed into a traditional Lakota sweat lodge where I honored my ancestors and prayed in the way of the people. I also participated in a pipe ceremony. These interactions enabled me to explore underlying concepts that may not have been available to me otherwise.

## Coding

A thematic analysis of the data renders accessible an interpretation of news about the occupation that emerges from and respects a pan-Indian view of reality in news. In order to develop the first tier of coding categories, I turned to the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith. The application of the eight themes of pan-Indianism to my working text resulted in categorical aggregation (Rossman and Rallis 153) or coding, of the data. In other words, each theme became category for coding the forms then sorting the resulting material into categories. For example, with a list of the eight themes in front of me, I examined each news item, marking the themes as they emerged. Using this unique, indigenous methodology as an entry point, I began to visualize how these themes communicated or represented a version of reality in news for Native peoples, and how I might best describe and interpret that version of reality. I decided to apply this list of thematic categories to the working text, as I had already begun to observe evidence of their existence during my work with the initial protocol.

Categorical aggregation is considered desirable in thematic content analysis as it reduces the data to a more manageable level. To this end, I extracted the coded sections from the working text and placed them on a second, thematic protocol. The thematic protocol delineated a systematic process for gathering examples of the language of each thematic category together for comparison and contrast. Each entry included the reference number assigned the original news item, the direct quotation from the news, that is, the language, phrase or other discrete element being studied as representative of that specific theme, personal notations, and any sub-categories or sub-themes that began

to emerge. During this phase of the process, I began to note that unifying patterns began to emerge. I also began to note exceptions to these patterns.

Considering each theme singly allows for direct interpretation. When themes are considered together, patterns and correspondences readily emerge. Within these categories, the description of events as they unfold allows us to re-contextualize the facts of the occupation from these eight thematic perspectives.

Though the eight themes of pan-Indianism are known to exist, the language used to advance them has not been identified prior to this study. I looked for these themes in the news and found them, then identified the general characteristics of that language. This is one of the unique contributions of this study. The resulting characteristics of the eight themes comprised the criteria for coding. These are as follows:

1. Healing – language about the spiritual relationship of Native peoples to one another, to our mother, the earth, and to the Great Spirit. This is language that attempts to redeem the shattered identities of Native peoples. This theme is linked strongly to themes of recovery and the relationship of individuals to the land.
2. De-colonization – language about land, land ownership, and taking back land or culture misappropriated by mainstream, white America. It usually implies movement eastward, taking back land misappropriated during western expansion.
3. Transformation – language that attempts to overturn erroneous mainstream ideas about Indians. It often addresses issues related to education of Native peoples so that they have knowledge of their own cultures and history. This language is often humorous or ironic in tone.

4. Mobilization – language about the migration of occupiers to the island and the resources needed to sustain life on the barren island. This includes language related to the strategy and tactics of the occupiers. It asks Native peoples for actions.
5. Survival – language that describes Native peoples' resourcefulness in order to overcome the negative effects of colonization under U.S. governance. This language generally debunks the stupid or dead Indian stereotypes. This includes language drawn from the oral and written history of cultural genocide of Native peoples. The theme of survival almost always appears together with the theme of recovery.
6. Recovery – language suggesting the recovery of the spirit and group mind is necessary for the physical, mental and spiritual healing of Native Americans. This language generally rejects individualism as being at odds with the community-oriented identity and processes of Native Americans. This rejection of white culture is one of the hallmarks of pan-Indian rhetoric during the period studied.
7. Development – language describing the deadlock created for Native peoples in dealings with federal government policies and agencies, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and with corporations who control tribal resources. This language generally addresses why Euro-American ownership values do not serve Indian nations with traditional group relationship to land.
8. Self-Determination – language that reinforces a liberal view of tribal sovereignty in which Native Americans, as members of sovereign nations, have the right to set up an independent government without U.S. intervention in its affairs. This view challenges U.S. government's view of Indian nations as dependent sovereign nations under the dominant power structure's protection.

Essentially, the eight themes constitute varying perspectives on a recurring cycle of happenings. The acts of de-colonization and recovery depend upon the successful mobilization of peoples to action. There is the recalling of colonization and fragmentation of the peoples, the destruction of the time before the white men came. Then there are tales of survival, overcoming the destruction of the peoples and their life ways. After survival, recovery from destruction and transformation for the future become possible. The ultimate transformation will come when self-determination and development are returned to the hands of the Indian nations.

The relationships between themes make it possible to develop naturalistic generalizations about the data, that is, to interpret the way Native Americans constructed a version of reality in news about the occupation.

### Chronology of Events

The chronology of events for the occupation reported about at length in mainstream news occurs around five primary instances. These are as follows:

1. The first day of the occupation, November 17, 1969.
2. The first Thanksgiving on the island, November 27, 1969.
3. The death of Yvonne Oakes, daughter of Richard and Ann Oakes, in a fall from one of the buildings, January 5, 1970.
4. A fire breaks out on the island, taking down several historic buildings and the lighthouse, June 1, 1970.
5. The last day of the occupation and the removal of the occupiers, June 11, 1971.

This timeline provides important contextual markers for understanding how the themes worked together to constructed a Native American or pan-Indian version of in

news about the occupation. Of the above events, it is noteworthy that the news that proliferated in the mainstream about Yvonne Oakes' death does not appear in Akwesasne Notes. This is considered by most Native peoples to be a gesture of respect, an ethical standard that supplants the mainstream news standard of objectivity. This silence, for me, speaks as loudly as words, perhaps more so. Referencing this timeline also honors the use of a bounded system, that is, it considers the themes of pan-Indianism bounded by time (1969-71) and space (Alcatraz Island).

Incorporating the concept of cyclical time into the narrative analysis is achieved by this repetitive organization of the eight themes, which are comprised two sets of the sacred number four. This device is common in the literature of Native peoples as a way to present different versions of a story from simultaneously occurring perspectives or viewpoints. This type of organization suggests the invocation of sacred time that is unique to Native American communication. It also mirrors the process-oriented methodology suggested by Smith's indigenous model. This model maintains the dynamics of cyclical time as reflected by the ebb and flow of tides, seasons of the year, and the four directions. Relationships between the motifs suggest a web-like structure. Finally, this decision also strengthens the ability to contextualize each theme within its social, historical/mythological or economic setting. Some overlapping of topics among themes is considered a natural consequence of the proper application of this method. This study recognizes that pan-Indianism focused on sets of collective issues grounded in the experience of Native peoples under Euro-American colonization.

I recognize pan-Indianism as a human rights movement with a public rhetoric. With the Alcatraz occupation at its forefront, "[t]he movement has developed a shared

national language or discourse which enables indigenous activists to talk to each other across their cultural differences while maintaining and taking directions from their own communities and nations" (Smith 110). The themes of pan-Indianism constructed a version of reality in news for Native peoples. Through the patterns of news, Native American speakers constructed a pan-Indian version of reality that continues to be used and developed today by indigenous peoples all over the world.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF THE RECOVERABLE THEMES OF PAN-INDIANISM, 1969-71

This analysis hopes to further understanding of the ways reality is constructed in mainstream and Native voice media. The example of Akwesasne Notes, a Native voice newspaper, constructed of reprints from mainstream news, provides us with a unique opportunity to examine the ways Native peoples construct reality from co-cultural perspectives.

The identification of language used to communicate the eight themes of pan-Indianism suggests it is possible to identify words and phrases from news stories to demonstrate how Native Americans wrote about or constructed the occupation of Alcatraz Island from 1969—71. The application of the themes to the working text provides us with a useful tool for analysis. In the following analysis of these themes, we hope to show ways Native Americans wrote about or constructed a version of reality in news about the occupation through this thematic approach. To accomplish this, each theme is considered separately from the other. The language identified with these themes falls within the categories cited. Within each thematic category lies additional topics and sub-topics used to communicate the relevance of the theme to the occupation and Native peoples. Thus, areas of overlap indicating relation between themes may be noted. The examination of these patterns suggests the ways Native Americans on the island wrote about or constructed the event using language that communicated and reinforced a version of reality based in the ideas and values of pan-Indianism.

The eight themes analyzed herein are de-colonization, development, self-determination, mobilization, survival, recovery, transformation and healing.

### The Theme of De-colonization

The theme of de-colonization was the first and the loudest theme in the language about the occupation. I use the word "loudest" intentionally. Headlines in giant-sized, all capital letters with exclamation marks announced the occupation: ALCATRAZ! TAKEN BACK. As occupiers originally controlled the messages about themselves in the media, this particular message was among the earliest and clearest. It is also the message to which researchers most often return. De-colonization is language about land, land ownership, and taking back of land or culture misappropriated by mainstream, white America. It usually implies movement eastward, taking back land misappropriated during western expansion. This language emerges in the topics of Alcatraz! taken back, land reclamation and acquisition, borders, identity and Indianness, liberation, reparation, pan-Indian nationalism, re-colonization and neo-colonialism, and returning.

### Alcatraz! taken back

On day one of the occupation, the headlines on the front of the newspapers proclaimed the event's importance in all capital letters: ALCATRAZ! TAKEN BACK. It was one of the most-reported events of the modern era.

Despite the fanfare, there had been no stage lights or camera crews when the small group of college-aged students, including Mohawk Richard Oakes, swam through the icy, choppy waters of the San Francisco Bay. The moon was the only witness to their seizure and occupation of something that, they argued, was already theirs. Their target was the return of a piece of land to Native peoples. So the words, ALCATRAZ: TAKEN

BACK! changed the Native American perspective on things. Or did it? Like their identities and ways of living on the earth, the land had been taken away from the indigenous peoples of North America. Nobody had asked them to give these things up. Instead, these peoples felt the land had been stolen, sometimes under cover of darkness and sometimes in broad daylight. It had been chiseled away with the stroke of a pen, brushed away like a wisp of smoke rising from the pipe, and it had gone straight to the heart like the sharpest of flints. Broken treaties, forced marches and wars had taken their toll. The people had been broken and the fragments of their bones and bowls scattered about as curiosities. In taking Alcatraz Island, the occupiers were taking back something that they felt was rightfully theirs. Like the colonizers before them, the native protesters seized the land and made it theirs in the act of occupation. They did this not for self-gain, but for all Native peoples. Then they told the world about it: Indian land, a place where Indians' inherent right to self-determination could be realized.

#### Land Reclamation and Acquisition

The topic of land reclamation and acquisition is demonstrated through reporters' use of decisive language, examination of the proclamation statement, suggestions of secession, the occupation as a critical event, and Native peoples' treaty rights.

The language the reporters used to describe the initiative was decisive. The occupiers "took control" (Caldwell "Silent") of the island. They "reclaimed" it ("Indians demand"). They "posted signs that proclaim the island as their territory"(Caldwell "Silent"). One account stated: "The red men have captured the island. The red men have taken the island"(Von Hoffman). In the latter case, there's little doubt the use of colonial

era language to describe the occupiers was deliberate and meant to be ironic. The occupiers controlled the media and the messages.

At the press conference that first day, the occupiers created a spectacle to ensure their message made it into the news. The press reported all the hoopla around the spectacle and many reporters either missed the message or were simply caught up in the show. However, the occupiers issued an oft-cited landmark proclamation that, when examined in context, challenged U.S. rights to Alcatraz Island as well as other Indian lands. Addressed to "the Great White Father and his People," the salutation historically referred to the U.S. president and the descendants of the colonizers, that is, American citizens of white, European descent. The occupiers reminded the President and U.S. citizens of the Native peoples' citizenship rights and quality of life issues. "Fellow citizens, we are asking you to join with us in our attempt to better the lives of all Indian people," Indians of All Nations wrote.

The proclamation read: "We are on Alcatraz Island to make known to the world that we have a right to use our land for our own benefit" (Indians of All Nations). The statement was a jab at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For decades, the BIA's stewardship of Native lands reflected large-scale conflicts of interest on the part of decision-makers, resulting in the whittling down of Native reserves. Not only did the tribal nations wish to own their lands, they wished to remove decision-making about the lands from the hands of the federal government. The occupiers "told the government of the United States that we are here to create a meaningful use for our Great Spirit's Land" (Indians of All Nations). Underscoring this statement is the idea that people do not own the land, they belong to it. The land was being symbolically taken back to restore this sacred balance,

which had been destroyed by the colonizers. The occupiers turned the tables on the U.S. government. "We, the native Americans, reclaim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery" (Indians of All Nations.). With these words, Alcatraz had been taken back, de-colonized, declared independent of U.S. control.

The act of occupation was tantamount to secession, though very few stories reported it that way. "Doubtless the proclamation of an Independent Republic of Indian America, with Richard Oakes, a Mohawk, as its president, goes considerably beyond concepts Mr. Hickel has had in mind" (Hendrick), one writer noted. Hickel was the unpopular head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Though the ironic humor in the statement did not go unnoticed, Indians were not laughing.

The first day of the occupation, Native peoples were already calling Alcatraz a critical event, a last stand for cultural survival by Native peoples. Lehman Brightman, the head of United Native Americans, a San Francisco-based organization, explained. "This is the most important event since we actually stopped warfare with white men in 1889" (UPI "Alcatraz: Indian War"). In hindsight, Native American scholars would agree. The occupation would become identified as the watershed moment in modern Native American history. As Brightman stated clearly, the occupation marked an act of cultural resistance by Native peoples opposing U.S. policies of termination and assimilation. It was the first such attempt since the Wounded Knee massacre nearly a century before. At Wounded Knee, "200 Sioux men, women and children, including relatives of Brightman, were killed by the U.S. Cavalry. The event ended the ghost dance, a movement for rejection of the white man's ways and a return to the old style of life, then sweeping western tribes" (UPI "Alcatraz: Indian War").

The occupiers claimed Alcatraz as "unused federal land" under the auspices of an old U.S. treaty made with the Sioux in 1868 (UPI "Alcatraz: Indian War"). This treaty would have given occupiers "squatters rights" (UPI "Alcatraz Indians Dig In"). The 1964 bid to have that claim recognized in U.S. District Court was unsuccessful (UPI "Alcatraz: Indian War"). The following fall, the occupiers shifted their claim on new legal grounds of their prior right to ownership.

Denis Turner spoke for many of the occupiers: "There is no way they are going to satisfy us unless they give us ownership of this property" (Caldwell "Silent"), he said. Turner's statement points to one of the inconsistencies in the occupation, the idea that ownership, if valid, is granted or given. The strength of the occupation was its "taking back," not asking permission to do so, leading to a second inconsistency, the unspoken request for approval or apology that would never come.

### Borders

The topic of borders was prominent in the language of de-colonization, especially regarding the establishment of boundaries, what lay inside the boundaries and what lay outside the boundaries. As discussed below, some of the meanings that emerge are implicit, not explicit in the text.

Establishing the borders of the occupation became a primary objective of occupiers. Language about the establishment of boundaries also addressed their enforcement, protection and retaliation if crossed. The establishment of boundaries meant that the island had to be identified as occupied territory, rather than abandoned surplus, and that the right of the Indians to be there had to be established. As previously demonstrated by the occupiers' use of decisive language, and the reporting of this

language in the press, the need to immediately establish boundaries was reflected in the news of the first day of the occupation. Any tactician knows that part of taking the field is posting signs that you have the advantage. The occupiers established their claim and their boundaries while the newspapers took note.

The language describing what lay inside the boundaries addressed identity, safety and peace, and pan-Indian nationalism. The occupiers drew their borders. They were situated at the center. The borders of Indian land included the dock and a "safety zone" the U.S. Coast Guard was asked to observe. Outside lay colonized land. Within those boundaries lay aggression, removal, dependency, genocide, ethnicity as opposed to nationality, fragmentation, alienation and no hope whatsoever. The San Francisco Bay was shark-infested water. In the center was safety. There, the occupiers could wear their hair long. They could speak their languages and share their stories without fear of repercussion. They could reclaim their identities.

Whether or not American recognized their claim, in the minds of Indian peoples, Alcatraz had been de-colonized and returned to Native peoples. The occupiers had used the tools of the colonizers to re-draw the map of the world from an indigenous perspective. Suddenly, they were on the inside in a 100 percent Indian world, rather than on the outside trapped in a one-percent margin of color in a world of whiteness.

The language describing what lay outside the borders of the occupation addressed violence, war and conflict. If inside the borders of "free Indian land" lay safety and community, outside lay the threat of re-colonization and violence. With a collective memory of centuries of removal from Indian land, forced marches and cultural genocide, the occupiers took the high ground, hoping for the best and preparing for the worst. The

occupation was a non-violent action using tactics of individuals like Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. As many of the occupiers were college students, they were well acquainted with the federal tendency to crack down hard on 1960s student protesters, calling in martial forces to squash protests and marches. Violence seemed an inevitable conclusion to the occupation given the climate of the day. As well, Indians recognized the unofficial U.S. policy to use violence to force Indians and others into compliance with their policies and laws. With both historic and modern precedent for the use of force by the government to control messages and limit discourse about domestic and international policy, violence seemed an inevitable end.

