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STORY MEDICINE: THE POWER OF HEALING
A JOURNEY FROM ANGER TO INNER PEACE

by

Tiffany Ann Warzecha

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors
(Anthropology)

The Honors College

University of Maine

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Dedication and Acknowledgements

To the Japanese boy who gave my grandfather lemon drops before being sent to an internment camp during World War II

I hadn't planned on writing an acknowledgement section, because who reads them, except maybe those in the acknowledgement or those searching for their names. Here is my thank you to those who have helped me through the years and to those I have yet to meet. To God who has been my guidance on this healing journey. To my mother who has always been a willing editor. To my dad who has supported me in so many ways, including filling out my taxes while I worked on my thesis. To my brothers and close friends. To my cousin for flying out to watch my defense and to Alec for buying me that much needed beer after the defense. To Abbie for making sure that I got my thesis done and taking me to the ocean the night before it was due. To my grandparents for driving out to pick me up from school twice and for all the good times we have shared. To all others, know you are in my heart and I hope I can express my gratitude to you in person or in my works.

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Story Medicine: The Power of Healing
A Journey from Anger to Inner Peace

November 22, 2004- *So it's been a year since the Free Trade Area of the Americas [FTAA] summit in Miami. And what has changed? Bush is still President and the rich are still rich. There is still blood in the River Jordan. And I am still in school and have a roof over my head. Marches later and children are still killed in Iraq- the hearth of civilization. What will become of us God? Will you allow us to destroy Your creation? Uprising all over the world, drought, genocide- has anything really changed since you sent Your only Son? I wonder. I used to wonder why King David would cry out to you and question your motives. But here I am, many years down that road and I cry out too, Lord. Why are children dying, why do governments oppress and kill their own people. I want, I yearn for my King. Let me serve, make me ready and be my shield. Send me to shout on the rooftops, but please hold my hand, I cannot do it alone. When I go out into the streets, give me the courage to speak the Good News of brotherhood and salvation. Be my transformation. Be there. You are my hope, my love, my faith, my charity...*

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations" - Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

This thesis is a personal story- a journey to more deeply discover who I have been, who I am, and who I am becoming. It is the story of myself as an angry young American woman at the dawn of the 21st century who did not want to stay stuck in anger, negativity, pessimism, hopelessness; who instead went in search of an alternative framework or worldview, for myself and ultimately, for humanity. It is as much a process of my own healing as well as a model for healing in our communities, relationships, and

bodies. In the end, it is an invitation to begin your own healing- sharing and listening to stories.

My work here is just one part of an ongoing conversation in coffee shops, in books, in hearts, and in strangers meeting in passing. However, in actuality, we do not have conversation in this work; we have an individual's story- a journey from anger to inner peace. Academic work can only really be an individual story with a certain interpretation of other's work- the other's own stories. A conversation only happens in an organic sense in the spoken, or digital realm, or even in that old fashion practice of letter writing when multiple parties can share their stories. So we have here one story- my own story and journey- a stepping off point where I share my own monologue on that journey from anger to inner peace. And hopefully when this chapter of my story comes to a close, a conversation can happen and has happened- a more organic-co-creative process.

So here is my study of self because one cannot begin to understand the other without knowledge of one's self. I am telling my story to more deeply know the self- outgrowing the current model of "doing things" which is to observe and to experiment with the other rather than to place value on the intimate experience of the self. And although I am often scared to go into that esoteric realm of self, I also realize that I am not alone, there are scores of saints, mystics, prophets, poets, theologians and philosophers who have come before me and will most certainly come after me who have dared to look deeply at self so as to know the other and to heal. Thus I begin the process of knowing myself in order to "know all the mysteries of the gods and of the universe" (Socrates). In the very essence, to know both the personal and the universal by first discovering who the self is- who I am.

At times it will seem as though I am trying to grapple with too many topics in one work, only giving minimal justice and not mastering one single idea. Perhaps I am doing just that. But I am really trying to discover who I am while opening up a space for others to do the same- from personal to the universal. My goal is to show our interconnectiveness by starting with an intimate study of myself in order to find that interconnectiveness- what many Native Americans call “all my relations.” To be able to heal both in body and community, we must have a sense of interconnectiveness with others by first having knowledge of self.

This thesis is a loving, gentle, critical, and creative analysis of some of my own life stories selected as they came up in conversation with people, ideas, books, and my self through my own journals.

My research process has moved from the personal to the abstract and back again. I looked at the metaphysical (ways of being) and epistemological (ways of knowing) in order to see how my own story telling can play a role in my bodily, relational, and spiritual healing. First, I recognized that knowledge is socially constructed. I have come to believe that with every new experience/experiment, I create new world views and theories that can be actively tested and applied to the metaphysical (our ways of being) and then the experience can begin anew. I constantly move from the experiential to the theoretical, especially when I tell stories about my experiences. It is important to honor my need for the everyday experience to inform my continually evolving world view.

