

AMERICAN INDIAN / WESTERN MAN

————— DIVERGING LIFE CONCEPTS

THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

".....everything an Indian does is in a circle and that is because the Power of the world always works in circles and everything tries to be round. In the old days when we were a strong and happy people all our power came to us from the sacred Hoop of the Nation and, so long as the hoop was unbroken, the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living centre of the hoop and the circle of the four quarters nourished it. The East gave peace and light, the South gave warmth, the West gave rain and the North, with its cold and mighty wind, gave strength and endurance. This knowledge came to us from the outer world with our religion.

Everything the Power of the World does is in a circle. The sky is round and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons from a great circle in there changing and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood and so it is everything where Power moves. Our teepees were round like the nests of birds and these were always set in a circle, the Nation's Hoop, a nest of many nests where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children".

Black Elk.

The Hoop of the Nation - the eternal Sacred Circle - was fundamental to the social and spiritual existence of the American Indian. * To the Indian the two extremes of ecology, the "spirit" and the "world", dual dwelling places of man, were intimately linked, each element of life defined by and interdependant on all others.

Continuity gave purpose to existence the Indian seeing himself, not as an individual with a personal goal in life, but in a much broader sense as a living link between the origin and destiny of the race, a part of a cycle of life which is as enduring as time. In turn his life style was dedicated to the preservation of the Hoop of the Nation and all facets of existence - spiritual, worldly and artistic - contributed to the uninterrupted passage of mankind through time past, present and future.

To arrive at an understanding of the American Indian "world view" it is necessary to break down the three basic areas of Indian life - the concept of matters spiritual, the bond of the land and resultant survival patterns, and the art cycle which embodies the other two. The Nava jo healing ceremony illustrates the importance of the harmonious functioning of the three cycles to the Indian and how he employed their union in tribal life.

The purpose of research into the knowledge fund of any ancient people must be the application of that information, where relevant , to contemporary life. To this end a comparison may be drawn between the life concepts of the Indian Nations and Western European society and the point of divergence discerned. Through this examination it becomes clear that the fundamental conflict arises from wholly different time scales operating in the two societies and, furthermore, that the limiting concept of time inherent in our society is at the root of many of our numerous social problems.

The Indian mechanism for the preservation of tribal heritage, namely tradition, is one whose application could be of enormous consequence to our society and by providing a means to develop a meaningful art cycle in our lives could enable us to achieve an added dimension in time - a vital "inner spaciousness".

To appreciate the American Indian "world view" involves understanding connections between overlapping concepts. The most important guiding force of the Indian was his sense of the spiritual. He saw himself as primarily a tribal member and he survived because tribal beliefs gave meaning to life. The spirit world was conceived as cyclical. It comprised the souls of all men past and future, was as enduring as time and preserved balance and hence health in all things animate or inanimate. Humans could intervene in the spiritual cycle to promote or restore harmony in the cycle of their own lives using ritual, song, dance and other means to invoke the spirits to heal, strengthen or benefit the nation in some way.

The spirit and natural worlds were so closely linked as to be hardly distinguishable in many respects. The gods inhabited natural forms - trees, mountains, sky, water and all living things, and on ceremonial occasions they could be called upon to take on human guise. They were the forces of the universe - the four cardinal points, North,¹ South, East and West, the seasons and calendar months, the rising and setting of the sun.²³

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Black Elk, one of the holy men of the Plains Indian tribes who experienced visions, described the enactment by his tribe of his major vision. Its purpose was to give renewed strength and courage to his dissipated people and could only be effective if the entire tribe actively, through ritual, relived the story of the vision. It was intended to unite spiritual and natural forces and bring them to bear on the dangers threatening their survival. The circle, the universal symbol of unity and strength, was a very important part of the ritual and Black Elk recalled how the four segments of the circle were represented and their power invoked by sacred actions:-⁵

".....to the maiden who would represent the North they gave the healing herb to carry and a white goose wing, the cleansing wind. To her of the East they gave the holy pipe. To her of the South they gave the flowering stick and to her who would represent the West they gave the Nations's Hoop. Thus the four maidens, good and beautiful, held in their hands the life of the Nation."