Stella Leach, a Sioux, put occupiers' feelings into words. "If it takes violence, it will come from the white man, not from us. We are here to stay on Alcatraz (Carroll "Defiant Drums"). In another account, she "made it clear" Indians would resist removal from the island (Caldwell untitled).

Conflict lay at the borders. The U.S. Coast Guard began to control the flow of occupiers, supplies and water on and off the island ("Richard Oakes Family). The only thing that got through were the tourist boats and ferries from which "obscene and derogatory remarks" were made by "people in the boats to Indians on the dock (Caldwell "Alcatraz Indians").

When the Indians' boat, Clearwater, a gift from the rock group Creedence Clearwater Revival, was damaged, they set an offshore boundary of 200 yards for visiting boats that often came within 20 or 30 yards (Carroll "Coast Guard"). "We asked the ferry people to stop this. We asked the Coast Guard to take action and finally we said we wanted it stopped, and yet, it continued (Caldwell "Alcatraz Indians"), said Trudell. The

border was extended to 250 yards and delineated the Indians' area of sovereignty ("Alcatraz-indian uprising").

Some of the occupiers demonstrated their frustration, retaliating by throwing rocks at the boats. The press called them "missiles" ("Alcatraz-indian uprising"). Finally, someone fired off an arrow, lodging it in the outside cabin wall of a boat "that had repeatedly come too close to the Island's dock" (Caldwell "Alcatraz Indians"). The press didn't get the joke inherent in the choice of means of getting the abuse to stop. Trudell responded to questions about the behaviors. "With one 43 cent arrow, we stopped it" (Caldwell "Alcatraz Indians"), he said.

Despite the embargo of water and the cutting off of supplies to the island, the occupiers stayed put. When fires broke out destroying or damaging several buildings on the island, reporters downgraded the occupation to an "encampment" (AP. "U.S. Says), using frontier era language. About halfway into the occupation, the U.S. government began to control the flow of information to the press. With the ensuing tragedies and bad judgment affecting the occupiers, they had no trouble painting a picture of irresponsible, bloodthirsty savages for readers still following accounts of the occupation.

#### Identity and Indianness

The language of de-colonization communicating identity and Indianness addressed the occupier's choice of a name, the recovery of Indian identity, citizenship, and use of language.

To identify themselves, the occupiers chose a name, Indians of All Nations. This name united urban Indians of many Native nations or tribes under the same auspices. Later, when the group incorporated, it would change its name to Indians of All Tribes,

most likely due to controversy over the use of the word "tribes" to describe Indian nations with governments recognized by the U.S.

With the sense of place that Alcatraz originated, came cultural recovery of identity. Suddenly, Alcatraz was not an island; it was a symbol of all things Indian. "Alcatraz now symbolizes 'Indianness' in the eyes of the entire world" (Caldwell untitled), said John Folster, vice president of the Bay Area Native American Council which represented almost 30 organizations.

Through the occupation and its language emerged the possibility of a truly Indian nation, situated on Indian land. Before Alcatraz, Indians had to hide within the mainstream society. "...they maintained their identity in small pockets...but subject to harassment, prejudice, and attempts at annihilation" (Revolutionary Movement of the People). Alcatraz was the realization of a long-imagined place where freedom of choice and self-determination for Indian peoples was an emerging reality. On Alcatraz, Indianness was encouraged. The island was a place where an Indian person could find acceptance and reclaim his relationship to his family and ancestors. He could repair the whole self, fragmented by alienation from his community. Alcatraz was a place where new community could be built from the fragments of old traditions. Contained within the idea of Alcatraz was the suggestion that indigenous peoples have more in common through their experiences of colonial expansion than differences as disparate nations. Alcatraz was the place to reinstate Native conceptions of communitarian land ownership. And, it would be the place where Indian nations' sovereignty was respected and a new united nation, an Indian confederacy based in unity, could be formed. Alcatraz became the center of the Indian world.

Citizenship became muddy water. The occupiers were members of tribes or citizens of Indian nations, but had only within the past year, 1968, had their rights as U.S. citizens been recognized. The implications of these emerging identity choices had yet to be fully formed and confusion set in. Similarly, conceptions of the ways sovereignty conflicted with U.S. citizenship began to surface. "What we have done by this declaration we have done for Indians. But to those whites who desire their Government to be a Government of law, justice and morality, we say we have done it also for you" (Caldwell untitled). The sorting out of citizenship and identities became indelibly linked to the project of social justice – and to the occupation of Alcatraz. Some of this language challenged the increasingly narrow definition of what it meant to be an "American" and replaced it with the idea of what it meant to be an Indian.

The use of language by Native peoples reflects an acknowledgment of contested cultural meanings. "I guess they don't understand our language. We're here to stay. We have no intentions of moving, not for this government or any other government" (Caldwell "Silent"), said one occupier. The remark recalled the practice in boarding schools to punish the use of native languages by the students who were forced to study there. On the island, by contrast, preferred language included the accents, words and phrases of the peoples' native tongues. On another level, the same statement recognizes that the language and messages used and perpetuated by the occupiers do not make sense to the U.S. government, which publicly refused to recognize the implicit challenge to governance the occupiers posed.

### Pan-Indian Nationalism

The language of de-colonization included language suggesting pan-Indian nationalism, especially about symbols of the occupation reflective of the occupiers' feelings of identification with the "center" of the Indian world. This language about symbol concerned the occupation's flag.

The occupiers ran up a flag on the island's lighthouse. It had a bright blue background on which "a teepee under a broken peace pipe was imprinted in red (Caldwell "Silent"). The teepee, with its conical shape, constituted a visible, easily understood symbol of Indianness shared by many of the Plains nations. The broken pipe had other connotations. First, when whole, it represents sacred balance in the world, containing both masculine and feminine traits and honoring the four directions. So, when the pipe is broken, the sacred balance between man and earth, man and family, man and community, is also broken. Second, the pipe is shared as a gesture of sacredness and keeping one's word. So, when the pipe is broken, it demonstrates that the words, treaties and agreements made between the U.S. government and Native peoples were not held in good faith. Third, the act of carrying the pipe has responsibility and the pipe must be carefully cared for. The broken pipe, then, becomes a visual symbol among pipe-carrying Native peoples that communicates specific ideas about the nature of the break between Native peoples and the natural order of things. Thus, the flag reflected shared sets of values between individuals of many tribes.

One occupier said, "That's our flag. We put it there. We put it there because this land is our land" (Caldwell "Silent"). What he does not say comes through loud and clear:

not only is this land Indian land, but all of North America may be Indian land as well.

Alcatraz is the beginning of a land-based movement toward Indianness.

### Liberation

In de-colonizing language, the meaning of liberty is different for Native peoples than that of Euro-Americans. In terms of the Red Power movement at the time of the occupation, it actually implies freedom from the United States, not freedom in the United States. The de-colonizing language of liberation was communicated through the attempts to gain U.S. recognition of the liberated state, the hopes of the peoples, the rejection of American colonial values, and the rejection of negative stereotypes of Native Americans.

The United States' official recognition of the Indians' position became a stated objective. "This is the first time the Indians have asked for a piece of land" (Caldwell "Silent"), Richard Oakes, 27, told the mainstream press at the beginning of the occupation.

Much later in the occupation, as government plans for a park progressed, the occupiers called a press conference and renounced the need for U.S. sanction for their actions. In a resolution amounting to a declaration of independence from the United States government, they wrote themselves a deed on a bearskin (Caldwell untitled). The use of bearskin would indicate the occupiers' strength and courage. It read "We announce on behalf of all Indian people or tribes that from this day forward we shall exercise dominion and all rights of use and possession over Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay" (Caldwell untitled.). A scant distance off the U.S. border, the Indians' communitarian ideals of land ownership, consensus government and insistence on sovereignty was becoming an embarrassment to the United States, whose attempts to eradicate the "Indian

problem" had not proved successful after all. To make bad matters worse for the United States, the Indians not only held the island, but threatened to "move to seize other property that they maintained was rightfully theirs" (Caldwell untitled). This idea could not have been popular either among U.S. bureaucrats in the office of Indian Affairs or to property holders whose titles to land or leases for mineral, water or resource rights were obtained under undesirable or illegal circumstances. The suggestion that Indians have land rights would be tantamount to suggesting that colonizers' actions had been less than noble – perhaps even savage.

Unknown to the general and Native American publics, toward the end of the occupation the occupiers had entered into negotiations with the government, but quickly found that the great white father still spoke with a forked tongue when it came to its dealings with Indians. "The first guarantee they made when the negotiations started was that nobody on the island would be arrested or taken off the island while negotiations were underway," Trudell later revealed ("Indians Charge"). "Browning wanted to settle the issue some way. He told us they wanted to give us the island and still look good" ("Indians Charge"). Browning Browning (who replaced Hickie in the Bureau of Indian Affairs) had lied.

Akwesasne Notes describes the tenor of the waiting and watching in Native American communities. "The idea of land coming back to the Indians – instead of losing more – blew a spark of hope into flame in the hearts of Indians – and their friends – all over the continent," read an Akwesasne Notes editorial statement ("Alcatraz-indian uprising").

The language of liberation necessarily rejects American colonial values. "The sad fact about the non-Indian world is that most of it is not based on the truth, and that's why it's going to fall, to crumble. It's crumbling now, it's falling apart," Richard Oakes said ("El Grito Interviews"). Underlying his words is the proposition that there may be more than one way of understanding the world, more than one type of truth. The occupation aimed to undermine the U.S. government's policy of forced dependence of native peoples. Oakes' statement put the U.S. government on notice that the traditional, paternalistic relationship between the U.S. government and Native peoples was coming to an end.

Occupiers made the connection between taking the island and rejecting the government. "We are attacking the whole system by attacking Alcatraz" (UPI "Alcatraz: Indian War"), said Adam Nordwall, president of the United Bay Area Council of Indians, in one statement. As this example illustrates, occupiers directed their anger at the system and government bureaucracy, not at individual Americans. In another statement, Nordwall reiterated the point, explaining "the whole system...has foisted injustice on the American Indian. Alcatraz has become a symbol" (Davis).

Oakes spoke for the occupiers. "The choice now lies with the leaders of the American government – to use violence upon us as before to remove us from our Great Spirit's land or to institute a real change in its dealings with the American Indian" (UPI "Alcatraz Indians Dig In"), he said (emphasis mine). A real change in this context means liberation from U.S. domination. Dealings means Native peoples want to be treated as equal nations by right. This evokes the social justice agenda associated with struggles for Native American civil and sovereign rights.

Alcatraz, in this context, also functions as a symbol for Indian liberation from American dominion. Seemingly overnight, Alcatraz Island became "a powerful symbol of liberation springing out of the long American imprisonment" (Collier 34). For almost 400 years, native peoples had been held captive, held in reserves like game, and kept dependent on their colonizers for inadequate food and shelter. "If the Indians had ever been joking about Alcatraz...it was with the bitter irony that fills colonial subjects' discourse with the mother country"(Collier 34). The writer suggested that in de-colonizing lands and peoples, the occupiers were doing to the U.S. what the U.S. had done to Britain almost 200 years before.

Foremost within the discourse about liberation came the effort to overthrow the dead Indian stereotype prevalent in Euro-American views of Native Americans. "...the Indians of Alcatraz are challenging the lies perpetuated by anthropologists and bureaucrats alike, who insist that the red man is two things: an incompetent 'ward' addicted to the paternalism of government, an anachronism whose past is imprisoned in white history and whose only future is as an invisible swimmer in the American mainstream" (Collier 34). About halfway into the occupation, the U.S. government made known its plans for a national "Indian" theme park. John Trudell, acting as spokesperson for the occupiers, said, "We will no longer be museum pieces, tourist attractions and politicians playthings. There will be no park on the island, because it changes the whole meaning of what we came here for" (Collier 34). Indians were no longer willing to roll over and play dead in order to survive.

### Reparation

The language of de-colonization addressing reparation seems to wish the U.S. would officially acknowledge its ill treatment of Native peoples as much as it wished to reclaim land. One native speaker cited U.S. policies of wartime reparations to other defeated sovereign nations as proof of native rights to reclaim federal land. "...your country gave these defeated nations their land back. Where is our land? Your Constitution says we are a nation" (Untitled Akwesasne 3:5). Eventually, the occupiers "issued a proclamation asking the government to acknowledge the justice of our claim" (UPI "Alcatraz Indians Dig In"). The U.S. did not cede to the demand; its silence spoke loudly to the Native Americans on the island and elsewhere. The occupiers used the silence to reiterate the seriousness of their actions. It appeared their demands for reparation fell on deaf ears.

### Re-colonization and neo-colonialism

The language of de-colonization also addresses the realities of re-colonization and neo-colonialism. The topic of re-colonization describes the re-taking of both land and identity by Euro-American colonizers. The re-taking of Alcatraz Island as a land base was achieved in short order. Thirty federal marshals removed the 15 holdouts – including children - from the island. Quickly, barbed wire and razor ribbon surrounded the island's perimeter. Armed guards patrolled with guns and dogs to prevent an act of re-occupation. The Indians' resistance had been eradicated and U.S. dominion restored. The U.S. action may be direct evidence of a neo-colonial agenda to exercise dominion over lands and peoples that is ongoing during the modern era.

With the Indians gone, the government leaked word to the press that the boundaries of the new park would be announced. Congress would fund the project (Hatfield). The announcement was worse than a slap in the face. To add insult to injury, Native American identity had also been re-colonized and the "dead Indian" stereotype reinstated. Akwesasne Notes was openly outraged. "And to top it all off, the Government announces to its people that the land will be used for the benefit of all Americans for a national park – with an Indian exhibit of course" ("Alcatraz" editorial). It was an insult; native peoples had been "killed" once again and turned into curiosities. Akwesasne Notes further commented that "The pseudo-radicals who needed a cause to identify with will have to seek a new minority group 'to help' or be content with the more relevant (and difficult) job of changing white people into a society which does not have problems with 'its minorities'" ("Alcatraz" editorial). The criticism of American societal values is plain. The occupation and discourse surrounding it may have been over, but the war for the recognition of the rights of Indians and minority citizens was far from over.

The language of de-colonization was also highly critical of the neo-colonial objective the United States enacted on Alcatraz, seeing it as a microcosm of a much larger agenda. After the occupation came to an end, Akwesasne Notes revisited the white man's romanticized infatuation with the Indian and the Euro-American push for new frontiers. "For many, Alcatraz was a new kind of Wild West Show, and the tourist boats will have to seek a new attraction now" the editorial statement read ("Alcatraz" editorial). Referencing the Wild West Show and its popularized American mythology of How the West Was Won suggests that for many white Americans, the romanticized view of Native

Americans as dramatically noble savages in some "authentic" time continued to hold sway, as did the inherent, moral rightness of the American way.

The criticism of what we now call neo-colonialism in Akwesasne Notes suggests that the appropriation of Indian identity, like that of Indian land, is ongoing and that Native peoples find it disturbing. "Although the history books, TV, film all tell a nice tale, Americans can't seem to quite get Indians out of their system. They work at it, naming streets and counties along Indian themes, playing Indian guides at the YMCA, having an Indian unit around Thanksgiving in schools ('Indians gave the world corn.')." the editorial continued ("Alcatraz" editorial). Appropriating Indian names, playing "cowboys and Indians," and constructing a dubious, whitewashed view of an event as part of U.S. history and elevating it to holy day status reinforces unfair and inadequate romantic stereotypes within the mainstream discourse.

The editors of Akwesasne Notes clearly saw these mediations of "Indian" experience as part of a policy of Euro-American colonial aggression, but identify it with a larger, global imperialist agenda. "But somehow the bad start that the colonists made still continues, with Vietnam still another Indian war for a nation moving west. The Pacific Islands, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos...Cambodia...Thailand. Ever westward" ("Alcatraz" editorial). In other words, they said, "America," the land of the free, is a lie.

Finally, the critique of the neo-colonial agenda extends to individuals living within U.S. boundaries that place stock in the public trust. "If America is indifferent to what happens to the Indians, who act as the miner's canary to warn of early dangers, they can look to the same fate for themselves and their children. If the American people did not find the government responsive to the wishes of the people, perhaps they will feel

more urgently the need to make the necessary changes. If the American people do not like the nature of the society in which they live, perhaps they need to spend some time in building a decent and humane culture instead of worrying over law and order and General Motors ("Alcatraz" editorial). Soon, the statement seems to suggest, the paternalistic demeanor of the U.S. government will extinguish the rights of all citizens, ignoring their wishes and using the law not to improve the quality of life for human beings, but to further consumerism at all costs.

### Returning

The language of de-colonization also predicts a returning of Native peoples again and again until de-colonization has been achieved and balance restored. This implies a turning back of colonial expansion with movement of Native peoples eastward from Alcatraz Island and the west. "At the end of ten years, Indians will have an equal place with white men. At the end of ten years, we will have our sacred ground and sweat lodge on the extreme east coast," said Chief Eagle Feather, a Sioux medicine man living in South Dakota in February 1970 (Carroll "Defiant Drums"). The eastern movement the Indian de-colonizers, and its psychological repealing of Western expansion, underscored the visionary significance of the national pan-Indian movement.

