

The Dangers of Nonunderstandings by Rebekah Tanner, July 2018

Two highly intelligent, well educated women, both of them birth-right speakers of the same English language, say the same words: "How do you become a woman? By first being a girl!" What each one means, are two completely different things.

A recent article in *Rewire.News* written by Mary Annette Pember (April 2018) reports that Cheyenne cartographer Annita Lucchesi, "Inspired by the Cheyenne concept of "netaevananova'htsemane" (which translates to, "let us recognize ourselves again"), is working to create a mapping tool that recognizes and honors the geographies in which missing and murdered Native women live and die.... Using mainstream technology, Lucchesi seeks to infuse the work of the *Atlas of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in the United States and Canada* with Native ways of thinking or epistemologies that are guided by community needs."

[\(https://rewire.news/article/2018/04/27/mapping-missing-murdered-native-women-want-story-meaning/\)](https://rewire.news/article/2018/04/27/mapping-missing-murdered-native-women-want-story-meaning/)

In 2019 the seven-year tour of *Walking With Our Sisters: A Commemorative Art Installation Honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women* will end its tour throughout Canada and a portion of the United States. Conceived by Michif artist Christi Belcourt, "it includes 1810 pairs of moccasin vamps (tops) plus 118 pairs of children's vamps created and donated by hundreds of caring and concerned individuals to draw attention to this injustice."

<http://christibelcourt.com/walking-with-our-sisters/>)

On March 7, 2013, President Obama signed into law the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013*, or "VAWA 2013." Among other things, in this 107-page document the United States Congress "recognizes tribes' inherent power to exercise "special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction" (SDVCJ) over certain defendants, regardless of their Indian or non-Indian status, who commit acts of domestic violence or dating violence or violate certain protection orders in Indian country. This new law generally took effect on March 7, 2015."

<https://www.justice.gov/tribal/violence-against-women-act-vawa-reauthorization-2013-0>)

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113s47enr/pdf/BILLS-113s47enr.pdf>)

With the passage of time, awareness of the issues surrounding the disproportionate number of occurrences of violence directed at indigenous women in the United States and Canada (and one has to wonder about the remainder of the Western Hemisphere) is, no doubt, growing. Many of these women meet with violence at the hands of persons known to them. Some are singled out for this mistreatment for political reasons. The most famous (to my mind) and the first contemporary case I knew of was that of Anna Mae Aquash. She was a Mi'kmaq activist who was probably was killed in early December 1975. Her body was found by a rancher during an unusually warm period later that winter, on February 24, 1976, by the side of State Road 73 on the far

northeast corner of the Pine Ridge Reservation. Buffy Sainte-Marie has sung about her friend in two of her songs: "The Uranium War: A True Story from within the American Indian Movement" and "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee." The seeming inability of the courts to take effective action in Anna Mae's case, and the intrigue surrounding it, as well as the inclusion of numerous otherwise newsworthy individuals in its details, have singled it out in the minds of many. Truth is, the number of women, indigenous and otherwise, who meet violent ends for political reasons are probably far greater than anyone has imagined.

<http://nativeamericannetroots.net/diary/254>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/27/magazine/who-killed-anna-mae.html>

Just how many of those women, whatever the so-call "reason" for their disappearances and deaths might be Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, or some other non-dominant gender or sexual identity is not well documented. One hopes projects such as Annita Lucchesi's will encourage fuller documentation and lead to more reliable data.

As others are working on understandings of, and potential solutions to, the problem of missing and murdered indigenous women, some (like me) are attempting to figure out how the situation arose... or became so bad, while hardly anyone seemed to notice, outside of the communities of their loved ones. It is my opinion (which may not matter much to anyone except myself)

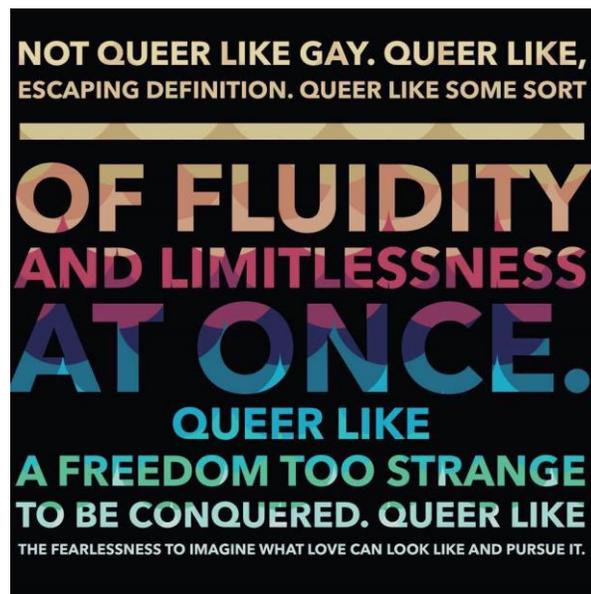
that this is a problem as ancient as the arrival of persons of the Christian faith in the so-called “New World.” With their faith they brought a deep-seated hatred for women that goes all the way back to their own First Mother, Eve. In my own efforts to comprehend such unchecked hatred, I found some pretty interesting answers in a paper originally written in 2001 by Dr. Anne Waters, published in 2002 in the APA Newsletter, and (with some refinements), is included in her seminal text: *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*, (Blackwell, 2004) as “Language Matters: Nondiscreet Nonbinary Dualism” (pp. 97 – 115).

So, who am I that anyone would care what I think, or how I’d analyze this writing by a woman far more brilliant than I can even imagine? Truth be told, it really doesn’t matter – but I recently found this little video *I am L’nu*, created by Naomi Condo. She is someone who you might say is kind of like a younger version of myself (different Native Nation, different additional culture groups; but a mixed race, Native-identified, woman) who – by her courage to make her thoughts and feelings heard – possibly puts herself at risk of unwanted violent attention. How sad is that?

<https://vimeo.com/173129374>

I have always feared this. I am the daughter of a man, who in spite of his own mixed-race background, took his stand as Wyandotte. Who, most likely because of this, was, like Anna Mae Aquash, found dead at the side of a snowy Western U.S. highway (it doesn’t only happen to women).

I am also a Lesbian, (apparently) born with a pair of X chromosomes, or what these days gets labeled as cis-gendered. Nevertheless, I was a bit of a “Tom-Boy” as a child, and never imagining myself giving birth (which I have not). I remember clearly that day in 1980 or so when I came home wearing a political button I had acquired that read: “Baby Dyke” and my own mother kind of freaked out. I have always considered myself female: at first, a girl, and later, a woman. I have done my work of mimicking the Great Universal Mystery of Creation as artist-craftsperson, writer, and educator. I have mothered and raised two foster children There are several others significantly enough younger than me to have been my children that I have nurtured as my “chosen family.” In the final analysis, the one word I most prefer, if I must select a single word to label my gender identity, is – Queer. So, that's who I am.



Quote by Brandon Wint Page, Art by Sami Slenker

What follows is how I have come to understand Dr. Waters' writing entitled: "Language Matters." Unable to do this better than she already has, I am highlighting the lines that seem especially brilliant to me and making a few summarizing notes about each section of the article in this font-face, Century Gothic. Dr. Water's writing will appear as **Verdana**. Hers is a lengthy piece with many philosophical concepts that may be unfamiliar to some readers. She does some defining of terms in the **Endnotes**; especially for her **Introduction**, I highly recommend readers take advantage of the help she provides in these notes.