".....is not the South the source of life and does not the flowering stick truly come from there? And does not man advance from there towards the setting sun of his life? Then does he not approach the colder North where the white hairs are? And does he not arrive, if he lives, at the source of light and understanding which is the East? Then does he not return to where he began, to his second childhood, there to give back his to all life and his flesh to earth whence it came?"

These forces were so integral a part of life that they occur in Indian language, folklore, art and, especially, their concept of time. Man saw his relationship to the spirits as a personal, family one. They were the souls of the Nation past and future. Relating his vision Black Elk described the major life forces as his six grandfathers who ".....came as relatives to visit me".

LAND / HUMAN CYCLE

Tribal religion and tribal land formed a bridge which united past and future. The Indian lived in the landscape not on it, as we do; his home was space, the earth a total environmental unit. When the European pioneers of North America reached the great central woodlands they saw it as an area "...to be cleared and brought to life with their settlements,⁶ but to the Indian the forests were already brimming with spirit life". The local underworld was not only the place from which the race emerged and the place to which its individuals returned but it was as well the storehouse of all life-giving crops which were in season, drawn up to nourish the living. The Ohio Indians of the Hopewell period (200 - 500 A.D) believed they originated from craters in the ground. During their lifetimes, in a united desire to make a lasting "man-mark" on their sacred land, they moved thousands of tons of earth to construct a giant

serpent effigy, a symbol of their cult, which has survived to the present day.

As the universe is intricately patterned into hierarchies and divisions so were the Indian nations. Their spiritual and land cycles drew a parallel with the orbits of the planets. Just as the earth turns on its own axis while revolving round the sun, the vital elements of existence - food, ritual, healing, art, folklore, myth and education - were each harmonious cycles in themselves. All interdependent on and defined by each other, while forming part of all-embracing spiritual/land/human sacred circle. The land was constant. It was the foundation upon which the continuity of the nations flourished and was preserved. The Indians believed they were as old as the land, eternal as it was eternal, their soul its soul. This feeling of belonging gave the nations a profound emotional security.

The relationship between man and land was so intimate that it too was seen as a personal one. The Indian knew the sun as "Father Sun" and the land as "Mother Earth". Even to-day at Taos Pueblos in New Mexico, Indians may still be seen taking shoes off horses and walking about in soft soled shoes themselves in the Spring for at that time of the year they believe the earth is pregnant and they must not harm her body.

It is apparent that the land exerted an enormous influence on the Indian life pattern. His home - the North American continent - stretches from 20⁰ latitude to 87⁰ latitude encompassing most of the world's climatic categories with a landmass that varies in character from the high slopes of the Rocky Mountain Range to the vast Central Plain. Here I will not concern myself with documenting the various survival patterns of the thousands of tribes within their distinct environments. It suffices to say that a singular vision ran through the consciousness of all American Indians, one which they wrought into their world myths, religion, verbal poetry, song, dance and ritual drama, manual crafts and costumes

and which enabled them to live in harmony with the universal forces of which they were so aware.

ART CYCLE

It is very significant that the American Indians did not have a word for Art as an independent concept. Just as one cannot separate their native clothing from either wearing, sewing, ceremony or medicine power, one cannot understand their art as a distinct entity. To the Indian art was the embodiment of the spiritual and land/human cycles and its function was the cosmic union of man and earth. The study of American Indian Art history is the study of the evolution of a highly regularised symbolic vocabulary for use as a formula for supernatural recall and projection of psychic intent through design impact.

It is not within the scope of this essay to document the chronological progress of the history of the American Indian and his art. However, as the capacity to be affected by the external world and to turn sensory impressions into independent images is a unique feature of the human species and as it is mainly through examination of these images which have survived to the present day that we can piece together the pattern of Indian life philosophy, it is important to isolate some examples of how the use of symbols was a major concern in the continuity of the nations.