Until the land and identity of Native peoples are de-colonized, the peoples will simply recoup their losses and try again, no matter what the U.S. government does. "They've responded to us with shows of force," Trudell said following the removal from the island. "They're trying to intimidate us, but we're not going to be intimidated. They've always dealt with us with a show of force. We don't want to get hurt, but we're not afraid of that. We'll be back. America hasn't heard the last of its Indians and that's definite until

some active, positive steps have been taken to relieve the conditions we're talking about" (Caldwell "Ousted"). Though the age-old reality of removal from Indian lands had been re-enacted, there was no denying that the occupiers had changed the course of Native American history. Native peoples had shown they could return as though from the dead once and they could do it again. By this point, the Red Power movement had already begun, and there would be no stopping the tide swell of direct action committed to the "taking back" of Indian lands.

Alcatraz occupiers began turning up at other direct action sites. Among these is John Trudell, whose words suggest the pathos of the Alcatraz aftermath: "We're not going to quit. We've been moved twice and we're tired, but we are going to keep plugging because we want someone to listen to us (Caldwell "Ousted"). The statement implies that, like water on rock, Native peoples will eventually wear away at the bureaucracy.

### The Theme of Development

The language describing the theme of development generally addresses the deadlock created for Native peoples in dealings with federal government policies and agencies, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and with corporations who control tribal resources. This language also suggests that Euro-American ownership values do not serve Indian nations with traditional group relationship to land. Not surprisingly, the language focusing on development is without exception from the period in which Native peoples controlled the messages about themselves in the media. These inequalities are seen as blocks to development. The theme of development appears in the language of news in two ways. First are the blocks to development of Native people, and second is the basis for development.

### Blocks to Development

The first way in which the theme of development appears in the news is about attempts of Native peoples to document their inherent inequality under U.S. governance. . These attempts to document inherent inequality of Native peoples under U.S. governance include the economic realities, U.S. government policies and conflicts of interest, and land rights.

The facts communicating the economic realities that are a block to development are reflective of Indians' experiences. In Akwesasne Notes, this information formed a background for the pan-Indian discourse forming around these issues. Without doubt, the economic realities of Native peoples historically and in 1969-71 were bleak. Native leaders saw the occupation as a way to draw attention to the poverty of Native peoples, much in the way that the Civil Rights movement had drawn attention to inequities between black and white Americans. "Alcatraz...has given us an opportunity for the first time to bring to the world the true picture of our desolation," read a statement from the Bay Area Native American Council. "It is a peaceful effort. It has hurt no-one but the Indians themselves, who have sacrificed much to compel the government to recognize their rights to land, education, decent houses and jobs" (AP "No \$24 Island").

Many news stories reprinted in Akwesasne Notes cited editor Edgar S. Cahn's book, Our Brother's Keeper: The Indian in White America, a publication of New Community Press. It contained staggering facts and figures about the poverty faced by Native Americans. These facts disclosed disturbing realities about household poverty levels and infant and population mortality, among other concerns.

One article noted: "...at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, the second largest in the nation, \$8,040 a year is spent per family to help the Oglala Sioux Indians out of poverty. Yet the median income among these Indians is \$1,910 per family" (Von Hoffman). The information seemed to imply that the system to help Native peoples out of poverty and that someone needed to fix it. That help, however, would not come from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. "At last count there was nearly one bureaucrat for each and every family on the reservation" (Von Hoffman.).

Another story cites infant and population mortality as a block to development. "Infant mortality among 700,000 Indians is three times the national average. The average life span of 42 is less than two-thirds the national average. Yearly income averages only \$1,500" (UPI "Alcatraz: Indian War"). Huge inequities are demonstrably present between Native Americans and Euro-Americans, who comprise the national average. Life expectancy is low; the facts suggest there is a correlation between the economic deprivation of Native peoples and their low quality of life and life expectancy.

Though the facts and figures are present, the sources are all from secondary materials. Reporters make little effort to interview actual Indian families and communities struggling with these issues. The human side of the harsh economic realities faced by Native Americans is rarely a source of news. The occupiers are frustrated when Native peoples remain a statistic.

Blocks to development include U.S. government policies of termination and assimilation, and conflicts of interest in their role as trustees. Though the conflicts of interest had always been apparent to Native peoples, this was the first time that public discourse linked government policy to Indians' inability to improve their situation.

The government policy of assimilation of Native peoples into the dominant society was a source of disenfranchisement. "The Indian faces a dilemma. If he stays on the reservation, he is hopelessly mired in poverty: if, as urged by government, he moves to the city, he is unskilled and unprepared for urban life, and so remains mired in poverty" (UPI "Alcatraz: Indian War"). The decision for young Native Americans – whether to stay on the reservation or relocate to urban areas – is a difficult one. Either way, the road is a hard one. Those who chose to relocate through government programs that promised skills and jobs were often disappointed. In urban areas, relocation often led to isolation, poverty, and depression.

Similarly, government policy of tribal termination eroded the natural resources set aside for the support of Native peoples and instituted practices that could be termed policies of extermination. "The system for protecting the Indian is full of traps. The federal government, obligated to represent Indians in protecting their national resources, is disabled by conflicting loyalties" (Price), one opinion-editorial states bluntly.

The erosion of natural resources proved an effective tool for tribal termination and created a lasting block to economic development. "Because Indian rights are subject to so many restrictions and limitations, land-holdings slowly diminish, valuable water rights dribble away until valuable economic and human resources are in desperate straits. As a result, development of these resources is impossible and the Indian remains doomed to poverty and distress as reflected in the statistics which have been reiterated until the citizen has been dulled by them"(Price).

The relationship between the U.S. government and Native Americans could be described as paternalistic, in which the Indians were seen as children incapable of tending

to their own affairs. Euro-Americans who wished to enjoy the benefits of the natural resources proved quick to recognize the role of the federal government as "trustee" of Indian lands. The government, under the auspices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, often actively participated in the denial of these resources to the Indian peoples. Rights to resources, such as water or minerals, were often leased away or reservation land holdings were re-negotiated for the power-holder's benefit.

Some writers would argue that the U.S. entire U.S. economy was built at the expense of Native peoples and the denial of their human rights. They also hinted that the government's objective was extermination or genocide of Native peoples.

"Whole economies are built on dying Indian rights. At some point the wrong becomes so monumental that correction is beyond the legal conscience (UPI "Alcatraz: Indian War"), read one damning summation of U.S. policies leading to the decimation of Indian peoples. Despite the sympathetic slant and outraged tone of the story, it must be noted that abuses of the system for which corrections lie "beyond the legal conscience" do away with the possibility of reparation, correction or change.

Another story relates U.S. policies regarding Native peoples to the actions of the U.S. military during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Vietnam War. "Even today it appears that what the guns and sabers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry couldn't complete in 1890 will be brought about by plain starvation," one writer noted (Von Hoffman). Through analogies like this one, the genocide of indigenous peoples by the United States began to take on a global appearance. "With the Indians and with the Vietnamese, many people wish to know if extermination is the government's policy" (Von Hoffman). Human rights violations, such

as massacres, began to be depicted as part of an overall U.S. agenda for dominion over lands and peoples, rather than as isolated incidents or anomalies.

Additional support for re-consideration of U.S. Indian policies in light of extermination and genocide was expounded at length in Dee Brown's 1970 book Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee, a heart-rending Native American history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A revisionist Indian history of the American experience painted vividly a long history of betrayal and genocide.

The psychology of Americans may also make it difficult for Indians to have their rights to land recognized, one story suggests. "Non-Indians scoff at native rights to land, expediently forgetting that the idea of private property is deeply embodied in the American experience. They may also object to 'unearned' income" (Price). The American economic system relies upon specific legal definitions of private property, ownership and land use. This system, in 1969-71, still did not recognize the legal traditions of Native peoples to own and use land. Eschewing the idea of private property for "communist" ideas of land ownership was unthinkable. In contrast, native peoples tend toward communitarian land use and ownership. The family or community may work to support one another economically. Some resources may be shared or used to improve the life of the entire community, family or clan.

The occupiers challenged the Euro-American versions of the way land was acquired from Native peoples from the first day of the occupation. They also challenged the U.S. government's dissemination of lands held in trust for Native peoples to non-natives who would lease or purchase the land for pennies an acre through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This challenge was printed in part in several publications; it has been

reprinted in its entirety here. "We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four dollars in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the white man's purchase of a similar island about 300 years ago. We know that \$24 in trade goods for these 16 acres is more than was paid when Manhattan Island was sold, but we know that land values have risen over the years. Our offer of \$1.24 per acre is greater than the \$0.47 per acre the white men are now paying the California Indians for their lands" (Indians of All Nations). In 1969, the government's policies of termination continued through erosion of the land base. Unfortunately, the BIA was operating within the rights of its role as "trustee."

The occupiers communicated their distrust of BIA policies and actions regarding land rights, citing it openly as a block to development. Using irony to drive their point home, they mimicked the language of broken treaties the U.S. used to remove land rights from Native peoples. "We will give to the inhabitants of this island a portion of the land for their own to be held in trust...by the Bureau of Caucasian Affairs...in perpetuity – for as long as the sun shall rise and the rivers go down to the sea" (Indians of All Nations). Subtly but deliberately, occupiers suggested U.S. policies regarding land ownership and use to be at the root of forced tribal termination and assimilation into the dominant culture. Both these ongoing government projects, the occupiers suggest, are significant blocks to Indian development of people and resources from within their communities.

#### Basis for development

The language of the theme of development also addressed what was needed as a base on which to build a better life for Native peoples. First and foremost in this discussion is the concept of unity among tribes.

Unity was a pan-Indian project that sought to create alliances among various tribal nations to push for political and social justice, and to fight for legal recognition for land rights. Richard Oakes talks about the hope of beginning a new organization, the Confederacy of American Indian Nations, to weld Indian groups all over the country into one body capable of taking power away from the white bureaucracy. If Indian nations retained their sovereignty, then banded together in a Confederacy with similar goals for Indian peoples, they might be successful in challenging the federal government on a basic level.

### The Theme of Self-determination

The language of self-determination reinforces a liberal view of tribal sovereignty in which Native Americans, as members of sovereign nations, have the right to set up an independent government without U.S. intervention in its affairs. This view challenges U.S. government's view of Indian nations as dependent sovereign nations under the dominant power structure's protection. This language is used to address three topics, all of them concerned with the legal rights of Native peoples to live as they choose. These include legal rights to Indian lands, legal rights to self-governance, sovereign rights of Indian peoples as nations, and the ramifications of occupiers' actions.

Legal rights to Indian lands. The language of self-determination addresses the legal rights to Indian lands in several ways including treaty violations, establishment of title, rights to land use and resources.

No matter how one cuts it, the fact remains that Native American's lands and rights were stolen through a string of good faith treaties with the U.S. government that the latter party never once honored. Therefore, it comes as no surprise, that the theft of

Indian lands was one of the first topics to surface in the language about self-determination. When the island was claimed on Nov. 20, 1969, as "free Indian land" (AP "Electricians, Plumbers"), occupiers quickly suggested they had legal rights to the property. A land base would be the first step toward self-governance. "We're just asking for some of the things stolen from us so we can govern ourselves" (Caldwell "Silent"), said Dennis Turner, 22, a student at the University of Santa Cruz, New Mexico, who joined the occupiers.

Establishing a clear title to the island, which was at the time abandoned surplus, became a primary objective. The occupiers "insist that Alcatraz is legally theirs and that they have a right to live on it as they please, without government supervision (UPI "Indians say 'Rock'"). They further demanded that the U.S. "acknowledge the justice of our claim' and to give them the island within two weeks for rule by an 'autonomous Indian government' ("Indians demand Alcatraz").

Twenty-eight weeks into the direct action, the occupiers defied the government and followed through on their stated intentions. Self-authoring a deed giving themselves sovereignty over Alcatraz, they stated they would also reclaim other property (Carroll "Defiant Drums"). The deed was written on a bearskin (AP "No \$24 Island"). "The leathery document said 'from this day forward we shall exercise dominion, and all rights of use and possession, over Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay (Carroll "Defiant Drums"). The document contained an additional provision suggesting that Indians also had rights to other lands across the North American continent and that they planned to reclaim those as well. The statement read that "'from time to time' Indians elsewhere in the country will 'announce the restoration of other land to Indian dominion'" (Carroll

Defiant Drums). The claim of lands and establishment of clear title was a topic of importance in the language of self-determination.

The press and the U.S. government treated the Indians' attempts to obtain clear title to the island as a dramaturgical publicity stunt and depicted the deed as a prop. One paper reported "The 28-week occupation of rocky, wind-swept Alcatraz Island was made 'official' yesterday when the Indians there unveiled a deed of sorts painted on cowhide (Carroll "Defiant Drums"). The remark was disparaging and reduced the significance of the critical action to a pseudo-event. The press ignored the meanings behind the performative acts and later reported that the General Services Administration was the "official land custodian" of Alcatraz Island (AP "Historic Buildings").

The inability to establish clear title to the island led to controversy over the use of natural resources scavenged from the site. As the U.S. began to counter the messages of the occupiers, the waters of San Francisco Bay became muddied with accusations of Indian misdeeds. Two occupiers were arrested onshore for selling copper reclaimed from the island as scrap metal to obtain money needed on the island. "We claimed the island as our own, just as they claimed this country, and we had a right to the resources (Caldwell "Ousted"), Trudell said.

"We're talking about our right to live, our right to be people, and this is how they respond. It shows that their attitude toward us has not changed (Caldwell "Ousted") Trudell said. He "...reasserted his promise that the Indians would not drop their fight (Caldwell "Ousted")." He noted continued reference of poverty indicators as a rationale for the occupiers not being given use of the land and resources available. "We are not statistics and not that passive Indian who keeps turning the other cheek," he said. "We're

not going to be the forgotten Americans any longer, either. We're going to be Indian-Americans and we're going to let the whole world know that we're going to be people" (Caldwell "Ousted"). In this case, the word "people" has the meaning of human beings. Trudell's statement also meant that as human beings that are citizens of sovereign peoples or nations, who have formed their own government, the occupiers believe they have legal rights to use the land and its resources.

Legal rights to self-governance. The language of self-determination addresses the legal right of the occupiers to set up their own government. This language occurs around demands of the United States government, the establishment of self-government, and organization and plans for development.

The occupiers wanted the right to self-determination, the "right to set up an independent Indian government" on the island (Hendrick). In order to achieve this goal, the occupiers drafted a list of demands to be obtained from the United States federal government.

"The gist of the demands is a stand for self-determination, with the return of Alcatraz to the Indian people, to be controlled and administered solely by Indian people" (Davis). Consideration of the word people here is enlightening. Often, the word refers to a group and peoples refer to nations. When describing individuals, one may say person. However, the indeterminate use of the word people in this statement is problematic. The language suggested that all Native Americans are one population, instead of reflecting the multi-national reality of Indian country. It also suggested the occupiers, despite those varying origins, were one people. It may have been a functional language choice meant to

help occupiers establish a claim to the island. But, one wonders if the occupiers understood the nuances of this central part of their argument.

Administration of the island necessitates an organizational structure. Organization of the new government was a subject demonstrating the practical requirements of the self-determination agendas. Building on Richard Oakes' conception of an Indian confederacy, the occupiers set up a democratic government "which represents a united front of all the Indian nations" (Davis). This suggestion of unity among tribes represented a potential outcome should a confederacy of Indian nations come about. In fact, none of the occupiers were designated by their tribes to represent their peoples' interests on Alcatraz and many had long since lost their relationship with their tribe of origins. The front was just that; the occupiers were not legally empowered to represent Indian nations, no matter what they said. It was a tactical maneuver, using a relatively small group of individuals to suggest a large number of peoples.

Organization had been an important part of the occupation's success. Two weeks before the November 20 occupation, which is the focus of this study, organizers of the occupation had attempted a symbolic landing on the island. This experience "ignited a series of meetings and strategy sessions; ...they returned to the rock, this time with a force of nearly 100 persons, a supply network and the clear intention of staying. What had begun as a way of drawing attention to the position of the contemporary Indian developed into a plan for doing something about it" (Collier 34).

The occupiers began the process of self-governance, a process that was at times as rocky as the island, seemingly growing from the landscape. "There's a council that carries out what the people want to do – except sometimes they just go ahead and act on their

own authority" (Barringer). Gary Bray, a Vietnam veteran who had recently returned from active duty in Vietnam, described the system being put into practice. This account also notes "petty divisiveness" permeating the group's organization (Barringer).

The occupiers also turned their attention toward development of Alcatraz Island. The Indians of all Nations developed a plan for the use of the island. When a meeting between occupiers and federal bureaucrats took place, the occupiers reiterated their plans for the island, the same plans they had laid out in the proclamation during the original press conference. They planned the following:

1. A Center for Native American Studies will be developed which will educate them to the skills and knowledge relevant to improve the lives and spirits of all Indian peoples. Attached to this center will be traveling universities, managed by Indians, which will go to the Indian Reservations, learning those necessary and relevant materials now about.
2. An American Indian Spiritual Center, which will practice our ancient tribal religious and sacred healing ceremonies. Our cultural arts will be featured and young people trained in music, dance and healing rituals.
3. An Indian Center of Ecology, which will train and support our young people in scientific research and practice to restore our lands and waters to their pure and natural state. We will work to de-pollute the air and waters of the Bay Area. We will seek to restore fish and animal life to the area and to revitalize sea-life which has been threatened by the white man's way. We will set up facilities to desalt sea water for human benefit.