What do I experience and how do I know? I know by the constant feedback between being (experiential/metaphysical) and knowing (our world view, theories, epistemological state). I will use my situational learning, my life experiences in order to

express that feedback. Through the stories told after an experience, I transmit to others these experiences, the emotions, and the lessons I learned moving towards new ways of knowing. Which in turn allow me to make sense of my world and thus to continually move back and forth between experience (everyday) and theory.

This is an auto-ethnography- the study of self in order to uncover/discover theoretical and universal truths/principles. So much of cultural anthropology research has focused on making the anthropologist “objective”- making sure that nothing of the personal creeps into the research process. I find this view unsatisfying. Instead, I agree with feminist cultural anthropologists who have dared to share the personal in their work, often told that they are navel gazing. But I say heck, I will risk navel gazing because through navel gazing, at least I know where I came from- my mother’s womb.

There is already a vast collection of works in feminist theory that deals with the experiential informing the theoretical through the use of narrative from everyday life. For example, sociologist Louisa Greathouse Amador and historian Laura Finkel use narrative- both fictive and non-fictive- to tell stories about class and racism. Dr. Amador of Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla in Mexico works with children’s stories to explore the construction of identity, social representation, and how we look at the other. She asked a hundred 10-11 year olds in the Federal Primary schools of Puebla, Mexico to tell stories about children interacting with one another. In the story, they had to include boys and girls who were Gueros/Gueras (light skinned) and Morenos/Morenas (dark-skinned). After collecting the stories from the children, she and a few anthropology students analyzed and then charted the different categories that emerged from the stories, finding: attitudes toward the other, how the children were treated by the other, events,

confrontation, origin of change, characteristics of children, economic conditions, and a moral ending. In the conclusion of many stories, the common theme was “they discovered that even though they were not the same, they were able to do the same things.” Dr. Amador uses the narratives of children to learn what people in Mexico think about skin color and class.

Laura Finkel used narrative to tell the story of the University of Maine during the Vietnam Era. She allowed 15 former students from that period to tell their stories. She felt that the everyday experience is history and she attempted to explore that idea in her work. She saw oral history as a “cooperative process,” allowing “the narrators to tell their own story” (1998:10). By using narratives in conjunction with documents from the time period coming from in and outside the university, she found stories not of violence but of cooperation- students working with each other, the community and the college administration. Community studies using everyday experiences help to “widen our understanding” (3) and to allow for ordinary people to tell their story outside of the dominant narrative so often told by historians.

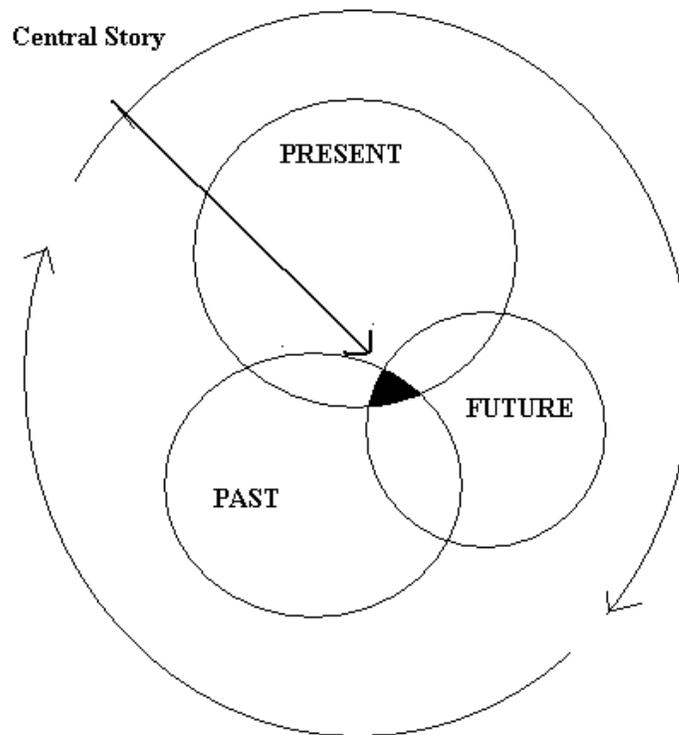
My work fits into this already established way of knowledge. However, I move from fiction stories written by the other and stories told by those other than the researcher to a study of self. I too looked at how I identify myself in terms of the other, how the idea of other is constructed and how I can deconstruct this idea of other. Unlike Dr. Amador’s study on skin color and Finkel’s study of Vietnam era students, I explored my own life stories in order to learn where I have been, where I am, where I am going, and who I am. My introspection coming from this social/emotional learning perspective, is that I realized that through story, I understand. By using story, I see that my own stories have

as much “value” as others’ stories. And so my introspective thesis is a statement of process, not a completed text in a sense but part of an ongoing organic conversation, where the written thesis is merely a moment in time. It will represent where I am at this moment in time, and some of where I have come from, an exploration of my inner medicine, my stories in a space where I study anything and everything- tea, stories, medicine, power, friendship, trees, songs, and dances- where I intimately engage with both the metaphysical (ways of being) and the epistemological (ways of knowing).