The modern American Indian tribes are descendants of a small band of people who filtered across from Siberia when, during the Pleistocene Era,⁷ the thirty-six mile divided of the Bering Strait was a solid block of ice leaving a narrow bridge which joined the two vast continental landmasses. These people, of Mongol extraction, spread slowly downwards and dispersed over the entire American Continent⁹ adapting physically and culturally to environmental conditions. Gradually they lost all links with their Asian origin and disorientation with regard to time and space resulted.

In examples of artifacts found dating to this early period we find a stylized character, essentially a property of the "beginning of art". Man's socio-cultural characteristics are not those which are retained from nature but rather the way in which they differ from it. Art objects were meant as opposites, marking in the landscape and as art was intimately related to social organisation such objects as the Hopewellian serpent effigy were a tribal "man-mark" of a collective consciousness with a humanism born of tribal interdependence. Due to the struggle of survival all artifacts of necessity served a vital function. This was hardly the environment for a relaxed decorative art and all art symbols had mystical significance forging a link between man and the spirit world, between individuals within a tribe and between tribes many miles apart. Because these symbols evolved from common experience and due to their inherent vitality, they could be understood by tribes of many different languages.¹⁰

The fusion of belief and function incorporation daily experience and use of materials available locally in making objects which, through this process, took on a symbolism of great depth and meaning, resulted in traditional development of expertise in the handling of these materials and a richness of craftsmanship and design. To the Eskimo, whose survival depended on his skills as a hunter and his agility on dangerous ice, dexterity and keen attention to detail was imperative. These are the qualities which in turn he imposed on the delicately carved animal fetishes characteristic of the Northern region. These carvings also convey the feeling that the Eskimo artist in making them has withdrawn into his own interior world, small in scale, taking the outdoors in with him. The Woodland Artist was concerned with the association of game-hunting, fishing, sky, trees and water and the quillwork and beechbark work of the Woodland tribes display this sense of articulating the environment.¹¹

The Indian artist, knowing his responsibility for preserving continuity in the spirit and natural worlds, accepted traditional limitations of form and pattern and worked within established guidelines. Certain patterns were incised so often that they became etched in the Indian mind. Variation was allowed however, and on contact with white settlers and trading posts, trade beads were adapted into traditional beadwork designs. Embroidery, a skill taught to Indian girls by communities of French nuns, in time also became a naturalised tribal material. Neither the buffalo nor the white eagle waited around in their living state as static objects to be studied and painted by the Plains Indian and consequently, nothing was rendered from life but from memory or through mystic communication. This led to the use of three dimensional forms¹³ and a fusion with the fourth demension inhabited by the spirits.

The Indian artist referred continually to the springs from which his art (synonymous with life, land and spirituality) first emerged. He never digressed from that source. His traditional symbols were so basic and evolving from experience common to all mankind that they traversed barriers of language. The Circle was accepted as the universal symbol of continuity among peoples of over six hundred and fifty dialects. It represents harmony in the elements of existence, contains and defines space, shape, direction and even colour and was conceived as a mirror in which everything was reflected. It can be traced throughout the sphere of Indian culture from Arikara Medecine Lodges¹⁴ and Sioux Sundance¹⁵ Lodges to decorative symbols on household implements and it indicates the constant invocation of the life forces by the Indian.

North American Indian art celebrates the continuity of the land mass and the precious interaction between man and nature. It is a spiritual art intimately bound to the land and mythological origins and serves to assert historic lineage and social status while translating the myths of a supernatural animal past into such powerful symbols of immense religious

significance as the Thunderbird¹⁶ and Great Lynx.¹⁷ The inner vision of the man, be he Eskimo or Pueblo Indian, endures as an eternal theme, present to a greater or lesser extent through the vast body of American Indian artifacts. It decorates, educates, exorcises, gives permanence and security, allows the transfer of supernatural forces within different forms and enables man to actively preserve harmony within his sacred circle thus facilitating the unhindered passage of the nation to its ultimate destiny.