4. A Great Indian Training School will be developed to teach our people how to make a living in the world, improve our standard of living and to end hunger and unemployment among all our people. This training school will include a center for Indian arts and crafts, and an Indian restaurant serving native foods, which will restore Indian culinary arts. This center will display Indian arts and offer Indian foods to the public, so that we may all know of the beauty and spirit of the traditional Indian ways (Indians of All Nations; Caldwell "Sirs").

Essentially, they would place Alcatraz Island at the center of Indian development, creating a place where Native Americans could develop both their skills and identities in culturally relevant ways. The former prison would become a part of the foundation for Native Americans to share, mend and rebuild their peoples, looking for solutions that would empower both individuals and nations to seek their own solutions.

Sovereign rights of Indian Nations. The language of self-determination that addresses the sovereign rights of Indian nations has to do with the occupiers' claims that tribal sovereignty as a doctrine extended to themselves. As part of this attempt, which attempted to force U.S. complicity, Oakes read the occupiers' list of 'non-negotiable' demands to the press during the occupation's initial conference. These demands included a personal meeting with Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel, funds to construct the cultural center and an agreement not to interfere with supplies for the invaders" ("Officials to meet"). The demands were meant to force the U.S. to allow Indians of All Nations to function independently. Walter Hickel, then-head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, refused to respond. The Nixon administration sent four "high-level regional bureaucrats" ("Officials to meet") to meet with occupiers. Their discussion was about

governmental programs for Indian development. They refused to talk about the title to the island.

An unfortunate eventual result of this tactical maneuver was the way the government used it as an opportunity to reinstate control of the messages about Indians. The government committee's function was to present a range of reasonable, apparently respectful choices to placate the organizers. Robertson, the committee spokesperson, "used the word 'choice' advisedly, without meaning to imply any ultimatums to the Indians on Alcatraz ("Officials to meet"). In other words, Robertson was reinstating the Bad or Savage Indian stereotype. The Indians could be dangerous and most certainly were expected to be unreasonable and to reject the reasonable remedies suggested by the federal government.

The Indians' proposal was never taken seriously. Robertson said it was "neither good planning nor sound policy" (Barringer). The paternalistic tone of the statement implied that Indians are unable to make good plans or good decisions for themselves and need the government to do it for them. He referenced "common sense" problems with the plan, such as access, sufficient water, sewage disposal and other services as flaws. These references re-enacted negative stereotypes about Native peoples and passed them off as common sense. Robertson did not address the reality that prisons and universities are both institutions, with similar organizational systems. He did not address the ways that the provision of services to one institution could be significantly different from another with similar scopes in size. He simply dismissed the proposal and the occupiers.

The tenor of Robertson's response did not go unnoticed by occupiers. "We are tired, and we are all very sad that the Government did not fulfill its words. While they

speak of helping Indian people, their actions belie their words in that they want to do our thinking for us (Barringer)," one occupier said, rejecting the government's paternalistic stance.

The plan, the Indians felt, would cost about \$300,000 (Caldwell "Sirs"). The occupiers gave Robertson and the federal government "until May 31 to make a counterproposal," stating that if they could not reach an agreement, then the occupiers would "draw up their own ownership deed and seek private funds to develop the island (Caldwell "Sirs"). Not only do they want the right to self-determination, they want the United States to fund the institution in reparation for past wrongs against native peoples. The U.S. did not acknowledge the occupiers with a response by the May 31 deadline.

Discussions of self-determination also reference whether or not the occupiers were aware of the possible outcomes of the occupation. Nine months into the occupation, La Nada Means indicated that she and others understood fully the ramifications of their actions. Recalling the initial days of the occupation, she said "we were ready to lay down our lives if we had to. We are ready to lay down our lives to stay here (Caen). She says that she and other occupiers are ready to die to obtain their rights and self-determination as sovereign peoples. Again, we note the use of the word peoples to denote both individuals and all Native Americans. As Vickie Lee later told attendees at a rally in San Francisco, "If not Alcatraz, someplace else. We are prepared to die" ("Alcatraz-indian uprising"). The statement promises the return not only of native peoples but also of issues. The movement toward self-determination is seen as a recurring pattern in an ongoing struggle for cultural survival.

### The Theme of Mobilization

The language of mobilization is about the migration of occupiers to the island and the resources needed to sustain life on the barren island. This includes language related to the strategy and tactics of the occupiers as well as language that asks peoples for actions. This language occurs in five ways: the mobilization of people, the mobilization of support, the use of available resources, considerations of public opinion and media, removal, and grafitto.

#### The mobilization of people.

The language of mobilization concerned with the movement of peoples was built on the concept of unity. This language addressed migration to Alcatraz Island, and emigration and settlement of the island.

The mobilization of people to Alcatraz Island seemed to happen almost without volition. The topic of migration to the island focuses on the original or long-term occupiers, the nation-wide movement of people, the migration as a spiritual pilgrimage, seasonal and crisis motivations of occupiers and the logical progression of Alcatraz.

By all accounts, Richard Oakes jumped off a boat in the San Francisco Bay and 13 others joined him in the icy water. The 14 individuals swam ashore to Alcatraz and on November 20, 1969, they formed the original core group behind the occupation of Alcatraz Island. When day came, the "scouting party" (Davis) went to the mainland, then returned to Alcatraz with approximately 100 college-aged Indians who arrived by boat. These were later called the "steady occupational group" ("Indians demand").

Additional occupiers followed the first hundred to the island. "Since then their numbers have swelled and now it is believed that there are as many as a thousand Indians

on the island" (Caldwell "Silent"), read an early report. The occupiers' hopes for a long-term population were affirmed.

"While everyone waits the population on the Island continues to grow. Now there are Sioux and Navajo and Cherokees. And Mohawks, Puyallups, Yakimas and Hoopas. And there are many others, young and strong with long black hair and determined not to leave" (Caldwell "Silent"). For the first time, "tribes" were depicted in the press as "nations." "Indians came from reservations as far away as Washington and Oklahoma, including Chippewa, Sioux, Mohawk, Seminole, Cheyenne, Cree and other nations" (Davis). The unification of all persons from all these Native American nations consolidated the pan-Indian movement into one geographic location. It was an exciting time for Native Americans and solidified the occupation's place as a critical event in the peoples' collective history. By November 28, eight days into the occupation, 400 Indians were occupying Alcatraz (Davis).

Occupiers' comments reflected their hopes for unity among tribes. One occupier said the occupation "has electrified their people and in one stroke unified members of the nation's 300 tribes" ("Alcatraz: Indian War"). Other occupiers, such as Bray and Remington, they expected the contact over time with Indians living on the mainland to result in an increased sense of Indian identity and that "what has started on Alcatraz will have far-reaching effects" (Barringer). Oakes said "It's the first time we've gotten all the Indians together. Perhaps we can develop an all-tribe consciousness. We might just wake up the conscience of America" (Von Hoffman). This suggests the primary audience for the media messages of occupiers is other Native people, with an objective of unity among

peoples, and a secondary audience is Euro-American. It also suggests that Euro-Americans are asleep in their lives and need to wake up to the actions of its government.

If the rapidly growing population of Native Americans on Alcatraz crossed gaps between tribes, it also crossed generation gaps. "The influx of Indians – from 2-week-old infants to tribal elders in the 70s – swelled the ranks of the original 100 to 500 persons of all ages" (AP "Electricians").

In the media, the migration patterns were compared to a pilgrimage and Alcatraz, to Mecca. It is certainly true that many individuals of Native American ethnicity made the trek to Alcatraz to see Indian Country for themselves. "Like a magic force, Alcatraz draws them from everywhere. There are over 150 permanent Alcatraz Indians. Thirteen thousand more tribal visitors have been on the island since the original Nov. 14 invasion: Seminoles from Florida, Eskimo from Alaska, Cherokee from Oklahoma, Sioux from Washington, Blackfeet from Montana, Apache from Arizona" (Jackson). Without doubt, there was a spiritual quality to the migration of Native people that stood up to be counted alongside the Indians on Alcatraz. "They bring their children, their sleeping bags, their flashlights and catalytic heaters. They stay for a week or two or three, and leave with a new strength and pride and determination." The description falls short of evoking and communicating the transformational experience as entire families and groups immersed themselves for the first time in unfettered Indianness – perhaps because it relies on the substitution of Muslim "others" to describe the experience of native peoples.

The migration patterns proved seasonal and/or crisis motivated. "In the ensuing months, the number of Indians on the island climbed to nearly a thousand. But as the winter rains came, they dwindled to fewer than a hundred" (Caldwell "Sirs"). The island's

cold, dank, damp structures did not seem to inspire many to stay. An example of crisis motivated migration to Alcatraz occurred when the federal government announced plans to convert the island to a park. One article reported that "hundreds of Indians swarmed onto this old prison site today in a bold challenge"(Caldwell untitled). It was the beginning of the war of attrition: "...about 100 Indians have kept a vigil here and said they will not leave" (Caldwell untitled). The government responded by cutting off electric power and water supplies.

Mass migration of all Native peoples to a central location was the suggestion of one fringe group in New Mexico. Signed by the Revolutionary Movement of the People, the letter to the editor suggested what its author saw as "the logical progression of Alcatraz" – a mass migration of all Native peoples to New Mexico. They said "A mass migration to this state of 900,000 inhabitants would bring down the Anglo power structure, and so drastically change the economic system that Anglo power would end in New Mexico. The government cannot prevent a mass migration. They will have to accommodate themselves to it. Any major move to prevent the retaking of New Mexico would almost certainly become a rallying-point for the numerous non-Indian rebel groups. " The language was that of secession. It held a vision of retaking the land from the white colonizers, a vision of de-colonization and the formation of an independent state within the United States. One can only guess that such a state would have enjoyed a relationship with the U.S. similar to that enjoyed by Texas. Akwesasne Notes reprinted the letter with an official position of "no comment."

The emphasis of the occupiers was placed on permanent settlement, in other words, rapid emigration and colonization of the island by Indian peoples. The language

of mobilization of people discussing emigration and settlement addressed the need for a permanent settlement, settlement by families and limbo culture.

There would be safety and strength in numbers. "We're encouraging people to come, stay – not as tourists," said Chavers. "We're going to have to stop people just coming out for a day" (UPI "'Rock' Indians"). A census of men, women and children on the island suggested that about 200 would remain to become permanent residents on the island (UPI "'Rock' Indians").

Despite organizer pleas to the contrary, the "composition of the ad-hoc Indian community changes constantly" (Collier 34). The changeover among occupants would be a weakness when it came to actually setting up a permanent community on Alcatraz. But, it would also be an important strength to the overall growth of the Red Power movement. Occupiers came to Alcatraz and fed not only on food stores but a rich sense of community and identity. Hundreds, or perhaps thousands, took this sense with them when they went home to their reservation or urban community (Findley), along with a working knowledge of how to effect direct action on their own conflicted borders.

On Alcatraz, occupiers tried to keep the emerging emphasis in the media on the island's permanent settlement by families with children. It was, in part, an attempt to mitigate the unfavorable coverage of occupation politics tempered the "bad press relations" (Jackson) describing the Indians as dangerous and unpredictable militants. The Trudell family was often cited as a typical family and "Families make up the core of Alcatraz Indians (Jackson)." John Trudell, 24, described as a "soft-speaking Sioux from Nebraska," his wife and their two daughters were often profiled in news about the occupation. Scenes reported on the island retained a pastoral feel, suggesting a return to

innocence. One news writer was greeted by "10 eager children waiting for the arrival of a promised case of chewing gum" (Jackson). The parents, like John and Lou Trudell, used the opportunity to talk about how U.S. educational policies negatively affect their children and family (Jackson). Lou Trudell's story suggested a similar sensibility. Assimilated into the urban landscape, she had never been around Indians until she came with John and the girls on "weekend visits from San Bernardino" (Jackson). When her husband decided he wanted to move to the island permanently, she agreed. "I wouldn't mind staying out here forever" (Jackson). With the move to the island, and the imagined return to an original state of Indianness, came the hope of a meaningful future that was not available to Native people on the mainland. To illustrate this, John Trudell recounted the story of applying for his college education. "Go out and get a job, you're wasting your time going to college" (Jackson), he was told.

Behind all the bad press, the reports seem to say, there remains something good and pure and innocent; something bright and young and intelligent that needs encouragement. Other Native Americans echoed the Trudell's sentiments, though many of them did not make the commitment to relocate permanently to the island. Despite the occupiers' best attempts, living conditions were anything but idyllic.

"Limbo culture" is a phrase describing the experience of occupiers who remained permanently on the island endured seemingly endless waiting. The preparation for the government invasion that never seemed to come and the isolation of the island took their toll on occupiers. Many of those who had been among the first occupiers had been long gone. The act of occupation had lost its glamour and allure as harsh reality set in: "Some will return in the spring and with vacations from school and jobs. Others are discouraged

and bitter and may never return." Some occupiers "have taken to calling their lives 'limbo culture,' because for 16 months they have waited for a final decisive confrontation that seems no nearer" (Findley). During that time, however, something important had changed. "A year ago the talk was of evading a government force, now the talk is of active resistance. It is a silent battle of attrition that even the second winter has not won for the government" (Findley). Despite the occupiers' pledge that any violence would not come from them, Trudell found himself repeatedly denying that the occupiers were hiding guns on the island (AP "Nixon").

Use of available resources was another of the occupiers' strategies for surviving the long occupation. Behind the idealism and the press conferences was a lot of hard work. Though the glamorous appearance of the occupiers on television and in the newspapers focused on isolated, staged events, and an idyllic existence, the long-term direct action of occupying Alcatraz was not a free ride. The occupiers managed the built structures, and available manpower in ways consistent with their desire to survive the island's conditions over the long term.

The built structures were used for various purposes. The 1905 cell block, which had once housed America's most notorious prisoners, was converted into bedrooms and meeting rooms ("Indians demand"). Occupiers committed to an equitable division of labor. "Every man, woman and child has a job and responsibility"(Jackson) to the community. This is consistent with the communitarian values espoused by occupiers, which I believe essentially combined commune-style living with Native life ways and cultural sharing.

Support for the occupation. Support for the occupation, in the form of moral support and money, supplies and food, arrived from family back home, urban Indian centers, and white Americans sympathetic to the Indian cause. The outpouring of support for the occupation was depicted as a deluge. "On the mainland, supplies, messages of support and more volunteer Indians continued to pour into the temporary headquarters of the San Francisco Indian Center at 3189 16<sup>th</sup> Street" ("Indians Demand").

Families back home watched the occupiers with pride. "My folks back home on the reservation are so proud of us and what we're doing," Dennis Hastings, an Omaha from Nebraska, said. Native families and communities committed a lot of the money and supplies sustaining occupiers. But more significantly, support and solidarity for Native issues developed among Native American communities throughout the country" (Davis). The lead sentence of one article stated bluntly: "Alcatraz is the catalyst that has united the American Indians after 400 years" (Jackson). No wonder the U.S. government didn't have anything to say in the early days of the occupation.

Supplies needed by the occupiers were basic and often at critical levels. Supplies of food, equipment, and water were in demand. The Indian center, always a hub of urban Indian community life, was pivotal in the organization and receptions of resources for occupiers. "Support for the Indians' cause rapidly developed in many sections of the community, reaching a peak on Thanksgiving Day with hundreds of people contributing money and sending gifts of food to the island. The event was immensely popular and received widespread news coverage. The availability of food and water was of primary concern to occupiers.

The influx of peoples quickly used up food stores. Oakes spoke about the food shortages only a week into the occupation. "Food is running out and will be gone by tomorrow" (UPI "'Rock' Indians"). The occupiers asked the public for the donation of a large net for fishing to help meet food shortages (UPI "'Rock' Indians dislike Indians"). In a matter of days, the occupation's organizers began to discourage day visitors who were utilizing resources without committing energy in return. "We're short on food and supplies now because of the huge number of people who came to Alcatraz for one to four days during the Thanksgiving holiday," said Dean Chavers who acted as the coordinator of Alcatraz resources at the San Francisco American Indian Center. The "three day 'pow wow' ...drew 600 Indians from throughout the nation" (UPI "'Rock' Indians").

Food, medical supplies and blankets were brought in by boat (AP "Historic Buildings"). The pleas for basic resources would continue throughout the occupation. "People keep asking what they can do for us. Well, we need meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, warm clothes – please, no ball gowns or gold slippers, which some people have sent. But if we have to, we can make it on our own" (Caen). The inclusion of many unusable or frivolous items in donation boxes headed to the island was proof of the unrealistic picture mainland Americans had of the realities of the occupation and of the lives of Native Americans. For many Americans, the occupation apparently looked like another Hollywood Indian performance.