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— *APA Newsletter*, Spring 2002, Volume 01, Number 2 —

"Language Matters — A Metaphysic of NonDiscreet NonBinary Dualism"

Anne Waters [Pages 5, Column 2 – 14 Column 1]

*The difference is in the promotion, so to speak. A non-native poet cannot produce an Indian perspective on Coyote or Hawk, cannot see Coyote or Hawk in an Indian way, and cannot produce a poem expressing Indian spirituality. What can be produced is another perspective, another view, and another spiritual expression. The issue, as I said, is one of integrity and intent. ["The Great Pretenders" Wendy Rose in *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, M. A. Jaimes Guerrero, ed., 416.]*

Introduction

In the Introduction Dr. Waters will provide a historical overview of how, with the arrival of colonizing Europeans (later to become EuroAmericans), new concepts also arrived. Because of how language defines mind, these new ideas ultimately had the power to work as agents of the colonial governments and religious institutions brought to the Western Hemisphere, beginning in the 15th century C.E. and going forward through time, to the present. In the case of this paper she will use the example of gender (later on in this reading) – as just one example of how the colonials' ideas and thus, their use of language, became a tool of power-over and its resulting violence against indigenous populations in the Western Hemisphere.

In this paper I use gender as an example to explore a nondiscreet ontology of being. To recognize that gender as it is known today among colonized American Indian nations mirrors a notion of gender among American Indigenous cultures five centuries ago may be misleading. Deconstructing contemporary dominant American gender notions against a background of an alternatively conceived ontology of Being through America's indigenous languages proves fruitful in explicating why and how gender need not be an essentialized concept. This paper first clarifies an important distinction between a discreet binary dualist ontology, and a nondiscreet binary dualist ontology.

In fulfilling the European colonial project in the Americas, a hypersensitively bounded infrastructure of Eurocentric ontology desensitized nondiscreet [1] binary [2] dualist Indigenist thought. EuroAmericans, while exploiting people, land, and resources of the Americas, comprehended about their experiences and encounters with Indigenous people, only what could be conveniently characterized via their Eurocentric ontology. An ontology of binary, or discreet dualist logic, operated as the colonial framework that deeply embedded EuroAmerican thought and language, and a Eurocentric perspective about Indigenous people, on the North American continent. Eurocentric nonunderstandings, and hence misunderstandings, of precolonial ontology, rationality, beliefs, customs, and institutions of people Indigenous to the Americas has been filtered through this overlay, or template of interpretation.

EuroAmerican institutions, including educational institutions, have placed many nonunderstandings about Indigenous people into the context of EuroAmerican embraced conceptual categories. These categories signify a discreet (limited and bounded) [3] binary dualist [4] worldview. This worldview continues to operate as a template into which all EuroAmerican interpretations of Indigenous thought and being are recorded. Hence, much of indigenous philosophy is not easily accessible; though some accessibility is possible via language analysis and semantics of contemporary speakers of indigenous languages. The EuroAmerican binary system of dualist thought

empowered and facilitated the misinterpretations of indigenous nondiscreet binary dualist worldview; many of these misinterpretations remain active in contemporary scholarship. [5]

Imposing a closed binary ontology onto Indigenous ideas obstructs communication meaning systems, to such an extent that, for good reasons, indigenous ideas and vision have largely remained closed to outsiders. The seemingly cognitive inability of some EuroAmericans to acknowledge a different ontological system, represented by indigenous thought, continues to perplex and befuddle many American Indians. [6] It has historically been in this context of blinded EuroAmerican vision, that many American Indians have been denied the learning/use of native languages; and in this way have sometimes been prevented from safeguarding ancient sacred knowledge. This theft, or stealing of native language, and with it, sacred knowledge, fostered many painful losses that remain unhealed today. The losses create gaps of understanding indigenous worldview and ontological being in that world. Retaining sacred knowledge would have nourished Indigenous people during half a millennium of painful colonization. Yet it was denied to most of those American Indians that survived the genocide.

Many American Indigenous nondiscreet notions of nonbinary, complementary dualist constructs of the cosmos have been diminished and obscured by colonization. A nonbinary, complementary dualist construct

would distinguish two things: (1) a dualism, e.g. male/female that may appear (in a binary ontology) as opposites or different from one another in some important respect; and (2) a nonbinary (complementary) syntax that puts together these two constructs without maintaining sharp and clear boundary distinctions (unlike a binary system). The maintenance of the rigid distinct boundaries of binary logic enable (though may not necessitate) a hierarchical value judgement to take place (e.g., mind over body or male over female) precisely because of the sharp bifurcation. A nonbinary (complementary) dualism would place the two constructs together in such a way that one would remain itself, and be also a part of the other. In this way, a hierarchical valuing of one being better, superior, or more valued than another cannot be, or rather, is excluded by the nonbinary logic. Organizing, complimentary ideas of an indigenous ontology, still survive within the ontological horizon of nonbinary, nondiscreet, dualist languages. Complementary dualisms can be found today among such diverse Indigenous people as the Ahnishinahbaeotjibway in Canada [7], to the Mayan in South America, [8] and the Dine metaphysics of the Southwest U.S.A. [9]

Non-complementary, or binary dualist constructs have rigidly constructed boundaries that that do not interact, or "crossover" to other constructs. In the English language, and in Western thought the concept 'good' if used together with the concept 'evil' is such that one can diminish

aspects of the other. Something may be good or evil, but not both at the same time and place, without diminishing the other. They need not be equal in the joining, but rather have the potential for one to be superior to the other. Hence, 'good' and 'evil' may not overlap, nor may there be any ambiguity of the meaning of one in relation to the other. **Things, including actions, must be either good or evil, but not both. [10]**

For another example with a different twist, consider: the color black and the color white come into contact with one another. Physically, as with paints, a grey appears, obliterating the black and white boundaries; ontologically, a conflict or struggle ensues, each construct vying for its own showing and placement over that of the other! This is why, in Western thought, it is important to keep sharply divided dichotomies bifurcated with rigid, clear boundaries operating at the margins. **These boundaries are what enables value judgement to be applied to the two constructs. that is, value of one over the other can be achieved only if they do not mix.**

Western metaphysics of classic Greek thought seems to manifest this bifurcatedness (binariness) of dualist thought; concepts are truncated with sharp, clearly unambiguous, boundaries. This contributes to why Plato, for example is able to play word games with some tightly bounded binary dualist constructs, such as the "like" and "unlike." To elaborate this point, consider the **Humpty Dumpty theory of binary dualism in European thought that reaches back to Greece.** In the history of Western philosophical thought

since Plato's fracture, not a single philosopher has been able to put back together the universe for the Western world!

Plato created a notion of reality, or "truth" that was static, of the mind, always being in the abstract [11]; He redefined the common notion of material substance to be "the unreal" changing, always becoming a different physical illusion. The "true" became an object of worship, existing in total abstraction from physical bodies of the universe. The physical became objects of derogation and want, drawing attention away from the realm of "the true." This particular way of being and conceiving reality embedded a structure of hierarchical value: the true was to be embraced as the (nonchanging) form of the "good,"; and the formless, constant flux in the universe of matter, was to be rejected as "evil."