My story begins with stories of anger, disillusionment, pain, and the search for inner peace. I will tell a story, and then share what I now see as its truths for me, and what I now believe hold universal seeds for others. Through story, I can see that everyday I have a chance to heal a little more and I can also encourage healing in others. In addition, through stories, I understand myself and others. Stories challenge me and lead me to places I never thought possible. In stories, I find my sense of place, my past, my present, while being conscious that I can only ever just be here now (Ram Dass, 1971). So what are these stories, where did I find them, how were they told, and what can I learn from them?

I will be using personal journal entries as well as memory. However, I will be careful with using memory because my world view has changed since events occurred, and the journal entries have the raw stuff that I need to re-search in order to understand myself. When writing his own memoir, Bill Ayers, a University of Illinois at Chicago education professor and a former Weather Underground member, found that memory could only take him so far, because he had changed since he last looked at events in his life:

This story is only one version of events- it is a memory book rather than a transcript, an accounting of sorts without any pretense toward an authorized history. There is, too, a necessary incompleteness here, a covering over of facts and a blurring of details, which is in part an artifact of those fugitive days and those exquisite and terrible times...Is this, then, the truth? Not exactly. Although it feels entirely honest to me.



Three concentric circles showing how our past influences the now which influences the future. Our stories are rooted in the past, present, and future. If we have no idea where started, how will we know that we are healing every day?

Throughout my thesis, I will highlight a way of being and knowing that is already out there and possible- telling stories of quiet healing spaces that are often overshadowed by dominant narratives filled with loud and violent spaces. I will tell multiple stories of mine while acknowledging the bigger picture- the universe. I hope to convey the need for knowledge of story in order to find a place for the everyday experience in history and theory, to express gratitude, to forgive, to heal, and to celebrate, finding daily the space to

have meaningful conversation, re-discovering purposeful celebration and helping to start meaningful traditions, and finally spreading a conversation about peace and healing while realizing that change is slow and takes time.

I have broken my thesis up into three parts. In Part 1, I will attempt to outline the role of the anthropologist in story telling and healing, by defining story, culture, ethnography, and auto-ethnography. Although I have researched primarily anthropological theory, I will also be borrowing from the sociological, theological, and philosophical traditions to discuss my thesis.

That being said, in Part II I will discuss the Socratic study of self and my own story. Through my own story, I will highlight my transformation from anger to inner peace. After looking at my own story and Socrates' study of self, I will then discuss 7 ideas that will take us from the personal to the universal in discovering a way to bring about peace and healing in the everyday through story telling, thus creating a *Story Medicine: The Power of Healing*.

Part I- The Role of the Anthropologist

Había una vez- Dr. Louisa Greathouse Amador

The one who tells the stories rules the world. – Hopi Proverb

It takes a thousand voices to tell a single story- Unknown

Defining Story

Who is telling the story? A constant theme in stories is that the scary animal is killed by a hunter. The lion always gets killed. When told the story of the hunter killing the lion, the child asks the story-teller why the lion is always killed. The story teller told the child that until the lion tells his own story, he will always be the one being killed

(Sidy 1993: 19). We have our own lion that becomes our nobility, our courage, our power, and our virtue when we tell our own story from our point of view- our individual story (20). Unfortunately, we do not always tell our own story, we let others tell our stories for us in ways of media and the dominant narratives that surround us. However by telling our own stories, we also open up space for others to tell their story. In *Ishmael*, a large talking ape invites men to tell new stories in their organic cultures. The ape goes on to tell his audience his definitions of story and culture:

Story: a story is a scenario interrelating man, the world, and the gods.

Enact: To Enact a story is to live so as to make the story a reality. In other words, to enact a story is to strive to make it true.

Culture: A culture is a people enacting a story (Quinn1995: 41).

I will be using the ape's definition of story and culture throughout my thesis. I will also briefly deal with three layers of stories that Thomas Berry utilizes in his work while primarily focusing on my own story. These levels of story are the Universe's Story, the Community's Story, and the Individual's Story. I have already introduced the idea that the past, present, and future create one story, now I add onto this idea the various layers of story that Thomas Berry suggests.