Harsh weather conditions on the island required fuel, both wood and gas. The weather and harsh conditions would continue to be a challenge to the survival of the island's occupants. The need for catalytic heaters for warmth, candles and lanterns for light, always outweighed supply. And, as the occupation wore on, the equipment became

more and more unreliable. The makeshift equipment began to falter and then fail. The death of the gasoline generator necessitated the demolition of a small wooden structure for firewood (Findley). The Clearwater, the boat that carried water and food for the island, was out of service for a month and was costly to repair (Findley).

The basic right of human beings to the resource of water became an issue. "Bear Forgets asked whites to urge political leaders 'to observe the occupation of the island in a humanitarian way'" (Reiterman). The Indians' attorney, Aubrey Grossman, issued a printed statement: "Since we have 23 children on the island and several cases of flu, we are worried about serious health problems" (Reiterman). By this time, the island's water tank was running dry (Reiterman). Bob Bradley at the Indian office asked visitors to "Bring us water in any amount by boat. The government's attempt to force us off the island by these and other methods will not succeed" (Reiterman). Visitors carried bottles and jugs of water over to the mainland (Reiterman). Money for survival continued to be an issue, let alone money to realize the plans for the development of the island. The government council determined to "apply to different foreign countries for foreign aid," according to LaNada Means (Reiterman). The occupiers considered the island and its structures as potential financial resources. Charles Dana, a 27-year-old Choctaw, said "Indians have already been approached by contractors interested in hauling away the granite from the prison buildings after they've been razed" (Carroll "Defiant Drums"). About the same time the number of "financially able and active supporters on the mainland" began to dwindle (Findley), a plan emerged whereby the occupiers would offer "conducted tours of the former federal prison site to raise money to finance their

operation." Tourists would pay \$5 per head and sign liability waivers (AP "Indians start tours").

Considerations of public opinion and media.

The language of mobilization addressing the topics of public opinion differentiates between two publics. Language about media generally addresses occupiers' initial media successes, public relations disasters, and overall media successes.

From its first moment, the occupation of Alcatraz Island had caught the attention of two separate publics. The first, a Euro-American mainstream public fascinated with American Indians due to an imagined, romanticized version perpetuated in novels, films and news. And secondly by a Native American public that constituted an unrecognized "sleeping giant." The sleeping giant analogy relates to a Native American creation myth. White America waited and watched as native peoples apparently arose from the dead and headed for Alcatraz Island, bringing their stories and their ancestors along with their blankets and supplies.

This suggests that the occupiers' primary public targeted in media consisted of the Native American individuals, families, reservation communities whose own beliefs made it possible for them to commit to act in response to the perceived cultural crisis. It also suggests that Native American mythology has been re-enacted and that what has happened in the past has come full circle and an old story is new again in the present.

The occupiers held a press conference that enjoyed unprecedented national and international coverage of Native Americans. Follow-ups covered Native American issues. For the first time, Native Americans were seen in the media outside the realm of Western movies and sports team mascots. The results were successful, possibly beyond anything

the occupiers had dreamed. For the first time, they spoke out about Indian issues and what they had to say was reported as news. If the stereotypes of Native Americans remained to frame their words for white readers, at least they tended toward the positive. The folks back home would understand.

After the initial burst of enthusiasm, the news media became less and less interested in the occupation. The news value, they thought, was in the press conference; the occupation was openly identified and discussed as a pseudo-event. One reporter stated that "The news media has come and, for the most part, gone" (Barringer). In the beginning occupiers had put on a good show, in part due to Richard Oake's gift for public speaking. Whatever his shortcomings, Oakes had been able to unify the voices on the island into strong, singular messages to the press. After he was removed from the decision-making committee on Alcatraz and went on to work on other occupations, the occupiers' messages increasingly lacked authority and coherency. The mainstream media, and therefore Euro-Americans, never understood the occupation as a critical event in the way that Native Americans did.

Occupiers suffered a series of public relations disasters. These include the death of Yvonne Oakes, the exclusion of the press from occupiers' plans for development and the fires destroying several historic buildings.

The death of Yvonne Oakes, Richard and Ann Oakes' 12-year-old daughter, was a blow to the occupiers. The child died as the result of injuries sustained in a fall on the island. The mainstream press had a field day with the child's death. Tellingly, Akwesasne Notes did not run any stories about the death of the child, and therefore I follow their example and do not discuss it at length here. My feeling is the editorial choice was a

matter of the Native American journalistic standard of "respect" instead of the Euro-American journalistic standard of "objectivity." These stories were not reprinted out of respect for the life and spirit of the child and the loss of the families. After Yvonne's death, Richard and Anne Oakes never returned to the island.

Rumors of financial misappropriation of occupation funds by Richard began to circulate and were never answered or proved. The Oakes family had difficulty paying for Yvonne's funeral and donations were sought to defray expenses. The Alcatraz council asked Richard to resign. These things, too, were generally not discussed in the publication of the Mohawk nation in which Richard Oakes had grown up. There were some things better left unsaid, again, out of respect for the family and the community. While Richard would remain someone of whose actions they could be proud, he would never find his way home.

The second public relations nightmare came when the proposal for the island's development was not presented to the press as a media event. The press was excluded from the important discussion, possibly from occupiers' desire to control the multiple messages behind the increasingly damaging news reports. The multiple messages were causing the occupiers to lose credibility and they had to be stopped. The remedy was to bar the press from important proceedings. "The reaction of the Indians cannot be reported, because the press was not invited to the session. Copies of the speech titled simply "A Proposal" were given to newsmen at a press conference later at the federal building ("US takes plans"). It was one thing for the Indians of All Tribes say they wished to operate as a sovereign nation, but yet another again for them to do so, then unilaterally exclude the media who, up until now, had enjoyed access. In fact, the

occupation had been conceived as a news event from the start. There is no question that Tim Findley, a reporter for one of the San Francisco daily newspapers, had a hand in events leading up to the occupation and ensuring its overwhelming news coverage. Disregarding ethical considerations of Findley's actions, and given the history of the hand-in-glove relationship between occupiers and the media, certainly there would have been at least a feeling of indignation among news reporters at the occupiers' action. The occupiers apparently forgot the wisdom of the old saw suggesting one should "dance with the one that brought you." They would later regret the decision.

The third public relations blow came when fire destroyed several of the buildings on the island. By now, John Trudell had replaced Richard Oakes as spokesman for the occupiers, but there was little that could be done either about the fires or about the way they were reported. The press reported the government's view: that the Indians had set the fires themselves and the burden of proof lay on the occupiers to show that they had not. The shift in perspective in the coverage was damaging, to say the least. The occupiers had done the best they could under the circumstances. They "used several thousand gallons of water in a vain attempt to start the fires (AP "Historic Buildings")." The effort laid waste to the occupiers' limited, valued water supply. Trudell said "the Indians would have been foolish to set the fire, in view of the water shortage (AP "Historic Buildings"). He said that "Indian strangers," or individuals who were strangers to the occupiers, had been spotted "shortly before the fires began (AP "Historic Buildings"). True or not, the statement was not given much weight. Some occupiers set up a bucket brigade with water drawn from the ocean (AP "Historic Buildings"). Others tried to save the lighthouse. John Chibitty, an elder, recalled the futility of their efforts. "We tried to get up there in the

tower of the lighthouse, but it was all locked up. Some people went back down to the ocean and came back with pails of water. Others tried to get a rope to the top of the lighthouse where the fire started and help put it out. But we couldn't do nothing except just let her burn" (AP "Historic Buildings). The occupiers declined a Coast Guard offer to help put out the fire. "There were six boats out there in the water. We didn't know what was coming off," Trudell said. "We didn't want all those government people running around at night (AP "Historic Buildings")." One could hardly blame organizers for their wariness. But, this decision may have made it look as though occupiers had something to hide, especially in view of their earlier suggestions that the buildings would be torn down for salvage. No doubt, their actions suggested that occupiers believed they had the right to refuse coast guard intervention, a concept the American public was not ready to embrace for obvious reasons. For a war whose victories lay in public opinion, these events were battles lost.

"Yet half the battle for Alcatraz has already been won," summarized one news report. "The Indian occupation there is known throughout the world and has even been copied in many parts of the country" (Findley). One wonders if the writer was beginning to be embarrassed that the Indians didn't know the occupation was only supposed to be a media event. The government, through its absence, was omnipresent. "Several times a confrontation appeared imminent – but public opinion seemingly made the Government hold off" ("Alcatraz-indian uprising"). Success, it seemed, could only be measured in column inches in the mainstream press.

For Native Americans and activists, Alcatraz comprised a template for successful, non-violent direct action in the form of occupation. It sparked the Red Power movement

and gave the American Indian Movement the experience and dialogue it needed to further Red Power resistance to U.S. policies of aggression toward native peoples in dramatic, albeit increasingly violent exchanges.

### Removal.

On June 11, 1971, the waiting was over. There was no opportunity for resistance. "...armed marshalls backed up by the Coast Guard cleared the island under cover of night. There was no resistance from the 15 people sleeping there at the time" ("Alcatraz- indian uprising"). The discussion of removal as a topic in the language of mobilization communicates the dramatic re-enactment of the past, failings of the occupation, protests of removal, displacement of the people on the island.

Removal as a dramatic re-enactment of the past draws a parallel between the collective experiences of the people under the oppression of colonial, imperialist expansion and the collective experience of the people in the present day. The Indian Wars refer to the period leading up to the 1830s in which the United States engaged in removal of Indian peoples to reservations in order to meet the Euro-American demands for land. Euro-American institutions, such as schools, Christianity and the court system, are considered instruments of this ongoing war to eradicate Native culture and land rights. In this way, evoking the living story of the Indian wars, which would have still been in the peoples' stories, as well as in the literature of the day, organizes the Native experience in specific ways. The year 1969 brought with it the publication of Vine Deloria Jr.'s book-length manifesto, Custer Died for Your Sins, and Dee Brown's story of 19<sup>th</sup> century removal in Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.

The voice of Native American disappointment resonated when Akwesasne Notes recorded its opposition to the removal, calling it another chapter in Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee. "It was a re-enactment of the Indians' Passion Play, following a script that was written in some distant past – everyone played their parts well" ("Alcatraz" editorial). There was a touch of bitterness in the statement, an acknowledgment that nothing had really changed despite the occupiers' best efforts. But the occupation and the lived experience it encompassed for Native peoples all over the country – and all over the world – was real. Native peoples could reach out and touch it, go there and visit, and for 18 hard-won months, experience it both directly and indirectly. Legally or morally, the Indians had taken back a piece of land from the colonizers and held it by right of possession. Despite the change in perspective, the removal of Indian peoples continued in the present day and the occupation was over.

There were few reflections on why the occupation failed, though the editorial staff at Akwesasne Notes did pose several theories about responsibility for the occupation's failings. "The Indians were not without fault" ("Alcatraz" editorial), Akwesasne Notes conceded. The editorial voice described a mobilized force spread too thin, a lack of long-term commitment among native supporters and a lack of tribal support for the vision of unity. "Tribesmen of the continent were enthused, made the pilgrimage, and then resumed their jobs and became involved in other activities ("Alcatraz" editorial)," it noted. "Leadership and skills which might have been useful on Alcatraz became co-opted in other activities and reaching out in other glamorous pursuits" ("Alcatraz" editorial). The latter was most likely a criticism of Oakes, but also of LaNada Means who had made friends with several celebrity figures, and conceivably of Adam Nordwall.

Another failing was the lack of support for the unity movement by federally recognized tribes and tribal leaders. "As special White House assistant Bradley Patterson said, 'You don't think Navajo Chairman Peter MacDonald cares one iota about Alcatraz' ("Alcatraz" editorial)? Tribal leaders were unwilling to rock the proverbial boat to support unity among tribes. And finally, "Indians who complain about the removal from Alcatraz should examine their own lives to see what they themselves did to make the dream possible" ("Alcatraz" editorial). It was an indictment of those who did not walk their talk.

The occupiers' hope for specific, measurable change effected through the media had not been realized. Public opinion really hadn't proven that powerful a force in the end, the statement continued. The removal of the occupiers "aroused a lot of press publicity, but not too much more." The public, after all, was white and secure with its definitions of citizenship, freedom and land ownership. "Certainly the people of New York or San Francisco did not take to the streets in protest. No benefactor stepped forward to offer the Indians of All Tribes a new base. How many Congressmen or Senators fear they will not be re-elected because of their failure to pursue the Alcatraz cause?" The answer was unstated: none.

Finally, Akwesasne Notes offers a native voice interpretation of co-cultural versions of truth in news surrounding the occupation, with Euro-American truth identified as propaganda, and Native American truth reflective of events as they actually happened. "Only the most gullible will fall for government propaganda" ("Alcatraz" editorial), the statement continues, suggesting Americans are not sufficiently critical of their government's actions. The pivotal moments of the occupation were recounted and

ticked off, one at the time. "Navigation hazard without the light,' they say. But the government is the one who turned off the electricity. 'Vandalism' they say. But the government said the buildings were in such bad shape they wanted the Indians off for their own safety, and also said it was planning to remove the buildings for a national park. Selling the copper wire for much-needed funds for the Indians was only making good use of natural resources ("Alcatraz" editorial)." The story told by the mainstream is not necessarily what is true. Native peoples held different stories and different versions of the truth than that reported in mainstream news.

About 90 Indians, including occupiers, held a demonstration on Fisherman's Wharf "to dramatize their pledge to return to the island" (Hatfield). The protest was depicted as a drama; the outrage was simply play-acting. The removal from Indian land was framed as a social "cause," not a political action. And, perhaps worst of all, it was reported as yesterday's news.

Without Alcatraz at the center, occupiers became physically as well as emotionally dis-placed. "We don't know what we're going to do now. We lived there since November. The people who were there had been there quite a while. They considered it their home. I don't know what we'll do now. We have no place to stay after tonight" (Hatfield), said Raymond Cox, a Sioux, at the Associated Indian Arts office in San Francisco where he and his family were eating dinner. About two dozen other occupiers were gathered there at the time.

Others from Alcatraz, like the Trudells, joined another group of Native Americans and together, occupied a deserted Nike missile site near El Cerrito, California. The occupation lasted only days. After they were removed from that site, John Trudell spent

his time trying to find food and a place to stay for the occupiers. Alcatraz, he said, "served us very well, but it was still only a beginning" (Caldwell "Ousted").

### Grafitto.

"Grafitto" is a term used to describe the manifesto-style graffiti occupiers painted on the walls of the prison. After the removal, only the grafitto, which may be likened to political slogans, were left to speak the occupiers' version of the truth (Waugh). These grafitto recorded phrases such as "Custer had it coming." The statement recalled the Indian wars and the people's repeated attempts for self-determination and de-colonization. Another, "Where's our Chief?" is deceptively simple. It communicates the occupiers' yearning for the leadership to unify the occupiers on the island, and for a strong national leader that bring all Native peoples together. It also communicates that occupiers did not consider the U.S. president their leader in any sense. And finally, "The Lord Giveth and the White Man Taketh Away," decries colonialism at its base principle of individual land ownership. Euro-Americans had once again taken land that was not theirs to take. There seemed no argument there.

### The Theme of Survival

The language of the theme of survival describes Native peoples' resourcefulness in order to overcome the negative effects of colonization under U.S. governance. This language generally debunks the stupid or dead Indian stereotypes. This includes language drawn from the oral and written history of cultural genocide of Native peoples. The theme of survival almost always appears together with the theme of recovery. The topics through which this theme is most often addressed include those of the reservation system, everyday survival on the island, survival of the spirit of Native people, liberation from

U.S. governance, reconciliation of American and Native cultures, the rebirth of the peoples, and removal.

### The Reservation System

Survival of the reservation system was often referenced as a common experience among occupiers who had grown up or lived on them. Experiences of the reservation system were addressed in three ways: the reservation as concentration camp, the reservation as an instrument of genocide, and conditions on Alcatraz as comparable to reservation conditions.

The comparison of Indian reservations to concentration camps was frequent and stated as a fact by those who had experienced reservation life. "The reservation is a prison. They are like concentration camps. They have always been like concentration camps to Indians" (Caldwell "Silent"), said Sid Mills, 21, a Yakima from Washington state. Another occupier, Dean Chavers, 24, agreed. "Alcatraz is a rocky, isolated, rundown, nonproductive small island. It is very much like a typical reservation" (UPI "Indians Say").

Occupiers suggested the reservation system may itself be termed an instrument of genocide, as it was part of an overall campaign to eradicate Native Americans and their life ways from North America. "The federal government has used federal law in important ways to hasten the decline of Indian culture. Reservations are used as a weapon to force the Indian into a mold, to change the Indian's personality, his style of life, his religion and his diet rather than as a means of preserving and perpetuating a valuable culture. The trustee of Indian lands has looked at its job as 'civilizing' the Indian, as turning him into a farmer, or a city dweller, a welder or a migrant worker. No other group

in the United States has been subjected to a purposeful land redistribution scheme designed to change patterns of culture" (Price), wrote one expert on Native American law.