Objects were "evil" because they drew attention away from the 'purity' of abstract mental thought; the flux competed to "tie down" thought in the world of matter, but was destined to lose the battle. These tightly bounded, clearly differentiated modes of being, good and evil, competed for human attention in continual struggle through human experience. And when the realm of form, of the good won out, the privilege of dwelling in the "land of the forms" was granted in an afterlife. But when the evil, the objects in the realm of the physical won the competition of attention, great human

suffering was to be the consequence, in a land of insurmountable suffering "down below" the earth, in an afterlife.

Via Neoplatonism, and throughout the middle ages, Plato's notion of "good" was transformed into a personal Christian "good" named 'God' in the creation of a tripartite flat world: the "forms in the abstract heavens—total good-God" were constructed securely up above the earth; and "the physical in the concrete hell— total evil-Devil" were constructed securely down below the earth." The only way to attain human peace or harmony living in the "earthly domain," (the alleged flat surface in between the "heaven and hell of good and evil,") was via prayer or, mentally dwelling in the land of the heavens. Neoplatonic thought cemented Platonic metaphysics in Europe, and served well the purposes of the medieval clergy. They turned their backs on the poor, and spent their time communing with their personal (good) god.

In this context, the only way to attain "human perfection" was through abstract thought. Anything that was not abstract thought, such as physical being, or physical pain, was to be denied the status of real. Pain, in such forms as flagellation, and physical torture, was believed to lead a person to a mind state where they might exist in complete abstraction. The value hierarchy of a binary dualist thought that valued abstract reason above physical pleasure, enveloped the cosmology of the "great chain of being," the "Christian hierarchy of being," and the King commanding through divine right, bringing into being divine plans. [12]

In the 15th century, European perceptions and beliefs cemented this Eurocentric metaphysics and ontology of value hierarchy, supported by the two pillars of binary dualism. Western culture lacked any historical understanding about how to live in balance and harmony (complementarity) with diverse metaphysical ideas and beings as they encountered in the Americas. Europeans had learned no tolerance for difference, much less how to survive living with (mother) earth. Europeans were their own products of colonization. They arrived in America knowing life only as servants, prisoners, peasants, and soldiers; they were alienated from being in the world. They continued a centuries old colonial imperialist project (their descendants continue to benefit from it).

When Europeans arrived in the Americas, respecting diversity was integral to survival and living in harmony. Europeans showed an intense lack of respect for diverse cultural ways. Their behavior suggested a psychological necessity to impose colonial European culture, with all of its superior and inferior linguistic distinctions, upon Indigenous people. In this way, any conceivable opportunity for dialogue, or communication among the two cultures, was obliterated. In some instances, the very same families who learned from native families how to plant, harvest, and survive the cold winters, forced indigenous peoples to leave the area.

America's Indigenous people had a history of creating harmony among diverse communities through political relations. [13] The histories of these relations are many, and are articulated through the oral history of many indigenous groups. On the North American continent, both intercultural and intracultural relations had long histories of communal respect. Indigenous people found a metaphysical place in the structuring of the cosmos for "all our relations," within the history of "the original peoples." [14] Upon the arrival of EuroAmericans, a completely different mode of communicating, and being in the world, was imposed on communication context.

The ontological structures of Indigenous people precluded a coherent dialogue with the newcomers. Europeans, having "purified" the mind, and "corrupted" the body, had no sense of physical rootedness to any land, nor responsibility to self, or other relations. Everything in European thought was filtered through a value sieve, and Indigenous people, because different, were not within the realm of positive value for the newcomers. These EuroAmericans, had left any remnants of their own sense of place, of geographical roots of being, in Europe. As they gazed upon the land and the bounty of indigenous foods and resources, they immediately lay claim to America's shores for themselves.

Hyper-bounded, value laden, binary dualist constructs of being were projected onto Indigenous people: first, by sharing interpretations of individual actions; then projecting these interpretations onto groups of

Indigenous people. Unable to tolerate difference in ways of being, Europeans disrespectfully labelled indigenous people uncivilized, inferior, dirty, ignorant, savage, primitive, etc. Thus, in ignorance, and at play in their own binary dualist logic system, the belittling of Indigenous people in the colonial mind, made colonizers feel superior to the colonized. And if they were superior to, their logic told them, Indigenous people were inferior, and if inferior, less than fully human. In this way, by ontologically denigrating the “other” to be of lower nature on a hierarchy of being, individuals in the south, like DeSoto and his metal clad warriors and human eating dogs, could brutally slaughter indigenous people throughout Las Floridas.

Simultaneously, the Spanish Conquistadores, in what was to become Mexico and South America, acted on similar constructs of Indigenous people who were seen as “other,” which meant not human in the gaze of the Spanish. Enslavement of Indigenous people was justified by a Eurocentric ontology (of being) manifested in the King’s orders. Europeans acted as though they believed it were all in accord with a “divine” plan of the universe. The debates at Valladolid were about whether indigenous beings in the Americas could be considered “human” or not. [15] If the natives of the Americas were human, then we had “souls” and had to be saved by being “Christianized.” On the other hand, if we were not found to possess humanity, then the Spanish were free to enslave us as they would any other creature of their non-human world. This debate in Spain clearly shows how a

hierarchically structured ontology can be used, to manipulate any type of different being in the world, that is not seen, through the colonizer's gaze, to suite plans of a colonial empire.

The brutal genocidal treatment of America's Indigenous people, at the hands of colonial Europe, is related to the ontological structure of the European colonial mindset. By the time of "point of contact" among Indigenous peoples with Europeans, an entire binary dualist worldview of consistently nonequal hierarchical power structures were in place in Eurocentric thinking. This mindset brought with it ideas about a male role as culture bearer in the world, and a female role as culture destroyer in the world. It brought with it ideas about humanity: an upper ruling class, rational and close to deity status; a middle military or overlord class, less rational, more emotional, and capable of some ruling over the lower class; and the lower intensive labor class, from the imperial gaze, thought to be incapable of rational thought, and unable to rule over their own appetitive desires.

It was from this vantage point of human nature, and the European binary dualisms of ontological being in the world, that the newcomers brought a theistic worldview of value hierarchy to America's shores. The Eurocentric ontological depiction of a disconnected, bounded, rational, cultured male father creator of the universe, stood in antithesis to (what was

seen Eurocentrically as) an unrestrained, unbounded, irrational, raw female mother nature destroyer of the universe.

And so (it came to pass that) in the Americas men stood over women, imperialists over the colonized, citizens over the enslaved, adults over children, similarly abled over differently abled, hereditied over nonhereditied, (a lie of) a pure race stood over mixed races, completing the Eurocentric hierarchy of winners over losers, and the valued over the disvalued, empowered over disempowered. All things of the world had a place in this hierarchy of being, and of differing values, according to the types of being, as classified by the rulers' ontological structure of power.