NAVAJO HEALING CEREMONY EMBODIES AND ILLUSTRATES THE SPIRITUAL,
LAND / HUMAN AND ART CYCLES

The Indian healing ceremony, a vital component of all tribal life, differing in detail from area to area but containing the same unified philosophical and medical system, serves as an example of the interplay of the sacred spiritual, land/human and art cycles and how it was brought about by man. The Navajo ritual was adopted to the specific needs of the people and embraced all that gave meaning to their lives. To enact the stages of the ceremony the entire tribe and many guests, who may have travelled great distances to be present, gathered together for a period of nine days and nights.

To begin, the particular disorder of the patient, which could¹⁸ range from disease to family upset, was diagnosed by the tribal "Hand-Trembler". He was so called because during the diagnosis he entered a deep trance and by concentrating external forces within his body he discovered the root of the patient's problem and simultaneously displayed the outward signs of uncontrolled trembling. This trance was in principle the same as modern methods of hypnosis; the distinction being that in the Indian cure it is the diagnostitian¹⁹ and not the patient who went into a trance. Having found the root of the illness, the source of which was understood to be disharmony between the individual and the forces acting on him, the "Hand-

Trembler" prescribed one of the five hundred cures handed down in the Navajo tradition and the ceremony proper was prepared.

If we consider the Indian philosophy of healing we find that the source of the illness was believed to be caused by imbalance in the polarities of the human personality; conflict between the elements of masculine and feminine, instinct and reason, conscious and unconscious mind of the individual, causing imbalance in the harmony of all things. The patient's difficulty was believed to have been suffered by one of the heroic characters of Navajo mythology and in the past the supernaturals having found a solution to the problem, that solution was recalled through ritual and applied to the patient. Art symbols were employed which gained their ferocious mystic power by exploring the gap that exists between nature as we can see it and the mythological past as it can only be envisaged and by conjuring up forces of nature that cannot be seen. The theme of the myth if any of the cures was always the restoration of harmony - ".....being as it used to be long ago".

The ceremony itself had a profound esoteric significance for all those taking part. It served to strengthen human relations, to educate the young in the ways of the tribe, to reaffirm traditional beliefs and to reestablish man's relationship to the universe. On the first night a fire was lit from wood ground from a lightning-struck tree and the Shaman, chanting some twenty-five thousand lines of verse handed down in oral tradition of the tribe, invoked the forces of the natural and spiritual cycles. On the following day the ground was dug and warmed with hot stones to make a sweat bath in which the patient underwent a purification rite.

The principal stage of the ritual involved the traversing by the patient, aided by the shaman, of supernatural barriers and the entering of a world of traditional Navajo mythological symbols painted in sand, which depicted unconscious forces acting within the human psyche. Dance,

song, chant and the wearing by the tribesmen of masks created in the patient the feeling that the Gods of the Navajo spiritual cycle had come to him. Sitting amid the sand painting and performing the actions of the particular mythological hero the patient became the character and, through the efforts of the shaman to focus great supernatural forces at a centre point, the conflicting drives in the Navajo's consciousness could be reconciled. After the ceremony the sand painting was destroyed because it was thought to contain an exorcised evil. On the ninth day the patient watched the entire tribe dance. Through unified tribal effort the patient experienced a psychological uplift and security in the knowledge, not that evil does not exist but, that through man's efforts, good could prevail and that the Navajo belief system was correct. His sense of time and tribal unity through past and future was reaffirmed and he realised his responsibility in life and his purpose in living.

AMERICAN INDIAN / WESTERN MAN

————— DIVERGING LIFE CONCEPTS

Continuity was the ultimate purpose of Indian existence and it was the responsibility of every individual. Working within a tribal framework their social organisation operated for the common good and they concentrated on keeping harmony within all the forces of the universe. However, when we speak of human work we mean the results of natural processes in which human action intervenes. Our work serves to alter mechanical climactic and biotic features of the immediate environment in order to provide a more favourable artificial situation in which to live. The undertaking to alter the landscape bears with it a responsibility for long term prosperity of the land and, consequently, the human life cycle. It is a duty to which this society, whose objectives are immediate and often narrow-sighted, conveniently turns a blind eye, but one which the American Indian

felt very keenly. How, but by keeping an ecological balance within the environment, could he envisage the continuity of the race? Critics²² say he was as ineffectual in the ecology as an animal and that to glorify the products, especially art objects, of such a life style is nothing more than perpetuation of the romantic "noble savage" image. But that is to discount their religious commitments and to ignore the very fundamental concept of time and space which underlay all Indian life and culture and which is alien to us in a highly technological society. The Indians did, and still do, continue to absorb new technologies and gathered influences from a large variety of sources but practiced only that which was culturally and ecologically relevant.