The reservation system was, in many ways, a system enhancing a general U.S. policy of genocide of Native Americans – a policy that would be echoed in the interment of Japanese-Americans during World War II and compared to Nazi concentration camps in which many peoples, including Jews, met their deaths. It was not an unfair comparison. After all, the reservation system came about following the 19<sup>th</sup> century removal and forced march of Native Americans from their traditional lands to reserves policed by soldiers. Many of the peoples died on the marches; of those that didn't die on the trek, others did not survive the winters, illness or the harsh conditions.

Oakes said "What is at stake today is cultural survival" (Collier 34). Some occupiers, he explained, had grown up on reservations within Indian culture while others were trying to reclaim their heritage after partial assimilation into American culture. "All understand that [cultural survival] is in jeopardy and they want some assurance that Indian-ness will be available to their children" (Collier 34).

Conditions on Alcatraz, Richard Oakes said, "compare favorably with conditions on most reservations." He explained, "The island is isolated, has no fresh water, inadequate sanitation facilities, no oil or mineral rights, no industry, a high rate of unemployment, no health or educational facilities, the population exceeds the land base, the soil is non-productive and the population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others"(Davis). As a metaphor, the comparison is pretty strong. Reservations were often isolated, far away from urban centers and jobs. Natural resources

necessary for survival, were often scarce. Sanitation was often sub-standard. Native peoples had no authority over their own oil or mineral rights. There was little or no industry and high unemployment. The amount of land and the quality of the land were often insufficient to support the population in other ways, such as farming, and small, poorly built homes would often be over-crowded by families. Native peoples for many years were not allowed to live off the reservation or to own property; they depended on federal assistance programs for subsistence living.

Everyday survival on the island.

Everyday stories of survival on the island took on new significance, especially when addressing the resourcefulness of the occupiers and the occupation as proof of survival.

A delivery of water from U.S. sources was, according to Oakes, "another battle we have won" (AP "Electricians"). When an "Indian plumber on the island announced proudly that he had succeeded in getting 35 of the old prison toilets to working" (AP "Electricians"), it was a statement of resourcefulness and ingenuity, not to mention the answer to a health concern. Conditions might be difficult on the island, but Indians were used to difficult conditions. This time, too, they would survive harsh conditions, only this time they held the key to their own salvation. They held the Rock.

Native peoples on the island sent the message to the government that they will continue to live and will survive culturally. The government's water and power cutoffs to the island were seen as "another form of genocide" against Native Americans. "If the government doesn't shoot them off, then they will force conditions to become so bad that

they'll become sick," said David Risling, Jr., president of the California Indian Education Association (AP "No \$24 Island").

The occupation itself seemed to prove that Native peoples had survived a centuries of genocidal policies. "The red men have taken the island, the red men whom we thought dead, destroyed as a people, ruined as a culture; they have come out of the earth where for sure we'd buried them and sailed out from San Francisco a mile and a half across the bay" (Von Hoffman). Despite common perceptions and decades of policies of termination and assimilation meant to merge Indians out of existence, Native peoples proved anything but dead. In fact, like the colonizers who took their lands, they boarded a boat and "sailed out" across a body of water and took back the island that they felt already belonged to them.

#### Survival of the spirit of native peoples.

This topic addresses pan-Indianism, massacres of Native peoples in the past, identification of Alcatraz with radical student movements, and identification of Native peoples with other cultures who are victims of genocidal policies.

This modern pan-Indian movement, which melded traditional spirituality and views about the peoples' relationship to the land with radical politics, was not the first. Pan-Indianism had unwound with the obstinancy of a snake a century before, rising to strike again, and now again, until there is justice for native peoples.

There had been another pan-Indian movement a century before Alcatraz and it had been met with massacre and genocide. The massacres of unarmed men, women and children had been discussed. Because pan-Indianism had returned like a high tide, parallels between Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota, in December 1890, Sand Creek,

Colorado, in November 1884 and the occupation of Alcatraz were obvious to Native Americans. The occupation of Alcatraz was simply a returning, a turning back to a spirit that denounced the ways of the white man.

The consummatory nature of the pan-Indian movement stressed the Native people's ability to overcome various silencing techniques, including death. "If we have to, we'll fight for this island. They can kill us but they can't kill our spirit" (Caldwell "Silent"), said Dennis Hastings, an Omaha from Nebraska attending Sacramento State College in California.

Two historic massacres of Native peoples involved in pan-Indian spiritual movements remained in the oral histories of the occupiers and the elders of their families, clans and communities. The massacres rarely find their way into the American mythology as other than a footnote in the American mythology of How The West Was Won. However, these massacres constitute a shared mythology among Native peoples who survived removal. These are the Sand Creek Massacre and the Wounded Knee Massacre, both of which occurred, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both of these massacres are associated with the era of the Ghost Dance.

The Ghost Dance and Ghost Dance Movement took place in the late 1880s and continued until 1890. The movement began when Wovoka, sometimes referred to as an Indian messiah, received a vision in which Native peoples were shown returning to traditional ways, maintaining peace between tribes and with the dominant society, participating in the Ghost Dance and songs, and believing in God. When the tribes turned to these ways, then balance would be restored to their people and lands. Wovoka told the Native peoples that as a result of the dance, the ancestors would return, that land would

be rid of whites, animals and game would return and be plentiful, sickness would be cured and good health would be given the people. The sweeping movement involved more than half of the Native peoples west of the Mississippi River. In 1890, soldiers at Wounded Creek massacred hundreds of unarmed Native Americans who were dancing a prayer ceremony asking Spirit to restore harmony and balance in their world. This shared experience created a feeling of unity and community across disparate tribal cultures, mythologies and traditions.

One account of the Sand Creek massacre came from a son of a local trader who saw the whole thing. His name was Robert Bent, and he was half Cherokee. He said, "I saw five squaws under a bank. When the troops came up to them they ran out and showed their persons to let the soldiers know they were squaws and begged for mercy but the soldiers shot them all. I saw one squaw lying on a bank whose leg had been broken by a shell. A soldier came up to her with drawn saber. She raised her arm to protect herself when he struck, breaking her arm; she rolled over and raised her arm when he struck, breaking it...some 30 or 40 squaws, collected in a hole for protection, sent out a little girl about 6 years old with a white flag on a stick. She was shot and killed. I saw one squaw cut open with an unborn child lying by her side. I saw a little girl who had been hid in the sand. Two soldiers drew their pistols and shot her, and then pulled her out of the sand by the arm" (Von Hoffman).

Lehman Brightman spoke of the 200 unarmed Sioux killed by the U.S. Cavalry at Wounded Knee, among them his relatives (Von Hoffman). His story of the Wounded Knee massacre spoke of a U.S. military movement that ended "the Ghost Dance, a movement for the rejection of the white man's ways and a return to the old style of life

then sweeping Western tribes" (Von Hoffman). A native man tells his story of the massacre, which is found in Ralph K. Andrist's book, The Long Death, and cited in the news about Alcatraz. "The 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry...ceased to be a military unit and became a mass of infuriated men intent only on butchery. Women and children attempted to escape by running up the dry ravine, but were pursued and slaughtered...by hundreds of maddened soldiers, white shells from the Hotchkiss guns...continued to burst among them...nothing Indian that lived was safe; the 4-year-old son of Yellow Bird, the medicine man, was playing with his pony when the shooting began. 'My father ran and fell down and the blood came out of his mouth,' he said, 'and then a soldier put his gun to my white pony's nose and shot him...'" (Von Hoffman).

Encapsulated in the Ghost Dance story is the story of what it means to be colonized. In its modern invocation on Alcatraz, it draws a parallel between the collective experiences of the people under the oppression of colonial, imperialist expansion and the collective experience of the people in the present day.

The modern pan-Indian movement identified strongly with these past injustices. Stella Leach spoke bitterly "about the genocide practiced on the red man by the white," her words comprising a warning "against expecting the Alcatraz occupiers to fade away." Her comments were directed to white Americans and the U.S. government. "We will not die out. We will live to be a reminder to your consciences" (Reiterman), she said. The past was not pretty and neither was the present. Oakes "acknowledges that the pan-Indian movements which have sprung up before have always been crushed" (Collier 34).

The use of force to suppress student protest on university campuses was fresh in the minds of the college-aged occupiers. This was often reinforced in the mainstream

news. Placement of stories about Alcatraz was often next to stories about radical student movements. "We don't want another Mylai or Kent State here, but we will not back down when we're right. We've had to take our lumps before," said one occupier (Caldwell "Alcatraz Indians").

Previously, we have noted that one writer compared Native Americans mobilization toward Alcatraz to the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. Veterans, returning from active duty in Vietnam, compared the actions of the United States toward Indians with those toward Vietnamese women and children in massacres like that at Pinkville, the name of an infamous massacre of Vietnamese civilians in the news of the day. "Pinkville, then, is not an isolated incident in American history. The red men on the island know that" (Von Hoffman). There is a tacit condemnation of U.S. policies of genocide as a means of colonization, substituting one ethnic group for another. At the time of the occupation, the Indians were often used as a metaphor for the Vietnamese. The time to act was now, before native peoples completely disappeared from the North American landscape. "In the case of the Indians...the government's policy has been genocidal" (Von Hoffman).

### Liberation

Liberation, said Oakes, was the way to cultural survival. "There's a sad neglect of all the different tribal cultures. Ten years from now, there might not be anybody out on the reservation to retain our culture and to be able to relate it. So this is actually a move, not so much to liberate the island, but to liberate ourselves for the sake of cultural survival" (UPI "Indians Say"). The liberties of the people were married to their relationship to the land.

A tangible symbol of the peoples' hopes for liberation came when the occupiers lit the lighthouse beam extinguished by the government. "The light is needed by the ships at sea, and by the eyes on land which watch over them and guide them," John Trudell said ("Alcatraz Glows"). The act of restoring the beacon was, for the occupiers, the restoration of a beam of hope helping Native peoples navigate the rough seas of liberation and self-determination. Among those ships literally at sea were the vessels bringing Indians home to Alcatraz, while Indian eyes on the mainland watched. For Indians themselves, lost in a sea of U.S. policies of termination and assimilation, the island remained a beacon of hope. Then, after fire damaged the lighthouse, the government turned off the landmark beacon. The Indians turned it back on. Soon, its light became symbolic of the hope of native peoples for self-determination, for a way out of the dark period of colonization.

Plus, the lighthouse was central: geographically centered on the island, symbolically centered in the popular imagination of both white and Indian Americans, and, as a metaphor for hope, centered in the Red Power movement. Its light was as an ephemeral thread that communicated a vision for the future. Native Americans following the occupation from all parts of the nation became spiritual torch carriers for the project of self-determination. "It was in peaceful search of this recognition that we came to the island last November. As long as the light glows, the search will go on ("Alcatraz Glows") The occupiers were asking for nothing less than the recognition of their rights as sovereign peoples.

#### Reconciliation of Cultures

Oakes spoke about the struggle that Native peoples have reconciling their Indianness with the American culture that dominates the world in which they live. "One

of the basic tenets of Indian life is humbleness," he began. Humbleness as a pan-Indian concept negates the ego and self-importance as desirable personality traits; responsibility to the people is more important. "Though it's true, for instance, that the Chicano people don't identify with the Indian part of their life. It's the invisible side for them; or it's the pagan side for them; or it's the side of them that's very savage. They rationalize, so far away from the Indian part of their lives; and I think all their lives try to believe in something they're not, trying to be more and more American..." ("El Grito Interviews"). Oakes' observation is of Native Americans as bi-cultural peoples, who have to choose between two different ways of life and survival. These ways include the rational, or white way, and the irrational, or Indian way. In accepting the stereotypical role of Indians as real, and denying their Native American ancestry, these peoples may become more like Euro-Americans but they've lost something valuable in the exchange: their identities and relationship to the world. A hint of sadness underlies Oakes' observation.

#### Rebirth of the People.

The rebirth of the people as part of a cycle of survival and renewal is best illustrated by news about the birth of a child on the island. During the second winter, the Trudells welcomed a son into the world in the unheated former prison guard's quarter's. They named him "'Wovoka'...after the Paiute medicine man who originated the 'Ghost Dance' in a last ditch effort at Indian religious unity that ended in the massacre of Wounded Knee in 1889 ("A Birth"). He was, John Trudell said, "squalling, strong and healthy" ("A Birth"). The birth marked the struggles of the occupiers with living, breathing proof of the rebirth of their cultures. Pan-Indianism was not dead, but had been reborn and was instilled in children who might realize the vision of liberation their

parents have held for them and passed on as part of their legacy. The baby, Wovoka, was strong and healthy despite the adverse circumstances of the geography of his birth, and so were native peoples. The baby was a reminder of the greater cycle of rebirth of which all life is a part.

### Removal

The second winter on Alcatraz was "the tiny island community's hardest season" (Findley). Removal of the Indians by the federal government began to be rumored. One of the occupiers said the idea of removal "was nothing new to us...we've always been expecting it" ("No Plan to Oust"). Lowering food and water stores, coupled with the weather, suggest the Spartan nature of life and conditions on the island. "Morale and health are high, but everything else is low. Breakfast is mush and bacon, lunch is canned soup, dinner is meat, if and when available. Tap water is brought over from the mainland..." (Caen). This second winter "may have been the most important period in the short history of Alcatraz" (Findley). Why? Because the occupiers did not starve, die of thirst or succumb to the elements. They did not give way to the federal government.

"It is that awareness...the reviving knowledge that native American culture has survived not only genocidal wars but years of being portrayed as a quaint souvenir of the American West – that first encouraged young Indians to seize Alcatraz in 1969" (Findley). Survival, not only of the occupation, but also of the second winter, would lead to the spring, a period of recovery and rebirth.

Removal would soon follow, with its unhappy echoes of earlier removals. Tammy Lee, 8, Timothy Lee, 9, and Tom Lee, 10, were on the island when marshals arrived, though their mother Vicki Lee, 30, a Shoshone from San Diego, was not. They

experienced significant trauma as a result of the marshals' actions during the removal. They told their mother the story of the marshals' actions. "My little girl said they held a gun to her chest and she asked 'Are they going to kill me?' And my son hid under the bed but came out when they put a gun to his head" (Hatfield). The use of force against her children led Vicki Lee to question her husband's involvement in the Vietnam conflict. "I don't think my husband should carry arms for the United States when his children are at gun point at home" (Hatfield). The tactics used to re-establish U.S. control of the island were eerily, uncomfortably familiar to occupiers.

### The Theme of Recovery

In news about the occupation of Alcatraz Island, the themes of survival and recovery almost always appear together. The language of the theme of recovery suggested that restoration of a balanced, way of life is necessary for the physical, mental and spiritual healing of Native Americans. This language generally rejects American individualism as being at odds with Native American communitarian traditions. The rejection of white culture is one of the hallmarks of the language of recovery. This language addresses the opportunity to rebuild Native American culture, restoration of land to its natural state, the personal and communal recovery of Native people, the hopes of Native people for recovery, and the recovery of right relationship between the land and the people.

#### The opportunity to rebuild Native American culture

Occupiers saw in the island's "isolation a place to rebuild their culture" (Caldwell "Silent"). The result of this vision was an outpouring of gratitude from many native people. "I want to thank all of you young people for making it possible for me in my time

to be here and see the rebirth of our culture. You have our support. The Indians have no generation gap," said Shamoia Mawatsi, a medicine man from the Santa Ynez Indian Reservation (Caldwell "Silent").

Restoration of land to its natural state

The recovery of the land from the elements and the waste of government abandonment mirrored that of the recovery of the people. "The only noise was the faint laughter of the children playing in the yard where hardened criminals once took their exercise (Caldwell "Silent"). While children played, adults worked "...to wrest control of the island from at least the elements which had had their way there for some six years...clearing treacherous tangles of vines and weeds from the many pathways and stairs on the island ("Indians demand"). A naturalized order of things emerged along with feelings of replenishment and plenty. "One live turkey, two ducks, several rabbits and a gang of friendly dogs are now roving on the island, and one group of young braves appears to have found a productive fishing hole offshore where they have delightedly hauled in a modest catch of red snappers" ("Indians demand ").

Tens of thousands of people visited the island to be immersed in Indianness. "...you find that the people coming here are here for the knowledge they can acquire. We hope we've been instrumental in bringing about an awareness in young people, an awareness that there is something good in the traditional aspect of Indian life. And we hope that the young people begin to respond to the old people...the old people can teach them much more ("El Grito Interviews...")." The 18 months of the occupation were an unprecedented period of cultural recovery for Native Americans.

The feelings of abundance continued, mostly due to the richness of Indian community life awaiting visitors and occupiers on the island. The feeling of belonging stood in stark contrast to the alienation and isolation of the individual in America's urban areas. "Here on this island, we've got so much more. It has so much more in the way of promise, hope, for our own people. Our people are slow to react to something of this nature, and they want to find out how much truth there is in it. It is hard to live a lie" ("El Grito Interviews...") one of the occupiers said. The statement suggests the struggle for Native peoples to live as prisoners in their own land, a land in which they continue to be treated as less than citizens. The American dream and consumer culture were not the path to truth, they believe. Instead, a returning to the traditional life ways of the peoples is a better way.