These strange and unreal constructs of hierarchical value were built into the ideology of EuroAmericans and some American Indigenous communities by benefitting colonizing enterprises of religion, educations, commerce, etc. From the land of the Salem witchcraft trials, to the missions enslaving California's Indigenous people, missionaries, politicians, businessmen, and the landed gentry played a key role in maintaining this hierarchical Christian ideology. It was well suited to colonial enterprises of trade in goods and people. Thus, EuroAmericans sanctioned genocidal activities that created chaotic ruptures of indigenous ontology.

Upon Spain's acknowledgement that Indigenous people had souls, the means of converting Indigenous people to Eurocentric theism played into the

colonial project. But because indigenous people were not easily converted, methods were employed to "kill the Indian and save the soul." [16] These methods included tortures, starvations, killings, burnings, stealing land, children, wives, family, enslavement, confinement, denial of languages, threat of diseases, or rapes and plunders of homes, burning of crops and people, and disruption of any vestiges of humanity until the theism, in exchange for life, or the survival of the community, was announced, and witnessed. Even now, after the signing of treaties, the smallpox blankets, the piles of American Indians lying in deep trenched graves, after the removals of the genocidal remains, the lynchings, rapes, thefts of children, alcoholic drugging of entire communities, and denial of cultural languages and sacred practices, a genocide continues in the name of religious freedom, citizen protection, assimilation, and most important, free trade.

It was in this way that it occurred. In this way agents of EuroAmerican colonial theism forcefully wrenched indigenous ontological constructs (embedded in linguistic structures and thinking of the indigenous mind) from indigenist thought, causing a continental shake down of Indigenous worldview. This ontological destruction was but one more notch on the belt of an ideology that functioned to maintain power over "others." These cultural extortions took a cavernous toll on Indigenous people, our families,

communities, and belief systems. In this psychological dismembering, which was eventually fueled by forced migrations, our fractures of ontology became chasms needing to be filled, gaps in the thought process.

Thoughts About Non-Binary Dualism

In this section Dr. Waters will provide examples from several Indigenous groups of how those communities have (and in limited but continuing fashion) uniquely understand non-binary dualism. These examples are drawn from the oral traditions and stories of these Nations.

Among the gaps, however, there remained kernels of ontology: ideas about ways to be in the world; and ideas about ontological relationships in the world. Our stories held understandings of indigenous human science, technology, relations, and sacred place in the world. The embedded ontology of indigenous worldview has survived for those who have had little else. The metaphysics and epistemology remain intact among many Indigenous people of the Americas.

Hence the colonial project of dismembering the ontology of indigenous thought successfully failed! American indigenous nondiscreet notions of nonbinary, complementary dualist constructs continue to exist. Though in some places they are diminished and obscured by colonization, indigenous ontologies are very active, even if sometimes in more isolated regions of the Americas. These organizing, complimentary ideas, still living within the

ontological horizon of a nonbinary, nondiscreet, dualism hold much information for our future. And it is to this horizon that many American Indians (and environmentalists advocating sustainable development) are looking, for a renaissance of American Indian thought. These ways of being, in an ontological indigenous realm, remain as practical, accessible, and pragmatic tools of understanding place in the world; which is of course, a place of responsibility to "all my relations."

For many Indigenous people, the importance of order and balance, as well as proper (moral) behavior, are part of the cosmological understanding of our universe. If one is out of balance with metaphysical forces, or out of balance within oneself, sickness will surface and remain, until the universe, and person in that universe, are again in balance, or complementarily ordered. The structures of the cosmos are like structures of the mind, in that everything must be balanced and nurtured properly in order for the universe, and us, to survive. In this way, dualism of indigenous thought embraces difference in principle, not as division, but rather, as complementary.

In Dine (Navajo) thought, for example, because the breath of life (air) is constantly being exchanged in the universe, from the cosmos and to the earth, breath plays a central role in complementary metaphysical thought. Not only is breath that which is life giving, but smoke, as manifesting aspects of breath, operates as medium for air to reach the sky, the cosmos,

as do words when spoken or sung. The exchange of breath is important because all things in the universe are related through air, and all are made of the same basic elements. Just as we take in air to breathe, so also, we let out breath, giving back to that from which we take. In Dine thought, for example, earth, air, fire, and water are the basic elements of the entire cosmos. These elements are continually in a give and take in the universe as spirit (energy) infuses everything. Thus, upon death, after air is released from the body (given back), the body will decompose into the elements, giving itself back, to that from which it was created. [17]

In Zuni thought the Twin War Gods are also known as the Evening Star and the Morning Star. The twins embody the principle of dualism, as manifested not in a binary, but in a non-binary, or complementary state of being. Hence a complimentary dualism of life force and death are held together ontologically, just as they are in real life.

“Twins incorporate not only the principle of duality but also that of balance, being...more than complementary yet less than isomorphic: both are of a piece, perceivable as separate but, in truth, inalienable. The Twins share a single breath of life that animates them both separately and together, providing a model for the Zuni in which to cast other perceptions of the natural and created universe as being all of a piece.” [18]

Metaphysical space, however, is operative also as moral space, hence the

providing of breath of life, via singing or talking, back to the universe fulfills a moral connection of nurturing everything in the universe.

Gaps of Meaning

In this section Dr. Waters relates some of her own lived and personal experience both as a student, and later, as an instructor (of Native American students). She recounts how, in that process, she began to come to grips with some of the cognitive dissonance she experienced – particularly within the field of Philosophy. In the U.S. and elsewhere much of Philosophy finds its foundation in the works of Plato and those who either built upon or wrote in opposition to his ideas. Dr. Waters tells us of her research and through it, of her growing comprehension of the “gendercide” carried out in the name of some of the very ideas held so dear by philosophers; and of her recognition that here and there, beyond all the odds, indigenist concepts of a “nondiscreet, inclusive, living nonbinary dualism” have survived. It can be seen, even now, in the diversity of Native gendered expressions.

As a young American Indian undergraduate philosophy student in New Mexico, I harbored a deep desire to do well in logic. EuroAmerican professors wanted philosophy students to believe that logic courses presented to us the opportunity to “master” the methodology of philosophy; that the very structure of human philosophical thought would be revealed to us in our study of logic. It was only later, in graduate school, when I proved

lengthy deductions, and contemplated meta-theoretical logic problems, that I began to take seriously my outsider intuitions about the field of logic. Our understanding of philosophy was supposed to be different after that first logic course. It was. Since this time I have taught some sixty-three course sections of logic and critical thinking. And yet, I still struggle, in everyday common discussion, to articulate my discomfort with the discreet binarism of some dualist thought systems.

In 1992, while at a community college in New Mexico, at the suggestion of Terry Abraham, an American Indian (Laguna Pueblo) special needs psychological counselor and administrator, I began working on a project to identify why many Indigenous students were having difficulty passing logic courses. They were opting to “drop out” of the classes. At that time I did not think their problems would be connected to my own ontological issues of binary logic systems. And yet, this work also became an opportunity to gain a better understanding and clarification of my own experience.

And so, I began, in small ways, to investigate, and change, the nature of the logic course I taught. Early in the semester I incorporated Native American Studies content into examples used to explain the structure of informal fallacies. [19] The level of Native American student interest, enrollment, and attendance was considerably increased. American Indian

students began showing up at the classroom door, and wanting to know who I was, and how they too, could enroll or sit in for the course.