When we refer to matters concerning Indian life we invariably use the plural. As an individual the Indian simply would not have survived. We in Western civilisation are isolated as individuals through a number of very fundamental causes and it is this isolation which arouses most of the major distress symptoms in OUR society.

The pace of modern technological progress causes such rapid change in society that the values held by one generation are considered obsolete by the next. This results in severed links with our roots, history being conceived as a linear past gone forever and the present as all that happens in an instant. Our minds have become prone towards stereotypes - the "celebrity" mentality. Ignoring long-term reaction we seek instant gratification and although scientists, obsessed with the breakdown of time, have now isolated a particle which is extinguished before it even comes into existence, we are caught up in a life-long race against the clock.

We ease our collective conscience with the knowledge that the genius of our past is stored in books. The Indian past lived on in unwritten rituals, initiation disciplines, songs, visual symbols, names and meanings which united man with heaven and earth. This

immense burden sometimes lay on fewer than a hundred persons. Such was its importance that in many primitive societies threatened with extinction puberty rites²⁴ became particularly painful so that the knowledge given to the newly initiated would remain with them forever. The responsibility of an entire nation's heritage gave the Indian a deep sense of purpose in living and perhaps this is where our greatest loss lies.

The overcrowded conditions in which modern man exists leads to further isolation within himself. Man, not like an ant, cannot live in a situation where he is one of millions of exactly similar beings. He keeps up his self respect by building barriers between himself and his neighbours to avoid seeing himself mirrored in them. Thus neighbourly love becomes diluted and eventually extinguished by a surfeit of neighbours leading to loneliness and apathy. Even our highest aspirations of goodness differ very basically with those of Indian Ideology. Consider the Christian principle of justice and charity :-

"Do unto other as you would they should
do unto you"
as compared to the Hope Law :-

"Cultivate the Hope way and you and the
whole people will have peace, prosperity
and happiness".

The Christian Church defines a code of behaviour for the individual in his dealing with another individual while the Hope tradition defines a code of behaviour of man as related to the whole of society.

Because all facets of Indian life operated together in a balanced way the Indian had a sense of place within the rhythms of the universe and a power over the nation's destiny. The universe was not conceived as a machine at the mercy of mechanical law nor was it viewed as a sum total of hostile, competitive forces struggling for existence. The land was the great stabilising factor in American Indian life. It

provided eternal security for those who worked to retain its natural order. The emotional needs of our Society are equally great but our substitute - financial security - is a poor one. Replacing ecological balance with the Stock Exchange is hardly a viable solution nor is the substitution of romantic nostalgia for a genuine effort to come to terms with the broken cycles that should be functioning in our lives.

Just as Indian artifacts are testimony of the cyclical pattern of their lives so too is contemporary art a reflection of the reality of our civilisation. As the transition from Europe to America materialised the settlers began to lose their ties with European tradition. For a time they continued to look to Europe for trends in the Fine Arts but gradually losing all sense of identity with their place of origin they began to look for new forms of expression. Having nothing but contempt for the original inhabitants they did not attempt to build on established American traditions. Without roots their art split with everyday life becoming an independent philosophical exercise with no basis in human experience and, consequently, in the fullness of time politics and industry have advanced on that continent far more than Fine Art. As in America, we in Europe have fallen ill of the increasing pace of industry causing our traditional links to be broken and leaving us without a source for our art. Having developed a pattern of living which disturbs the natural order both in our environment and in the spiritual and human facets of our lives, we have lost the continuity which is vital to the preservation and renewal of our heritage. For centuries the mechanism of tradition complemented the growth of European civilisation but, due to the rapid rate of technological change imposed on society in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, cultural development failed to keep pace. At the beginning of this century the existing traditional forms had become obsolete.