#### Relationship between the land and the people

There emerged a renewed strength, a connection between the body of the peoples and the body of the earth. One native poet wrote, "Alcatraz, your living rock has given us all new strength...Remember us, for we are your people and you are ours" ("Alcatraz" poem). The relationship of the people to the land was reciprocal; they belonged to each other. The earth was not something to be owned, but something to be respected through relationship with it.

The occupation of Alcatraz Island was an act honoring this sacred relationship between the land and the people in a way that was not possible under the reservation system. This concept sheds a new light on several previously considered statements that relate recovery to the other themes, and I'd like to revisit them here in this new light. "We're just asking for some of the things stolen so we can govern ourselves" (Caldwell

"Silent"), one occupier said. Since land and identity were stolen, the recovery of Native American peoples required a safe place, a place where they could reclaim their relationships with the land and the Earth. Alcatraz was the place "...where they can bring the smashed fragments of their heritage, the potsherds of their history, and maybe by pooling what's left of Shoshone, Chippewa, Seminole, Crow, Mohawk, peoples, they can make a new mosaic of self-knowledge and identity (Von Hoffman)." Alcatraz as the center of the Indian world became a turning point, the center of the tidal pool around which everything else revolved. The occupation was a critical event, "the most significant event since Army troops crushed the 'Ghost Dance' – the last uprising of the Indian wars – after which Indians decided to stop fighting the white man (Price)." It was a place for recovery.

#### Personal recovery

"All my life, wherever I went, there were always thousands of whites around me. Every time I left the reservation to go anywhere, there were always whites. I didn't always want to look at their faces. Here I don't have to," one occupier said (Barringer).

Americanism, with its emphasis on individualism, is essentially at odds with the group-oriented identity and processes of traditional Native American communities. Some native peoples would call its advanced consumerism a destructive force. When Native Americans leave the community, they become isolated in urban America. Their identity, so firmly entrenched in the community and relationship with it, ceases to have relevance. They lose their identity when they lose the connection to their community or heritage – and to the land.

### Communal recovery

The recovery of the spirit of the people is linked with the recovery of the land, for each is a part of all that is. "We have found something important. We have found the strongest medicine people have is in learning to live together at peace with the earth. There is a barrage on your spirit in the city. There, it is one of the most difficult things in the world to get your head straight about what it means to be an Indian today," said Albert Montoya, a 23-year-old Ute who served on the island's governing council (Findley).

However, with the sense of community and the recovery of cultural heritage came a strong sense of isolation. "On the island, we are in a kind of exile. Sometimes, it is hard to keep morale very high, especially when it is cold and raining outside. But at least there, we are left alone and there is time to become aware of being an Indian," Montoya said (Findley). Outside the borders of Alcatraz lay the fragmentation of the self, the fracture of the individual from the community; inside the borders lay community awareness and the chance for recovery.

The recovery of the mind, body and spirit of a Native American person relies upon the reclamation of community and identity. When the community is restored, healing can take place both on the personal and communal levels. "And Indians need to realize that they too need to strengthen their ideals and their people, too," Akwesasne Notes editorialized ("Alcatraz" editorial). "The action is not at a tribal chairman's meeting in Pierce or at a NCAI convention in Anchorage – it is in purifying our own hearts and strengthening our own people" ("Alcatraz" editorial). Recovery, the statement says, begins in the hearts of the people and only begins when they begin to take effective

action, to live what they believe, to walk their talk. As Alcatraz Island signifies the recovery of a larger relationship to the land, so the recovery of the individual signifies the recovery of the peoples.

Pan-Indianism on Alcatraz Island incorporated many traditions into its ceremonies to create a spiritual unity that incorporated into one community the collective experiences of many nations. These spiritual traditions most likely included ceremonial use of the peace pipe, dance and sweat lodge, observances that would have been common to many tribes, among others. These choices led to an understanding of right action on the earth that had significant spiritual as well as political implications. The combination of spirit and politics would be the glue that held the Red Power movement together and which continues to bind Native peoples to their communities and their continued struggle for legal and land rights to the present day.

#### Hope for Recovery

The re-kindling of the lighthouse beacon communicated the hope for recovery of personal and collective rights to some native peoples. "For us on the island, and for Indians everywhere, it is a symbol of the rekindled hope that some day the just claims and rightful dignity of the American Indians will be recognized by our fellow citizens." Having only recently being recognized in the United States as "citizens," Native Americans still differentiated themselves from Euro-Americans. A "citizen" would have rights under the law, including freedom of religion. "Americans" are generally white, Euro-Americans. The hope is that someday Americans will recognize the Indians' rights to self-governance, that they are first citizens of their sovereign nations, not of the United

States. There is also hope that other Native Americans will reclaim their dignity through a return to the traditional ways.

### Rebirth of the people

The naming of the baby Wovoka by the Trudells was one act of cultural recovery, marking the rebirth of a people and their spiritual relationship to the past, the present and the future. On the island, native cultures were being reborn. These rebirths the reclamation of layered tribal identities through clothing, arts, song, language and dance. "...at night, the prison is filled with the soft sounds of ceremonial drums and...songs in Sioux, Kiowa and Navajo," an example of cultural sharing. After dinner another night, 15 dancers shuffled and moved to the sounds of drums, using their voices and movements to represent the pain and frustration endured by Indians for centuries (Reiterman). On the island, "...young and old renew the traditions of beadwork and leathercraft" (Jackson).

The recovery of Indian identity begins with children on the island. One article records this process. "'These Indian children,' says Grace Thorpe, seldom learn their own culture in school. Here each child has to do research into his tribe's history. They learn the legends and ways of their people" (Jackson).

This pride in one's heritage could be seen in clothing worn on the island, as well. Jeans, boots or moccasins, fringed jackets, beaded headbands and traditional (Jackson) or ceremonial dress each had their place on Alcatraz. "Each Indian identified himself by his name AND his tribe and most wear jackets lettered on the back with the words Alcatraz and their tribe, surrounding the Alcatraz Indian symbol (Jackson)." The jackets and shirts recalled the Ghost Dance shirts of a century before, decorated for protection against the

white man's bullets. Identity, which before Alcatraz, had been fragmented, began to be a matter of choice.

### The Theme of Transformation

The November 20, 1969, occupation of Alcatraz took place only days before the traditional American holiday of Thanksgiving. The occupiers invited other Indians and the public to witness one of the first acts of transformation in an Indian-centered world. The language of transformation attempts to overturn erroneous mainstream ideas about Indians. It often addresses issues related to education of Native peoples so that they have knowledge of their own cultures and history. This language is often humorous or ironic in tone. The language of the theme of transformation addresses those topics in need of transformation if Native peoples are going to survive. These include historical perspective, negative stereotypes, change of the mundane to the sacred worlds, empowerment of the people, urgency, the idea of Alcatraz, and self-determination.

### Historical perspective

The occasion was worthy of great celebration. Headlines read "Indians at Alcatraz Feast, Dance in Holiday Festival" (AP "Indians at Alcatraz Feast"). The holiday observance honored the perspective of the Indians. The history was not the one taught in American schools or Indian boarding schools. The newspapers spoke glibly of the deliberate shift in point of view: "In 1621, a group of Indians helped provide a Thanksgiving feast for some palefaces who landed on Plymouth Rock. Now, in 1969, a group of palefaces are helping provide a feast for some Indians who landed last Thursday on the "Rock" – better known as Alcatraz Island," the lead ran. "And this time the palefaces will bring the turkeys" (AP "Paleface Idea"). The latter, a quote from Adam

Nordwall, a Chippewa who helped plan the occupation, suggested that this time, the Indians were in the power seat.

#### Negative stereotypes

Occupiers sipped non-alcoholic cider "under a bright sun in what used to be the prison exercise yard" as "firewater...was banned by occupation leaders" (AP "Paleface Idea"). There is a conscious perception of what is needed to transform the public perception of the "bad" Indian or the "drunken" Indian. There was dancing, ceremony and celebration of the occupation's victory and of the un-Thanksgiving story that was about to unfold.

#### Change of the mundane to the sacred worlds

The occupiers observed ceremony. Richard Oakes was joined in circle by a 65-year-old medicine man and 10 others. They squatted while passing "the peace pipe in a long and somber ceremony" (AP "Paleface Idea"). This may have been the first time many of those attending had been part of a traditional ceremony. The presence of a recognized medicine man is important, as only very few individuals actually become spiritual leaders in the old traditions. His presence indicates the occupiers' awareness that their actions on the mundane plane are also part of the sacred world. The origins of the pipe and the pipe carrier would have been important, though they were unrecorded in the news. The passing of the peace pipe would have involved the invocation of the four directions and the ancestors. Offerings of tobacco, and possibly of corn meal, would be made. Most likely, each person would have offered the lit pipe to spirit by touching it to his chest then raising it overhead. There would have been a conscious invocation of spirit to the proceedings.

In honor of the occasion, one Indian read "A Thanksgiving Song," a tribute to the ancestors, a recovery of dignity and a testament of the emergence of unity between tribes. Old rivalries were being left behind in the dawning of this new day, and all the great leaders of the past stood together at last. "Indians of Alcatraz, you have made us men again! Tall Blackhawk stands with Sitting Bull, Wise Tecumseh speaks with great Cochise. And all the tribes in all the lands send up the song for victory and peace. O, brave young Indians, your mothers weep no more (AP "Indians at Alcatraz Feast")." The song was a healing balm for those who remembered from where and whom they had come. The invocation of great chiefs of the peoples recalled the sacrifices of the ancestors and suggested the occupiers were redeeming those sacrifices by restoring balance to the Indian world.

#### Empowerment of the people

Empowerment of the people for transformation toward the end goal of self-determination depended on several important concepts. These included education for Native peoples, funding for a pan-Indian center, the ability to break the reservation cycle, and unity among peoples.

Culturally-centered education, that is, education of Native peoples from their own perspectives, was a top priority for real transformation. The occupiers spoke from the first moment of arrival on the island of their vision of building and maintaining a center for Indian education and culture on Alcatraz (Caldwell "Silent"; UPI "Alcatraz Indians"). "We propose a traveling college – to go out to the Indian people, gather knowledge, and give it out again" (AP "Paleface Idea"), Oakes said. The retrieval of knowledge would begin through cultural sharing among members of tribes on the island. "Classes in Native

American studies were begun...at the tutelage of roving Indian octogenarian Mad Bear Anderson and tutoring sessions for the dozens of children on the island were set up...to keep them abreast of their basic school work" ("Indians demand").

Almost immediately, Alcatraz became recognized as a place where transformation of perspective, of relatedness to the land and Native cultures could occur without fear of reprisal. Native Americans responded by coming to the island. Visitors quickly numbered in the hundreds, then the thousands. There was obviously a need and a response from Native peoples. There was occupation and emigration to the island.

To effect the transformation, the occupiers would need the federal government's help in terms of funding. They drafted a proposal asking the U.S. to ante up money to fund "a major university and research and development center for all Indian people." The research and development for such a pan-Indian (Von Hoffman) center would be committed to breaking the reservation cycle and creating the dialogue and experiences needed to successfully make the shift to self-determination. In the beginning, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Hickel suggested the plan was possible. The island was a land of potential. In the often-cited story that compared Richard Oakes to the movie star, Victor Maturro, Oakes said, "Perhaps we can develop an all-tribe consciousness. We might just wake up the consciousness of America" (AP "Akwesasne Man"). As a spokesman for the occupiers, Richard Oakes was made to appear a hero in the press, and with heroes, anything seemed possible. Certainly, the Akwesasne back home had to feel a certain amount of pride that a local boy had become a national spokesman for Native peoples. Oakes had his own shortcomings, but in front of the cameras, he was eloquent and spoke with conviction.

In fact, in the early days, the possibilities seemed endless. "...we want a cultural center and a college that represents young people learning the forgotten culture they left to learn the white man's culture. The young Indians want to come back," said one occupier (pp). Another, Maria Lavender, a young woman of mixed Polish and Indian ancestry, suggested, "We have to teach the children the best of the Indian culture, but we have to include the best parts of other cultures too" (Barringer). Her statement suggests Nagel's description of cultural identity as a "shopping cart" experience where individuals pull from the marketplace of ideas the things that work for them. This is consistent with the choice of identities the occupiers can incorporate into their lives on Alcatraz.

When the government offered as a concession to occupier demands a park with "maximum Indian qualities," the occupiers declined and reiterated their vision for the development of the cultural, educational and spiritual development (Caldwell "Sirs"). When the government ignored their request and said Alcatraz Island would become a national park, the occupiers dug in. After all, they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. Occupiers saw it as another chapter in the Indian wars, the extension of an ongoing agenda. They refused to give up the fight.

"We are going to dig in and go ahead with our plans to build an Indian cultural center," said Joseph Morris, 53, a Blackfoot from Montana. "Alcatraz now symbolizes Indianness in the eyes of the entire world" (AP "No \$24 Island"). The occupiers wrote their own deed, a declaration declaring their ownership of the island. There was talk of demolishing some of the old buildings. "I think the old cellblock will be the first thing to go. After today things are going to start happening," said Charles Dana, 27, a Choctaw. "We want to see this island go back to nature, a lot of it" (Carroll "Defiant Drums"), he

said. Transformation of the island would restore the natural order of things both for Native Americans and all their animal and plant relatives with whom they shared space. The Euro-American way imposed an order that was unnatural, forced and without respect for the earth or her inhabitants. The United States government had two choices: to either remove the Indians, re-enacting an age-old solution to the country's so-called Indian problem, or "to institute a real change in his dealings with the American Indians" (Hendrick). The occupiers did not want to live in forced dependency any longer. This was a new beginning, the way to transformation and self-determination.

#### Urgent need for change

Urgency underlay the talk of transformation. This movement, like other pan-Indian movements before it, was in danger of being crushed. But, in Hickel's initial response and in the hearts of the people, there lay hope – and hope is hard to extinguish. "But time is running out for us. We have everything at stake. And if we don't make it now, then we'll get trapped at the bottom of that white world out there, and wind up as some kind of Jack Jones with a social security number and that's all. Not just on Alcatraz, but every place else, the Indian is in his last stand for cultural survival" (Collier 34), said Richard Oakes. His statement suggested the anonymity Indians felt in American culture. There was one important difference between Alcatraz Island and the mainstream, however. Every place else there was alienation and isolation; on Alcatraz there was the promise of belonging, of homecoming. Not even urban Indian centers, with their pan-Indian communities, could offer that. Confused about their identities, young Native Americans were stranded no longer; they now had an island, a safe place in a sea of Euro-American colonial era political aggression.

### The idea of Alcatraz

By the midpoint of the occupation, many Native peoples held a common vision for the transformation of the future. "Alcatraz, the idea, is deeply set. And I have found that the idea is not here alone, not on the island, but wherever there is any Indian in this country," said John Trudell, after returning from a speaking tour (Findley) to raise money for organizers. The idea of Alcatraz, not the physical island, became the key to transformation taking place across the nation.

The occupiers refused to accept that removal from Alcatraz was the solution to the war of attrition that had developed with the government. Again, we see the lighthouse used as a metaphor for Alcatraz, this time in acknowledgment of its role as a template for action for other Native persons. "Alcatraz is an idea. It is symbolic and has acted as a guiding light for countless numbers of Indians from many tribes. This beacon should not be extinguished by removing our people, like the Indian removals of the 1800s," said Vicki Lee, 30, a Shoshone from San Diego (Hatfield). Alcatraz is not an island, but a way out of a long American imprisonment to cultural freedom. It is a plan of action.

### Self-determination

Self-determination as the result of transformation is addressed through references to Nixon's "Indian Message" and the lack of meaningful change.

For a brief moment, it seemed as though the hoped-for transformation was at hand. In July 1970, President Nixon gave a speech to Congress commonly referred to as an "Indian message." In that speech, "he promised self determination and a new era for American Indians." Conspicuous in his silence, "he did not mention Alcatraz – the one thing Indians were clamoring for at that time" ("Alcatraz" editorial).

After the occupiers were removed from the island, Akwesasne Notes acknowledged that the hoped-for transformation, and the promised self-determination, had not taken place. One occupier said, "1871 or 1971, it's pretty much the same. Bloodless, this time, but with the end result the same" ("Alcatraz" editorial). The colonial project had been renewed, not ended, giving rise to a neo-colonial era. "America needs to realize that it is a time of new suppression for the Indians – perhaps for all people" ("Alcatraz" editorial). There was awareness that the sentiments of the American people of any race did not have powers to check the actions of government. By 1973, the U.S. effort to suppress Native peoples would not be bloodless anymore.

#### The Theme of Healing

The healing balm associated with Alcatraz would be a pan-Indian spirituality that would actively link spirit to the land and economic recovery. Healing was seen as a process that occurred in a cycle. The language of the theme of healing addresses the spiritual relationship of Native peoples to one another, to the Mother, the earth, and to the Great Spirit. This is language that attempts to redeem the shattered identities of Native peoples. This theme is linked strongly to themes of recovery. It is somewhat differentiated from recovery, which is based in practice of traditional ceremony, and centers on the processes of new life and growth through the renewal of the relationship of the people to the land. The theme of healing is usually addressed through turning back to culture, common spiritual beliefs and practices, and the relationship of the people to the land as a spiritual resource.