Later in the semester, I also changed my method of introducing formal logic. To eliminate anxiety and stress related to learning a symbolic system, I suggested to students that working with binary logic systems could be thought of as a game of imaginary binary dualities; that these dualities need not relate to world structures. I put special emphasis on the fact that binary dualities, or binary concepts, are used to work with imaginary non-organic thought processes, such as computers. This analogy to computers seemed to make a big difference. We were merely studying the processing pattern of electrical impulses in computers. I emphasized such structures as we imagined them, could be thought of as, but were not believed by everyone, to be the structure of ideas embedded in belief and thought systems of the human psyche. I was teaching students a way of reasoning that humans or machines could use, but in a way that did not place discreet binary logic as a more fundamental (or more valued) ontology than their own, that should be replaced by their own, or which they would have to engage in lieu of their own.

With these two changes, adding Native content and analogizing to computer thinking patterns, changes in Native American grades were dramatic. The motivation and enthusiasm of Native American students was beyond my imagination. For I had discovered that in leaving the box of

ontological tools open, all students could more quickly grasp the intuitive creative problem solving of conceptual pragmatic manipulation.

It was from this experience and standpoint that I commenced to think more deeply about researching ontological, epistemological, and metaphysical systems of Peoples Indigenous to the Americas. Changing my teaching methods was the prelude to uncovering an ontological infrastructure of American Indian scientific speculation. As I continued my research, I began to locate how the assumed Western European binary dualism embedded in what came to be known as Western philosophy (at least as far back as Plato), was not the same ontological system as, for example, Mayan (non-binary) dualism. This revelation changed not only my approach to teaching all of my courses, but my research methods, and the very meaning of my work as a philosopher. No longer was I primarily interested in ethics and social and political philosophy, but more to the point, the underlying ontology of my own Indigenous thought patterns that created a cognitive environment from which I viewed Eurocentric metaphysics, epistemology and worldview.

In 1996 I was invited to keynote a conference at the University of Oregon; the conference theme was "Engendering Rationalities." As I began to contemplate what the expression "engendering rationalities" might mean in the context of a women's (feminist) philosophy conference, my minds' eye

drifted to the concept of what the paradigm case of rationality is for the Western European world (and a fortiori by colonization, most of the world). In my pondering I realized the same gaps of ontology were in the framework of binary dualist logic that was embedded in the non-process ontology of feminist thought: male/female; masculine/feminine; good/ bad. [20] And in this context I remembered Adrienne Rich's importance of the "lesbian continuum" in *Lies, Secrets and Silences*, [21] and how this model had never been incorporated into conceptual categories of native gender. Racial and ethnic affiliations, and how race concepts are ontologically limited and bifurcated came to mind as well. [22]

I then thought about static bifurcations of the discreet binary (bounded) dualities of essentialisms in contemporary feminist thought and recent race theory: male/female, masculine/feminine, man/woman; Black/White, Indian/non-Indian, Hispanic/not-Hispanic, Asian/non-Asian, etc. These discreetly bifurcated and essentialized concepts suggests ways of being in the world that might run contrary to some Indigenist ontology we find remaining in American Indian languages. And the problem seemed to be not so much that "language has gone on a holiday," but rather, that deep structures of Indigenous thinking about ontological relations in the world conflicted with the discreet binary logic inherent in EuroAmerican reflection about relations in the world.

Critical feminist theory, like critical race theory, pleads for a reconsideration of these categories. And some have already begun this important work. But perhaps more, perhaps reconsidering race and gender categories, will require us to radically reflect on the possibility of altering our ontology. I have no idea how this could be done, but it seems that it might be a possibility.

One of the common laments Caribbean women brought to race theory toward the end of the second movement, was the question: Why can't I be Black *and* Hispanic? This issue pointed us to the direction of critically analyzing all contemporary American race categories. Paula Gunn Allen, also American Indian (Laguna Pueblo), in raising issues about race in the women's movement, brought to our attention the American Indian women's critique of EuroAmerican Feminist historicity and situatedness. Paula, in asking, "Where are the red roots of feminism?" directed attention not only to a gap of analysis, but to the very denial of human relationship in the world. These two queries, fuse together in asking "What are the roots of this language/these ideas, that deny my being in the world?"

The point here is that history directs us to a time when there did exist a difference of ontology. With this different ontology, there existed a difference of ways of being in the world. This difference of Indigenist thought, is cashed out in notions about personal and social identity. Epistemic red roots, for example, once existing in words like autonomy,

liberty, respect, and equality (in American Indigenist thought), could not be separated from ideas about freedom, responsibility, and peace. [23] Loss of language meaning is a loss of conceptual ontology; it is a loss of a way of being in the world; it is a loss of ways of relating in the world; and in its concrete manifestation, it is a loss of personal, social, cultural identity, or self.

Understanding the permeability of Indigenous constructs of ethnicity, or gender, may assist feminist theory in understanding certain womanist assumptions of indigenism. Indigenous women doing feminist social engineering and healing need to be understood as living two different types of identities. First, the identity of a being in a language that knows only a nondiscreet nonbinary dualist ontology; and second, the survival identity, imposed by highly discreet bifurcated, dualist logic of colonial Europe in the Americas. This second identity is molded in the logic and language of colonization; the identity is constructed in a fixed, racialized, and biologized criterion of identity; it is a political identity that works to protect those in power. It is used to announce the presence of a discreetly gendered person. When critical theory fails to recognize very different identities of American Indian women, the result is a misunderstood articulation of Indian gender and ethnic identity.

Gendered identity standpoints of the dominant culture become for American Indian women a colonial template dictating what our reality is

supposed to be; it is stamped on us by both a colonial language and ontology. Colonization has placed American Indians in certain ontological standpoints of perspective, yet it is sometimes from our traditional ontologies of perspective that we see and respond to how others see us. Though we have been and are forced to participate in a colonial game of "picture, picture, who has the picture." In reality, we know there are many pictures, just as there are many different genders and ontological structures in the world. What we don't know is why some feminist theorists don't "get this".

Many Indigenous gender categories are ontologically without fixed boundary. They are animate, nondiscreet, and grounded in a nondiscreet and thus nonbinary dualist ontology. That is, the ontology, as animated (continuously alterable), will be inclusive (nonbinary) rather than exclusive (discreetly binary), and have nondiscreet (unbounded) entities rather than discreetly (bounded) entities. In this way, it is possible to have a nonbinary (nondiscreet) dualist thought system, or a nondiscreet nonbinary dualist thought system, of gender. Understanding how a nondiscreet ontology of gender operates, and being able to imagine it, may be a crucial step toward comprehending gender [24] politics of American Indian women.

The ontological gender difference, made manifest in linguistic difference, discloses a way to embrace our world. This embracing reflects

deep ontological alterity. The overlapping categories of Indigenist ontology create an experience of the world distinct from, but in every way equal to, the Western European ontology of discreet bounded entities. This alterity gives rise to a different worldview, from which a very real standpoint comes into being. This standpoint discloses a difference of politics. It signifies a manifest site of change that would have been necessary to undergo, in the process of adapting to **ontological gendercide within the American Indian genocide in the Americas**. For many, because the genocide of indigenous languages was never metamorphosed, this nontransformed ontological site reflects a **nondiscreet, inclusive, living nonbinary dualism**, inclusively celebrated in articulations of "all my relations."