From this stifled cultural climate there emerged a new consciousness heralded by the work of philosophers and artists such as Bergson, Proust

and Picasso. These thinkers attempted to open European eyes to a whole new range of potentialities but our art continues to hinge its fate to that of modern technology and unfortunately we cannot hope to keep pace. Based, as it now is, on the principles of revolution and counter-revolution art functions for the instant - to shock and excite - but lacks the qualities of endurance.

SPATIALITY IN TIME / FUNDAMENTAL CONFLICT

The underlying cause of the diverging courses of Indian and European Political and Art History is the conflicting concepts of time inherent in the two societies. "Time does veritably have, for organisms, souls and societies a dimension different from and in contrast with, that merely linear dimension which our machines, clocks and calendars insist on". To draw a parallel with the thinking of the American Indian :-

"in the mind of Buddhist Ceylon, in its private and public behaviour, in its work rhythms, its private and public expectancies, lineartime is not the only and not the controlling time.... Time is enduring and commanding future which hurtles not across the narrow present to become immured in a linear past - it is enduring past which is dead and gone, which can, and does, enter the present but whose fundamental relationship is with the enduring future. Hence life has an inner spaciousness greater than ours. The capacity to wait, to endure, to possess the things that seem gone and to strive and socially to create, is somewhat different from ours". 28.

The Indian concept of measurement of time in terms of space denoted by the sun's path or his position and the journey he must take, by sleeps, moons and by winters. There was no name for any sub-division shorter than a day. The passing of weeks and months was observed as seasonal changes in the landscape and his concept of the dimensions of time are comparable to that of a young child. Possessing the security and stability of the land there was no need for speed as we understand it. Both spirit and duration were spatial and this is apparent in the lack

of concern with size in Indian art. Their art reacted to change but did not in itself cause change. Innovation was not due to "avant garde" and radicalism gave way to tradition.

Western European people have never learned to consider the nature of the world as conceived from a spatial point of view. Due to our isolation as individuals we do not regard ourselves as integral members of a living community nor as links between the origin and future of that group. The properties associated with spatial time - the power to create, the value of survival and the internal spaciousness of the individual - are meaningless in a society preoccupied with the immediate. What purpose in creating if not to endure? Living for instant and constant gratification, comfort and luxury, leads to a rash of varying distress symptoms, common in Western society including ill-health, industrial disputes, loneliness and apathy. Man lives for externals as the humanness born of personal contact with others is increasingly denied him.

"The life of the people was in the
Hoop of the Nation, and what are
many lives if the life of those lives
be gone". 29.

To-day in Reservations throughout America the effects of the imposition of Western values on Indian children and the unfortunate results thus caused, mirror similar effects throughout the entire structure of our society. The White authorities responsible for the welfare of the Indian Reservations adopted the attitude that tradition is the enemy of progress and removed children from their tribal communities at a very young age. Through the most formative years of their lives they were instilled with ideals of competition, personal profit and material wealth and were moulded in the manner of Western individualism. On returning to their tribes as young adults they found themselves completely disorientated with respect to Indian ways and great frustration resulted. This action, completely alien to the ideology

of the Indian, had a similar shattering effect on the nation to former military efforts to force them off the land which, destroying the rhythms of their sacred spiritual and human cycles, brought about the downfall of the Nations.