### Turning back to culture

The first part was a "turning back" to culture, the next was the generation of a common thread of spiritual belief and practice, third was the reclamation of relationship with the ancestors, and finally was a restoration of the relationship of the people to the land.

The occupation showed that Native Americans were returning, or "turning back to our heritage," said Ed Castillo, 22, of Riverside, California, a professor of American history at UCLA (UPI "Alcatraz Indians"). Another occupier explained that "young Indians want to come back to their native cultures ("El Grito Interviews...").

### Common spiritual beliefs and practices.

Common spiritual beliefs included an understanding of relationship with the land as a spiritual right. "Land and water are tangible aspects of important spiritual rights. The continuing destruction of the economic basis of Indian society goes hand in hand with destruction of the spirit" (Price). This is addressed in language about the negative effects of Christianity, misappropriation and cultural sharing.

Pan-Indian discourse about healing on the island is often about common spiritual beliefs. Discomfort accompanied the missionary zeal demonstrated by Wayne Bailey, a Southern Baptist preacher from the American Indian Baptist Church in San Francisco, California. Some occupiers, including council members, felt Bailey pushed "white man's religion" on occupiers, who constituted a "captive audience" (Price). "Christianity is the dominant faith among American Indians...who need Jesus, ours blood brother," Bailey said (Price). Many occupiers felt Christianity to be at odds with the return to traditional spiritual beliefs. In the past, missionary boarding schools played a role in forced

assimilation of Indian children into white culture, including the Christian religion. Native language or spiritual practices were forbidden in these schools, and those who ignored the prohibitions were severely punished. Given this history, Bailey's preaching must have appeared a betrayal of the occupiers' commitment to return to traditional beliefs. Despite Bailey's Creek-Seminole ancestry, and professed support of movement goals (Price), occupiers must have questioned the veracity of his "Indianness."

The confusion, and the controversy in Indian Country over the appropriation of Indian hair styles and dress by San Francisco's hippie population, was reflected in the way other Native American activists saw the Alcatraz Indians. A rare criticism from other Native peoples reflecting the confusion of identities between the occupiers and San Francisco's youth culture was notable. When the Alcatraz occupiers wished to create a symbolic, visual link between Pyramid Lake organizers and their own direct action by pouring a gallon of water from San Francisco Bay into the other body of water, reservations were expressed by the Pyramid Lake group. "We voted to let the Alcatraz group come in and perform the ceremony even though some of the older members felt we were going to see Indian hippies," said Mervin Wright, vice-chairman of the Inter-Tribal Council of the Pyramid Lake Group ("Alcatraz Indians Plan"). This is significant because it suggests that established Indian nations expressed doubt about the activists' abilities to observe appropriate protocols and behaviors. We can infer from this that while the messages from Alcatraz may have dominated the media, the resulting constructions of reality did not represent the range of expectations and hopes for all Native peoples.

Spiritual growth was part of everyday reality of participation in the occupation. Somehow the occupiers began to live in practice what they had come to believe in spirit. This cultural sharing was revealed through the telling and witnessing of family stories.

A few of these stories, such as the following first-person account, were recorded in news of the occupation. "My mother was raised with her grandparents. They were medicine people, so she is one of the last medicine people living. There used to be a practice among Indians, that when a child was born, the umbilical cord would be tied to a cult in a sapling tree. The tree symbolized the life span of that person," said Maria Lavender, a woman of mixed Polish-Indian ancestry (Barringer).

In this context, the word medicine means something that approximates personal spiritual power. "We have found the strongest medicine people have is in learning to live together at peace with the earth," said Albert Montoya. "There is a barrage on your spirit in the city. There it is one of the most difficult things in the world to get your head straight about what it means to be an Indian today" (Findley).

#### Relationship of people to land as a spiritual resource

On Alcatraz, healing was a process and occupiers received moral support for that process from elders and tribal leaders. The Mohawk Nation, the home nation of Richard Oakes and the birthplace of Akwesasne Notes, sent words of support and a purse of money to the occupiers. They said: "We must make our minds known to you, that we support the strong stand you have taken upon our Mother Earth. Know that you have the power and strength of the Mohawk people through the generations with you. Remember you have the great law of place to guide you. To all who hear these words, let us give

great thanksgiving to our creator that we are still here on our great turtle island to act as the true custodians of our Mother Earth."

In this letter, the Mohawk council members acknowledge the connection between spirit and action on which the occupation's strengths are based. By invoking the ancestors, they remind occupiers of their place in the centuries old struggle for self-determination. This pan-Indian movement is not alone and neither are you, they might have said. This effort, too, is part of the whole. The great "law of place" suggests the occupiers' relatedness to the land is representative of the relationships of all native peoples to their lands.

#### Mythology of Turtle Island

When constructing a view of reality in news, Native American mythologies are often used to challenge American mythologies. One myth that Native peoples invoked in 1969 is that of Turtle Island. Turtle Island is understood by Native peoples to reference all of North America. One of the most important parts of the Akwesasne elders' statement refers to Great Turtle Island. In several tribal mythologies, Turtle is considered to have brought the land and the peoples into being on its back. In the story, the world is covered in deep waters. A spirit being, Sky Woman, falls through a hole in the clouds, and the animals work together to give her safe passage and a place to land. Two cranes catch her in mid air to slow her fall. Other animals dive to the bottom of the seas to bring back a bit of earth. Only Muskrat succeeds, and brings a bit of earth to spread on the back of Turtle, who agrees to hold it firm. When Sky Woman lands, she shakes out her skirts and the seeds of all life fall onto the earth and root. Thus, North America and the people are brought into being. The story of Turtle and his interaction with the other animals, such as

Muskrat, gives Native peoples sharing this story a sense of place and relationship to one another, to the land and all its inhabitants. By relating Alcatraz, and its distinctive turtle shape, to the story of Turtle Island, Alcatraz becomes an effective symbol suggesting that like Muskrat, Native peoples will eventually bring a bit of land back from the depths of overwhelming seas of oppression and build upon it.

Invocation of this myth during the occupation became a way to construct a view of reality in the media that exists both within, and apart from, the dominant news frame. It incorporated the occupation of Alcatraz Island into Native peoples' experiences personally and collectively, whether they are physically present on the island or not. When considered as myth, the occupation can be seen as a retelling of a story that already has meaning and relevance. The earlier myth is renewed and modernized, but remains intact and relevant. The modern myth of Turtle Island creates a mythic framework for understanding a difficult set of circumstances and objectives in a rapidly changing world fraught with uncertainties. Finally, the myth expresses the people's gratitude to the Creator for the strength to survive and to act and speak on behalf of the Earth, which cannot act and speak for herself, but which sustains all life.

#### Ghosts On Alcatraz

The ghosts on Alcatraz are of two sorts. The first are the ghosts of men who were imprisoned on the island. The second are the ancestors of the Native people.

Occupiers say they feel the presences of men imprisoned Alcatraz. The buildings are "haunted by the men who were imprisoned in Alcatraz, for their ghosts, too, were felt by the Indians there – 'what kind of people build iron cages like these?' they asked. 'What good can be said about a way of life which institutionally punishes its own

people" ("Alcatraz" editorial)? The conception of discipline and punishment are colonial inventions. The ghosts share the pain of incarceration and exile.

The other ghosts the occupiers suggest are present on the island are those of ancestors are those of ancestors who resisted colonization. "Indian ghosts will haunt Alcatraz now, just as the rest of the nation is haunted by Indians of the past" ("Alcatraz" editorial). The ancestors, like ghost dancers, move alongside the spirit of those who occupied the island.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

This morning, almost 40 years after the event that is the subject of this paper, I went outside and sat on the earth under a great old tree to drink a glass of water. I went there to contemplate what I want others to take away from this effort that was years in the making. This paper has, in fact, taken longer to unfold than the event itself. When I stood up, I shook out my skirts and all manner of debris rained to the ground. And I realized that like Sky Woman, it is my intention that this paper should plant seeds for new growth.

To my knowledge, this paper is like no other. In it, I have taken responsibility for the outcomes of this work upon myself. It has been informed at every step by the works and values of Native persons as I have understood them. In its pages, I identified characteristics of a pan-Indian performative view of communication within a co-cultural context not advanced previously in media studies. I also identified the general characteristics of the eight themes of pan-Indianism known to exist but not previously defined. I have chosen to submit a version of the news that was subsumed by the dominant American mythology used by reporters to tell the story. In doing so, I have put in writing a set of ideas that before now, has more frequently been silenced.

At the end of this journey, the responsibility now lies with me to determine what those researchers, journalists, activists and other persons should take away from this work.

Media researchers should understand that the language of pan-Indianism was found to enact a consummatory function of news as myth. This is a type of ritual communication in which news is used to bring ideas into being in the real world. In this case, ideas about what is necessary for the cultural survival of Native peoples became enacted in life and experience. This explains why Native American scholars and peoples identify the occupation as a critical event. This view co-exists with and opposes the news-as-drama perspective. Because Euro-Americans do not perceive drama (another form of ritual communication) as real, media scholars identify the occupation as a pseudo-event. This place on the ivory tower may not prove the best vantage point from which to view what really happened on Alcatraz Island.

When examined through the lens provided by themes of pan-Indianism, I found that the mythological function of news is primarily enacted through shared stories and mythologies. These myths provide a cultural framework for communicating ideas about the shared values and experiences of Native Americans as colonized peoples living as wards of the U.S. government. Stories such as the Ghost Dance of the 1890s, the Indian Wars and Indian Removals, and the creation myth of Turtle Island carry meanings embedded within, not apart from, mainstream news.

For native peoples, I can hope to do a small part to set the record straight about what happened on Alcatraz Island and what it meant to so many. On Alcatraz, Native activists questioned the "common sense" ideas about citizenship, ownership, law, justice and morality held by most Euro-Americans. The de-colonization, or taking back, of Alcatraz Island from U.S. governance in order to challenge federal control of Native lands and identity heralded the return of a century-old fight for the return of sovereign

rights for Indian peoples. The occupiers clearly articulated a plan for liberation from the United States government and hoped for the formation of a new nation based on principles of communitarian land ownership. They wanted the United States to pay reparations for crimes against Native peoples to fund the endeavor.

Unity among tribal nations was a pan-Indian project that sought to create strong political and governmental alliances between tribes. These alliances, organizers suggested, would strengthen the push for political, social and legal justice for Native peoples. Together, Native peoples could form one nation, fight to have their sovereignty recognized, and bring about the changes needed for the survival of the peoples. Unity was seen as the only way to overcome the negative effects of 400 years of displacement and poverty. Though many urban Indians without strong ties to their nations were attracted to the idea, none of the 300-plus federally recognized tribal governments acted to this end.

The occupiers wanted to reclaim their rights as members of sovereign nations capable of governing themselves on a land base they would operate. They used a set of moral and legal arguments to suggest they had rights to Alcatraz Island and other abandoned federal lands. These arguments hinged on repeated U.S. violations of treaty rights with Indian nations and on the concept of "squatters rights," or ownership by right of possession, and Native people's rights to own land and access and use the rights and resources associated with that land for the betterment of its peoples. Though these tactics failed, the actions of the occupiers did set in motion the processes by which Native peoples across the U.S. have since begun to successfully petition for the return of land and cultural artifacts.

The primary audience the occupiers address was not a Euro-American public, as has been previously thought, but a Native American public of like-minded persons. Mobilizing in accordance with that shared vision was an important part of reclaiming identity – and supporting the reclamation of Indian lands. To this end, thousands of Native persons visited the island during the occupation. Though the ultimate goal of occupiers was emigration and settlement on the island, most of the visitors went home. When they left, they took with them a blueprint for direct action including knowledge, contacts and tactics. Activists today may wish to reconsider the strengths and weaknesses of the occupation from this standpoint, as it is widely considered one of the most successful and far-reaching direct actions to date.

Repeatedly, Native peoples' strength and resourcefulness has overcome the negative effects of living under U.S. governance. Among these resources, I would number as the most valuable Native peoples' living mythologies. Native American myths are not the same as Euro-American myths and they are invoked in culturally specific ways common to individual nations and to pan-Indian movements. Story and myth may be the best tools for opposing ongoing neo-colonial enterprises that Native peoples fight daily. If applied to the construction of news with specificity and consciousness, we may see again indigenous peoples reverse neo-colonial mythologies all over the world. In the early weeks on Alcatraz, the activists overturned negative stereotypes about Native peoples. They used narrative devices drawn from traditional storytelling and rhetoric, like humor and irony, to communicate a Native American perspective on historical, Euro-American mythologies. This tactic was predominantly successful.

On the island in 1969-71, survival of the reservation system following the Indian removals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a dominant topic. The harshness of reservations made the former prison, Alcatraz Island, a particularly strong metaphor. Included in this thematic area are the Sand Creek and Wounded Knee massacres of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Removal from the island would result in oral histories that recall those of a century before. Native persons were shown to have difficulty choosing between the white and Indian cultures available to them and were often unable to reconcile the two. Today, reservation living conditions remain substandard and identity among mixed-race persons remains contested ground.

Over time, the word pan-Indianism has been used in a variety of ways. What remains is that Alcatraz was a beginning. In addition to the national Red Power movement and the American Indian Movement, an international movement of indigenous peoples toward self-determination was born of the 1969-71 occupation of Alcatraz. It remains ongoing.

A shift from the mundane to the sacred world through ceremony and ritual enactment is one of the most important aspects of the consummatory view of news as myth. The shift from the mundane to the spiritual, through the relationship of peoples to the Earth, uplifts people spiritually and makes empowerment possible. I have found this shift to be true in my own spiritual experience – which has deliberately excluded any practices or practitioners reeking of cultural misappropriation. I know without doubt that making the commitment to live what you believe is a political action with consequences in the real world. And, in the hands of activists, the marriage of a spiritual discipline with a political objective is almost insurmountable.

The processes of new life, regeneration and growth through renewal of the relationship of people to the land results in a phenomenon I call spiritual ecology. By returning to traditional culture, spiritual beliefs and practices, Native peoples would return to right relationship with the Earth from whom they would draw spiritual strength. I take heed of this example and commit to live in balance on the earth in the best way I know how. As an eco-feminist, I actively speak out against cultural misappropriation. And, though it has not been my path, I support all those who hold to the traditional ways of the peoples, because it is a good, respectful and healing way. I follow my own Earth-based spiritual path.

Within the story of Alcatraz, there emerges a fragmentation of viewpoints between Native peoples and Alcatraz occupiers. In media studies, we sometimes find that a minority voice is remembered as the majority voice, because it is the one repeated in print. This is the case with the occupation. The "Native American" voice we hear in this paper is not the only voice of Native peoples and it does not reflect a sole, unified viewpoint. There is great diversity amongst Native American peoples.

I believe journalists have an emerging set of responsibilities in an increasingly global economy. The world looks to journalists to represent others fairly. To the best of our ability, we must do this without the use of stereotypes. Mythologies and stories, the stuff of news, may be used to create understanding between cultures and co-cultures, rather than to reinforce positions of difference and dominance that serve the few at the expense of the many. When reporting about those of cultures different from our own, I believe it to be of the utmost importance to spend time with those we are representing and strive for understanding of their home cultures, values, shifting identities, family

structures, manners and faiths. We should at all times treat others and their traditions with respect whether our government or society does so or not.

From this, I would hope that working journalists and editors come to understand that the only way to fairly represent peoples is through their own stories, not ours. The extra effort must be ours. As journalists, the burden of responsibility lies with us to build bridges between cultures rather than walls. We are charged with a sacred, ritual responsibility as storytellers in an emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Our translations of others truths can either harm or heal.

There is one other thing. There is the question of what I am to take away from this paper. This is a good question, and one without a ready answer. When I began this process of writing, my work around the occupation took on a life of its own. The occupation of Alcatraz, and the words, actions and beliefs of its occupiers, came to inform my own life and the way I experience the world. I now see my writing path as a sacred one, no matter my occupation. And I have learned the important lesson that nothing is changed quickly and that all matters involving "truth" require negotiation, conflict and compromise. What you are reading is the second version of this story I have written, and not the only version to be told. Now that this is done, my spirit is tired. In closing, I wish only two things. First, I hope this work honors in some small way the spirit of my ancestors. I would leave their legacy for my own seventh generation. Second, I hope that I have discharged my responsibilities as storyteller with dignity and shown respect for all peoples. Some things should not be compromised and I have done my best.

Essentially, I believe the occupation of Alcatraz to be a modern day ghost dance. Many years ago, before I knew any of these things, White Buffalo Calf Woman came to

me, dancing, and asked me to follow. I have done this thing she asked of me. In this writing, I have listened and tried to hear the Alcatraz songs, feel the drum beat in the ground beneath my feet. I listened and heard this song. As my ancestors have taught, I wove a net of wiregrass to catch it in. It is hard to dance with all these words in my basket, so I am telling this song to you now. So it is said.

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