Because ontological difference can give rise to metaphysical difference, Indigenous concepts of gender may sometimes stand outside a sharply demarcated ontology of binary, dualist thought. **That American Indians have, against incredible odds, maintained this different ontology, is a marvel and wonder. The presence of this ontological memory suggests a vital malleability and animation of gender worldview may be preferred by Indigenous people, over a categorically fixed, sharply bifurcated, limiting worldview.** If this is the case, we can expect to encounter a general shift in disciplines that engage Indigenist thought and ontology; they will need to move toward comprehending a continuum of nondiscreet nonbinary, dual

metaphysical systems. However, the first site of interpretation may be those disciplines embracing cross and multi disciplines, cultures, methods, and dimensions.

An Indigenous manifold of complexity, resembling a world of multifariously associated connections and intimate fusions, might not be expected to easily give way to a metaphysics of sharply defined (bounded) and limited binary dualist constructions of gender. Nor may such yielding serve our situated survival in an actively complex, continuously changing, and hence precarious metaphysical world. But **identifying and naming diversely intertwined active gender ontologies (multigender ontologies), may turn out to be a prerequisite to understanding gender worldviews as they have developed in the Americas. This may especially be true for American Indians.**

Gender Becomes

Using Ojibway ideas as articulated by Henry Sharp, this section explores ideas about gender as malleable, and acquired: something one becomes, rather than something one is.

Henry Sharp, in "Asymmetric Equals: Women and Men Among the Chipewyan," notes how fuzzy logic appear in Chipewyan (Ojibway) language.

"One legacy of the history of the development of our [sic] language [English], and the role of binary thought in our philosophy, is the

assumption that categories are discreet (Needham 1975), that they are discrete bounded entities. A and not-A cannot be the same.

Chipewyan categories are, to a far greater extent than is the case in our culture, nondiscreet (Needham 1972, 1975). Chipewyan symbolic logic is not binary. A and not-A can be the same, or, since neither A [n]or not-A have discrete boundaries, they can overlap. It is the case of fuzzy logic in which the degree of resemblance between categories can be zero." [25]

Sharp claims that if colonial categories are discreet (discreet bounded entities), then it may be exceedingly difficult, in such a value system, to think about categories and not assign a hierarchical relation. **In Western thought hierarchy exists between every linked A and not-A.** This is because emotional (affective) reasoning that parallels rational (inferential) thought "projects hierarchy onto categorical differences (Hobart 1985, Parkin 1985)." [26]

Sharp goes on to note that gender is a cultural construct "imposed on the phenotypical expression of the chromosomal diversity present in human beings." Because there is a variety of genetic construction of the human species in the biology of sex, binary categories need not necessarily arise. Moreover, **as there is variation in genetic construction of the human biology of sex, binary cultural categories ought to be demonstrated rather than**

assumed. This burden falls upon Western Eurocentric culture; and will need to use genotypes, as well as phenotypical expression.

EuroAmerican culture, to explain binary sex/gender categories, will likely have to first presume discreetly fixed categories, essentialized (tied down) as ahistorical, and unchanging throughout time and place. This presumption might exclude other possible sex/gender speculations about historical, temporal, and regional cause and effect inferences with respect to gender role. As example, **grasping interactive and complementary, nondiscreet nonbinary dualist gender categories could be a function of a specific history of a human group in a particular temporal or geographic region.**

A Chipewyan perspective of gender explanation, as a particular instance of general explanation, requires linking alternate explanations together, thus combining a context of many illustrative factors without reducing them to a single concept of cause and effect. Contrast this to the “modern” scientific enterprise of seeking singular (tied down) necessary and sufficient conditions of explanation, as found in the history of Western European and EuroAmerican culture. The framework “is a triadic system, involving male, female, and a third category/context in which male/female is not relevant.” [27] **This third category retains the rudimentary ambiguity of non-fixed categorization: “who and what the being is is not knowable from what it is, but only from what it later became.”** [28] Male and female cannot

be presumed; the nature of the cause/effect relationship between adult/child may be the equivalent to gender classification, i.e., it is something one attains.

In some contexts Male may be an achieved status, and Female an ascribed, rather than achieved status. For example, the Chipewyans do not distinguish between physical and supernatural causality; cause and effect are one. "Inkoze" is a Chipewyan concept that describes the "collective knowledge of supernatural causality." [29] Males must achieve the status of maleness by attaining Inkoze. They do so by displaying behavior appropriate to having the knowledge of Inkoze. Having Inkoze is to attain respect; it is achieved via performance. Prior to attaining Inkoze, men do not have gender. Because women already have respect and status, ascribed via teaching skills, women do not need to perform in order to attain Inkoze. [30] In sum, Sharp tries to show how gender relevancy can be intercultural context laden. Yet historical records of gender relevancy may depend upon a logic of the recorder's ontological understanding of a particular event, as well as that recorder's attitude and ability, to understand Inkoze ontology. [31]

Thus, we see that the concept of gender can be malleable, and differs not only across cultures, but can be context dependent within a culture.

Gender constructs can be used to interpret the meaning of behaviors appropriate to, for example, menstrual taboos for young women, and root

oven taboos for young men. Lillian A. Ackerman, in "Gender Status in the Plateau" notes that among Plateau Indians, once children matured, taboos were not so strict, as measures could be taken to neutralize gender influence. [32] Understanding gender construct in Indigenous America, may require not only nondiscreet malleability, but that they be understood in appropriate personal, social, political, economic, domestic, spiritual, or even sexual contexts. At it best, it will not be uni-definitional or a-contextual. [33]

Gender Status

Continuing with examples from various Nations including Haudenosaunee, Dine, Blackfoot, and others, the social constructs that provide social and cultural status within groups are explored in this section. A historical look at whether matrilineal, matrilocal and matriarchal necessarily all go together in the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and how that may affect the assignment of status to women in general is followed with specific examples from Seneca history. Beyond that, the status assigned to multi-gendered individuals and roles in a number of different Nations are highlighted. This discussion takes place in a context that favorably recognizes gender diversity as an expression of personal autonomy and individual competence.

The status of American Indian women and gender is an important issue to raise in the context of social, cultural, and political relations. Much ink has been spilt the past several years since the second wave of the

feminist movement trying to prove the Confederacy created by the Iroquois Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and in the early 18th century, the Tuscarora), dating back as far as 1000 A.D., was a matriarchy. Admittedly, the clan system of the Haudenosaunee was matrilineal; but this does not necessarily translate into a matrifocal nor matriarchal framework. Again, the discreetly binary imposition of Western European logic has assumed that if a culture is not patriarchal, it must be matriarchal, and if not patrilineal, then matrilineal. In making claims about aboriginal people, Western European scholars have not been able to conceive egalitarian societies with protean (a Delorian word) binary constructs.