"There were bright lights at night so that you could not see the stars. After a while I got used to being there but I was like a man without a vision ". 30

TRADITION

This apatality in time was the key to the functioning of the Nation's Hoop and tradition was the restraining mechanism which held in intact. It is an over-simplification to look at what is or was and conclude that it was "natural". The life style of the Indian evolved not just from environmental conditions but from cultrual choices. It was selection, based on tradition, that decided what was to be assimilated into the permanent knowledge fund of their civilisation as sacred customs and survival patterns. This is clearly illustrated in the conflict that arose between the Indian tribes and white settlers concerning the central grasslands. The Indians livelihood depended on a supply of meat, hides, bone and oil from the herds of Bison which roamed the plains. Annually they lit fires scorching vast areas of the grasslands ensuring a regular crop of lush young grass and keeping the number of Bison constant. The settlers, on the other hand, attempted to prevent the burning. They choose to allow the grasslands to mature into forests to provide wood for building and for industry. To the Indain this action threatened extinction of their way of life due to the reduction of game in the area.

The process of natural selection brings about adaptation by which man absorbs information about the environment significant for his survival. To this end conservatism in retaining what has been successfully tried is vital. New technologies were brought into the ancient American

Indian ecological enterprise only when relevant and thus perfection was always an accumulative effort. As previously discussed in the Navajo Healing Ceremony health was restored to the patient through unified effort and age old ritual, disharmony with the natural forces and a consequent sense of isolation having caused the illness initially. Craftsmanship in working with local materials peculiar to certain areas developed over a long time span and traditional restraint is reflected in the serenity and composure of even the most colourful art work .

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Navajo wearing blankets, woven in rich colours and bold designs, were always draped around the body in folds never displaying their full impact and thereby retaining a calm subtlety.

The contemporary belief that only the rationally comprehensible or scientifically proven belongs to our society's store of knowledge causes the overthrowal of tradition. Here again our concept of chronologically ordered time divorces us from even our recent past and leaves us stranded and frustrated in our present. Malfunctions in society, such as the production of ever deadlier weapons or increasing competitive haste, are disorders of behavioural patterns originally possessing survival value. Comparing Western European society to the human body we can see that the life blood of continuity does not feed the vital organs. Furthermore our overcrowded cities can be likened to cancerous tumours which, if not arrested, can incur the destruction of every fibre of society.

CONCLUSION

We cannot prevent change nor live in this day and age as the Plains Indian did in his. The Indian did not ignore advancing technology but adopted those aspects of change which were useful to him, thus allowing development rather than revolution to occur. "His genius altered wisely but never diminished"³². The ecological conditions of human life are in considerable degree artificial in any society in proportion to the prevailing technical level and degree of economic intergration of that society and the relative concentration of human beings in settlements is a good index to artificiality. Unlike plants and animals, man has a positive place in the ecology but that must also imply a great responsibility. The prevailing "return to nature" mentality proves a futile exercise but, without retarding progress, it is necessary to seek the added dimension of spatiality in time and through the unification of ethics and politics to promote integrity as a community. Contemporary music endeavours to serve this need for a sense of group identity and a worldwide system of communication among the young. Through the restoration of a living, evolving mechanism of tradition it is vital to establish an equally universal language of art symbols relevant to Western European Civilisation :-

"....and as they walked the third ascent, all the animals and fowl, that were the people, ran here and there, for each one seemed to have his own rules: and all over the universe I could hear the winds at war like wild beasts fighting".

Black Elk.

NOTES.

- * The terminology throughout is intended to include both male and female.
- 1. See figure (i).
- 2. See figure (ii).
- 3. See figure (iii).
- 4. Black Elk - Oglala Sioux holy man and visionary. c.f. Black Elk Speaks by J.G. Neithardt.
- 5. Phenomena occurring with extraordinary frequency during the period up to and including the Battle of Wounded Knee Creek, December 1890.
- 6. Luther Standing Bear. c.f. Sacred Circles by R.T. Coe, page 15.
- 7. Situated in Adams County, Ohio, U.S.A.
- 8. 30,000 - 20,000 BC, approximately.
- 9. 16,000,000 square miles in area.
- 10. Indian Wulfling Plates were universally understood by Indians of all tribes. See figure (iv). Copper plates were cold hammered. Associated with Mound Culture. This example depicts a winged bird-being in ceremonial costume.
- 11. See figure (v A) - Polar Bear - Typical skeletal motif with the bear shown swimming or flying. Behind the sliding lid is a secret compartment in the throat containing red ochre, probably symbolizing the blood of life. The legs have human characteristics which suggest that this is a shaman in disguise - Walrus Ivory from Alarnek settlement. Dorset Culture AD 500.
figure (v B) - Ivory Weasle and Pair of Swans, also Dorset Culture.
figure (v C) - Polar Bear - whale skeleton, mid 20th century.
- 12. See figure (vi).
- 13. See figure (vii). Northwest Coast Tlingit screen.
- 14. See figure (viii).
- 15. See figure (ix).
- 16. See figure (x).
- 17. See figure (xi).