Joy Bilharz, in "The Changing Status of Seneca Women," notes that the status of Haudenosaunee women in the Confederacy has been continuously debated since 1851 to the present. [34] Bilharz claims that men cleared the land, and women worked it, and it had to be abandoned every ten to twenty years for more fertile soil, timber reserves, and animal access. What we are not told by Bilharz is whether the men/women and male/female constructs were polymorphous. Nonetheless, any notion of ownership of the land was always ephemeral. In this context both horticulture and hunting were complementary (and value equivalent) activities. And although we don't know the nature of the gender constructs, because a concept of geographical space was associated with gender, the

“Iroquois world divided into complementary realms of forest and clearing . . . the former being the domain of men, the warriors, hunters, and diplomats, and the latter the domain of women, the farmers and clan matrons.” [35]

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many things changed for Iroquois women. The eventual reliance upon EuroAmerican trade for metal tools and cooking pots, the presence of alcohol to abet genocide that thwarted a sense of community, the preclusion of traditional roles by new responsibilities of nontraditional ways, the eventual transition from a matrilineal extended family household to a patrilineal nuclear family household, and the mirroring, in the mid-19th century, of contemporary EuroAmerican values and customs, created a somewhat different Seneca Nation of American Indians. Significantly, these events did not defeat Indigenous values and customs, though they contributed to the waning of women’s traditional tribal power. “Women were disenfranchised: only males could vote, and only males could hold office.” [36] It was not until 1964 that native women were again enfranchised, and took up empowering political roles in housing, education, employment, and political councils. The current renaissance of Indigenous peoples’ culture can at least partly be attributed to rebuilding women’s traditionally powerful tribal roles in an urban context. Bilharz maintains that women still hold control over the “clearing,” or public policy, outside the home.

Gender construction appears malleable in at least some American Indian cultures. The Chipewyan concept of a gender becoming, or acquiring Inkoze by the performance of stepping out from a third enigmatic gender construct, evidently appears to be, from an EuroAmerican worldview, a unique and unconventional slant on gender. Yet Chipewyan gender notions present only one, among multifarious indigenous gender roles.

Another example of a variegated nondiscreet gender identity can be seen in the Taino Peoples, at one time from the Southeastern United States. Taino have rites for girls and boys upon attaining puberty; they generously grant young adults an autonomous option of gender selection. And a further illumination of Indigenous gender autonomy can be gleaned from the notion of the “manly hearted” women (ninauposkitzipxpe) among the Blackfoot, and the “nadlee” of the Southwest. In Dine thought, the nadlee remains a mixed gender status—the hermaphrodite of mythic trickster and creator, highly coveted, and always treated with respectful awe—and dignifies the marvel of creation and all relations. I can think of no similar concept in EuroAmeican thought.

Various supplementary examples could be cited. The presence of traditionally admired gendered beings endures. Peoples Indigenous to the Americas and elsewhere, suggest that we can secure at least one credible inference about differently gendered beings. That inference is this: that cultural values of at least some Indigenous people have continued

exceptional sanctuary to an attitude about gender that cherishes a wide arena of personal autonomy and freedom. In the Americas this sanctuary has been exceptional because it has withstood over five hundred years of cultural attack.

Alice Kehoe, in "Blackfoot Persons," explains the importance of autonomy as context for gender roles,

What really matters to a Blackfoot is autonomy, personal autonomy. Blackfoot respect each person's competence, even the competence of very small children, and avoid bossing others. People seek power to support the autonomy they so highly value. Competence is the outward justification of the exercise of autonomy. If a person competently engages in work or behavior ordinarily the domain of people of the other sex, or of another species, onlookers assume the person has been blessed, either uninvited or through seeking, by spiritual power to behave in this unusual manner. A woman who wanted to go to war, and there were many such, was judged as a man would be by her success in counting coup or seizing enemy weapons.

Conclusion

This brief conclusion harks back to the dangers faced by those who did not conform to EuroAmerican understanding of gender, feminist views that may or may not appropriately address the lived realities of Indigenous women and

ends with an affirmation of the “kaleidoscopic” nature of gender and its association in Indigenous languages with such concepts as “personal autonomy and equality.”

The colonization of the Americas brought severe sanction to anyone exercising an opportunity to exert individual gender autonomy. Previously known cultural exuberance of autonomous gender decision and polymorphous constructs became significantly erased by tightly defined, delineated, and discreet European and EuroAmerican gender roles. To transgress the hypersensitive boundary in the presence of the colonizer was to flirt with death.

Feminists have argued that European gender roles, via rigid and discreet boundary constructions, have limited human experiencing of sex and gender potentials. Certainly, we do not find among Indigenous people of the Americas a utopia of sex and gender roles, any more than we find a romanticized matriarchy, in which women were worshipped as the center of the world. And yet, even when some cultures may appear to have women at the center of a cosmos, it is not yet clear how under and over determination affected interpretations of what passed for gender dichotomy in the eyes of the beholder. Certainly, in the Americas, the ontology of translation as practiced by EuroAmericans did not adequately bear the ontology of Indigenous thought. It appears that it is as difficult to define gender among

Indigenous people today, as it is to define other discreet binary dualist concepts carried within Western European ontology.

Although I would disagree that a common ontology stands behind Western European and American Indigenist thought, there is still some common ground here. **If concepts of personal autonomy and equality are linguistically interdependent in Indigenist languages, this may help explain something about ambiguous and multigendered identities and humanly lived relations. And if this is the case, then gender may be a more kaleidoscopic and protean concept than EuroAmerican culture has yet to imagine.** [38]

Endnotes

1. An earlier draft of this paper used 'polythetic' and 'monothetic' rather than 'discreet' and 'nondiscreet'. 'Poly' meaning "many contained" rather than 'mono' meaning "one (self) contained". Monothetic logic would be one place predicate logic (monadic), polythetic logic would require many place predicate logic (polyadic). I later changed to use the distinction between 'discreet' and 'nondiscreet' binaries for clarity.

2. A "binary" system has a base of two, and everything is expressed using only two symbols, e.g. a binary logic system of computer programming uses only the powers of two, i.e., '0' and '1' ; and all programs are created using only these two symbols. Another example would be binary stars (sometimes referred to as a double star), where two stars revolve around a common

center of gravity; there are never more than two, and each remains within the common gravitational pull, yet retains their own boundary. In binary logic systems the two values are the "true" and the "false" and all meaning is put into this value system. By contrast a non-binary system may have bases of three or more, and may or may not be open to emergent change, e.g. a deontic logic system would use a value of the "true," the "false" and the "unknown," and meaning would be put into these categories.

3. Val Plumwood refers to the "boundedness" of the logic of colonization and oppression as being part of a dualism (or binary opposition) that constructs conceptual identity in terms of exclusionary contrasts, e.g. male/female. She indicates that feminist psychology has a term that she will use to designate the "gulf " inherent in dualised (note the 's' in the word 'dualised') categories. The term is 'hyperseparation'. Plum indicates that the hyperseparation is a form of identity constructed by maximum exclusion from the "other's" qualities, which she adds, are conceived as inferior. Val also notes that Marilyn Frye claims that the members of dualized (note the 'z' here) classes assume they are both hyperseparated from "others" (who constitute the opposition), and also homogenized, i.e., very like one another in one's own group (Plumwood 1998, Fry 1983). 'Dualized' means to make or consider dual.

4. A "dualistic" system (of or based on dualism) is a system composed of two parts, or kinds, like or unlike. Hence, dualism per se does not give rise

to unlikes (opposites), nor to the "inferiority" of one in relation to the "other." For example, a dualist ontology might hold that reality is composed of two elements, mind and matter, but need not make these kinds exclusive of one another, nor place value in one to the exclusion of the "other." Thus, the denigration of "mind" over "matter" as we see manifest in some forms of rationalism, is not a natural byproduct of dualism, but rather the product of a value intentionalism; similarly, for a theological dualism holding that there are two antagonistic principles in the universe, the "good" and the "evil." Of particular note is that members of colonizing groups generally do not see themselves as members of a colonizing group, but rather, only as "superiors to" the "others."

5. See for example *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, edited by Sue Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang (1997).

6. Throughout this paper I use 'American Indian' to refer to Indigenous people of the Americas (North, Central, and South) and their descendants. Thus, an American Indigicentric perspective is used analogously to the notion of a Eurocentric, Africentric, and EuroAmericentric perspective; i.e., it is seen from the "eyes of " Indigenous people of the Americas.

7. Wub-E-Ke-Niew, in *We Have the Right to Exist: A Translation of Aboriginal Indigenous Thought* (1995) has referred to this as an "...unresolvable

dualism in their [English] language...: "Because I cannot conceive of a language with dualism, I use notions of binary and nonbinary to expose an important distinction here..." (p. 236).

8. See Michael Ripinsky-Naxon "Shamanistic Knowledge and the Cosmology," in *Tribal Epistemologies: Essays in the Philosophy of Anthropology*, edited by Helmut Wautischer: Ripinsky-Naxon discusses one of the roles of a "shaman" as bringing together the abstract idea with the concrete reality: "The Maya principle of polar unity finds, in many ways, an intellectual resonance in Niels Bohr's "Principle of Correspondence" in which a single entity can be both matter (a particle) and pure energy (a wave); its nature is determined by its behavior at a given moment of observation. The observation of such physical behavior is subject to laws, formulated by Werner Heisenberg in his Uncertainty Principle, that are an inescapable property of the universe... such cosmological systems are not, in essence, incompatible descriptions of the world (at 155)." Vine Deloria, Jr. has remarked to a similar effect, in *Reason and Spirit* that it may be possible to replace the Western word "Spirit" that was imposed upon indigenous thought, to that of "energy" and reconcile at least some of Western scientific thought with American Indigenous thought.

9. "In Navajo they say like, whatever that goes on within your world it is moving. It is just like a flow, everything is in flow. There are no solid objects or anything. Everything...goes through transformation. It goes through

manifestations. There is wear and tear, there is, but there is no addition or there is no loss to anything. It is just a transformation. You are in that. You are participating in that, so everything is alive. So that is how the Navajo would interpret (Hanson Ashley, Sonto, Arizona, 7/27/93)⁴” *Molded in the Image of Changing Woman: Navajo Views on the Human Body and Personhood*, by Maureen Trudelle Schwarz; Univ of Arizona Press: Tucson (1997) p.18 (cf. p 93 regarding pairings of contrasting but complementary components to make a whole (where each half is necessary) in the web of interconnectedness formed by relationships in the universe, with self and all relations.)

10. In binary dualist logic, if something appears to be both good and evil, rigid boundaries must come into play to clarify which one is to be dominant. Time and place function as language markers in the English language in such a way that something cannot both be and not be in linear time or geographical space. What is commonly known as “Indian Time” on the other hand, is measured by events, and because events can recur, the “same” event may be in many places, or occur in many times.

11. As I use the concept ‘abstract thought’ it means thought apart from any particular instances or material objects as semantics.

12. Quote: Wub E Ke Niew p. 219.

13. *Linking Arms Together, American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace 1600-1800*, Robert A. Williams, Oxford University Press, NY, 1997.

14. Both the phrase "all our relations" and "the original peoples" have deep structural meaning in indigenous cultures. Indigenous people of the America's philosophical thought generally incorporates an acknowledgement of "the" people, in origin stories, as human people, as distinct from different kinds of people, like animal people, tree people, etc.

15. *A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World*, by Lewis Hawke Indiana University, Bloomington, 1959. Although the humanity of Indigenous people of the Americas was at issue in the Valladolid debates, other issues as well provided impetus for the colonization of the continents: Vitoria (Francisco de Vitoria at Salamanca) denied the right of mistreatment of indigenous people; Vitoria also argued that to prevent Indigenous people of the Americas from denying trade to Europe, however, in a world where "God" had intended all nations to trade, any nation or group had a divine right to conquer America in the interests of uninhibited trade. Vine Deloria discusses this in *God is Red*, and notes that "The doctrine that the pope had been given total control over the planet by God was soon secularized into justification for European nations, definitively Christian, to conquer... Once the doctrine became secularized, it was impossible for anyone to question its validity..." (277).

16. Ibid.

17. Consider "...the daily occurrence of the dawn as the sun returns symbolizes the continuation of time and of life itself. Dawn (associated with the white and the east) is one of the four cardinal light phenomena, along with the blue of day—sky (associated with the South), the yellow of evening twilight (West), and the black of darkness (North). Each of these four light phenomena serves as a guide to people's movements and activities (Griffin-Pierce [Navajo-Dine]1988)." *In Earth and Sky* at 284.

18. Epilogue to *Earth and Sky: Visions of the Cosmos in Native American Folklore*, ed. Ray A. Williamson and Claire R. Farrer (Mescalero Apache); University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque (1992) at 285.

19. When *Red Earth, White Lies* by Vine Deloria, Jr. was published, it became the perfect medium of text examples to use to teach about how modern science was rampant with informal fallacies!

20. And in this context I remembered Adrienne Rich's importance of the "lesbian continuum" (*Lies, Secrets and Silences*); Naomi Zack's work about racial and ethnic affiliations, and how race concepts could ontologically limit and bifurcate; and Maria Lugones' presentation in 1983 about our need to unwrap conceptual frameworks.

21. *On Lies, Secrets, and Silences*, Adrienne Rich, 1977.

22. Zack, Naomi. *American Mixed Race* (1995); *Race and Sex* (1996); and *Thinking About Race* (1998).

23. Se Wub-E-Ke-Niew, *We have the Right to Exist*, NYC: Blackthistle, 1995, and Jack Weatherford in *Indian Givers* at NY: Ballantine 1989.

24. Recent texts that have attempted articulations of indigenous multigenders include: *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology* edited by Will Roscoe (1983), *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* by Will Roscoe (1998), and *Two-Spirit People* edited by S.E. Jacobs, W. Thomas, and S. Lang (1997).

25. *Women and Power in Native North America*, Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerrman, eds., Norman: U of Oklahoma Press (1995) at 68.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. at 69.

29. Ibid at 66.

30. From an American Indian multigendered perspective, it might make sense that a multigendered person would need to attain "Inkotze" (which is a concept we find in many indigenous communities); but I have not yet thought about this very much.

31. Ibid at 67.

32. Ibid at 95.

33. See Tafoya, *Principle of Uncertainty in Two-Spirit People*, p. 198.

34. Ibid, at 102.

35. Ibid at 103.

36. Ibid at 109.

37. Ibid at 122.

38. See attached bibliography for some of the works by Alice Kehoe and Bea Medicine that might begin to help clarify gender in Native North American Communities.