18. In this case consider the mental anguish of a man who shot and killed a bear - taboo among the Navajo - and the guilt feelings which ensued causing physical sickness and loss of weight.
19. It has lately been realized that the Indian medicine men had for decades known of hypnosis, the conscious and unconscious mind, and the use of dreams in cures. and what was construed by Europeans as superstitious nonsense contained much of what we now consider to be sound medical practice.
20. Medicine man.
21. See figure (xii).
22. c.f. David Lowenthal, "Not every prospect pleases" in Salter's The Cultural Landscape. Also note John McEwen, "Indian Alibi" in The Spectator of 30th October 1976.
23. Quark.
24. Aborigine penis splitting. c.f. Peter Falk, Man's Rise to Civilization.
25. Beginning of 17th century.
26. Henri Bergson, L'Evolution Creatrice, (Paris 1907): "There is one reality, at least, which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own personality in it flowing through time - our self which endures. We may sympathise intellectually with nothing else, but we certainly sympathise with our own selves...our intelligence... can place itself within... mobile reality, and adopt its ceaselessly changing direction; in short, can grasp it by means of that intellectual sympathy which we call intuition. This is extremely difficult. The mind has to do violence to itself, has to reverse the direction of the operation by which it habitually thinks... But in this way it will attain to fluid concepts, capable of following reality in all its sinuosities and of adopting the very movement of the inward life of things." Proust, Remembrance of Things Past.
Picasso, "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon", painted in Paris in 1907.

27. Adrian Dobbs, 1947; quoted in John Collier's On the Gleaming Way.
Dobbs was a Lecturer in Colonial Administration in the University of Oxford.
28. John Collier, On the Gleaming Way.
29. Black Elk. c.f. Black Elk Speaks by J.G. Neihardt.
30. Black Elk on a prolonged visit to New York. c.f. Black Elk Speaks by J.G. Neihardt.
31. See figure (xiii).
32. Black Elk. c.f. Black Elk Speaks by J.G. Neihardt.

FIGURE I

OGLALA SIOUX CARDINAL POINTS

Where the thunder beings live	-- blue black	-----	WEST
Where the great White Giant lives	-- white	-----	NORTH
Where the sun shines continually	-- red	-----	EAST
Where you are always facing	-- yellow	-----	SOUTH

FIGURE II and FIGURE III

OGLALA SIOUX CALENDAR MONTHS

Moon of frost in the tipi	-----	January
Moon of the dark red calves	-----	February
Moon of the snowblind	-----	March
Moon of the red grass appearing	-----	April
Moon when the ponies shed	-----	May
Moon of the making fat	-----	June
Moon of the red cherries	-----	July
Moon when the cherries turn black	-----	August
Moon when the calves grow hair	-----	September
Moon of the changing seasons	-----	October
Moon of the falling leaves	-----	November
Moon of the popping trees	-----	December

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NAVAJO NIGHT CHART

House made of dawn

House made of evening light

House made of the dark cloud....

Dark cloud is at the house's door,

The trail out of it is dark cloud,

The zigzag lightning stands high upon it....

Happily may I walk

Happily, with abundant showers, may I walk,

Happily, with abundant plants, may I walk,

Happily, on the trail of pollen, may I walk,

Happily may I walk.

May it be beautiful before me.

May it be beautiful behind me.

May it be beautiful below me.

May it be beautiful above me.

May it be beautiful all around me.

In beauty it is finished.

Washington Matthew's translation.