An Anthropologist and her role in Story

“A long, long, long time...Of course there was an anthropologist on hand. What sort of world would it be without an anthropologist? He was, however, a very depressed and disillusioned anthropologist, for he'd been everywhere on the planet looking for someone to interview, and every tape in his knapsack was as blank as the sky. But one day as he was moping along beside the ocean he saw what seemed to be a living creature

in the shallows off shore. It was nothing to brag about, just a sort of squishy blob, but it was the only prospect he'd seen in all his journeys, so he waded out to where it was bobbing in the waves.

He greeted the creature politely and was greeted in kind, and soon the two of them were good friends. The anthropologist explained as well as he could that he was a student of lifestyles and customs, and begged his new friend for information of this sort, which was readily forthcoming. "And now," he said at last, 'I'd like to get on tape in your own words some of the stories you tell among yourselves.'" – Ishmael (54)

Anthropologists are constantly exposed to stories that others share. But where is the anthropologist's story in her research? Anthropologists need to be and are moving in a direction of acknowledging that their stories have a role in their work. Historically, anthropologists acknowledge the fact that their ways of knowing are different from another culture's way of being. Even early anthropologists Prichard and Malinowski both used their own story within their studies of other cultures- using their field journals as part of their final reports. Humans live in cultures and when studying other cultures, the anthropologist cannot fully get rid of her own culture- she retains the filter of her culture and her cultural lenses. Anthropologists are no longer the lone researcher working in the sterile laboratory of life and treating subjects like objects. The anthropologist is very much a part of the dialogue between the culture and her audience. She becomes the bridge person, a translator of sorts who participates in the understanding between and among groups- spreading the idea of power with and within groups (Rosenberg 2005: 54). We see this idea of a "power with" instead of "power over" or seizing power over in

groups like the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico and in women's circles. The anthropologist can record these stories of alternative ways of using power with regards to others.

As part of a culture and society, anthropologists have their own story that has a direct influence on the interpretation of culture that the anthropologist chooses to study. Anthropologists, especially ethnographers and oral historians, bring a story to their research, listen to stories while researching, and leave with a new chapter in their own story and the collection of anthropological theory. David Graeber suggests that ethnographic research should be included in working for just social change. He describes the act of ethnographic research as such:

When one carries out an ethnography, one observes what people do, and then tries to tease out the hidden symbolic, moral, or pragmatic logics that underlie their actions; one tries to get at the way people's habits and actions makes sense in ways that they are not themselves completely aware of...to look at those who are creating viable alternatives, try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back, not as prescription, but as contributions, possibilities- as gifts (2004:12).

According to Graeber, ideas do not come from the individual but from a moment in time where the ideas are discussed by various people- academics and ordinary people alike. Anthropological theory according to Graeber comes out of these conversations and he criticizes those who pay tribute to one individual, "Foucault's ideas, like Trotsky's, are never treated as primarily the products of a certain intellectual milieu, as something that emerged from endless conversations and arguments involving hundreds of people, but always, as if they emerged from the genius of a single man (or, very occasionally woman)" (2004: 4). However, we do owe theorists credit for taking the time to document these conversations. Graeber moves on to discuss that anthropological research needs to be applicable and have relevance to the ordinary individual's life (5) while discovering

life-ways that are “less alienated ways of organizing life” (40). Constantly he returns to the idea of conversations where there are multiple low and high theoretical perspectives which are “joined together by their shared desire to understand the human condition, and move it in the direction of greater freedom,” (8) to form a growing ethical discourse rather than a theoretical discourse (6). By suggesting an ethical discourse, he explores the low theory, carefully stating that it is not to mean policy theory from the societal hierarchy, but rather grass root theory that is applicable to the everyday experience, “a way of grappling with those real, immediate questions that emerge from a transformative project” (9). Like Graeber, I am suggesting an anthropology that comes out of a constant dialogue, including re-search of the self, and plants the seeds for a new tomorrow in the disintegrating systems of today.

Use of Ethnography

Nigel Barley, a cultural anthropologist, found his first trip to Cameroon to study Dowayoland both frustrating and rewarding. He learned how to work in an environment contrasting his own and found his western culture to be as susceptible to change and destruction as the culture he went to study. When cultural anthropologists study cultures, they study and observe a culture’s history, tradition, economy, social structure, politics, language, belief system, and material objects that the culture uses in everyday life. The anthropologist looks at the big picture and takes a holistic approach in order to know other cultures (*Faces of Culture I* 1983). Each culture offers a distinct way of being human. Behavior patterns, arts, belief, social institutions, economic structure, and thought are transmitted in a society through acculturation and language. Anthropologists in turn

use language to interpret the society and tell their own culture about the “other” while being conscious of the need to be objective when studying the groups of human beings.

For this purpose, fieldwork allows the anthropologist to learn how various cultures operate. Margaret Meade approached fieldwork by asking questions. She first asked what she already knew, then what she did not know, and finally what she needed to know (*Faces of Culture I* 1983). Once these questions have been answered, an anthropologist can start the pre-fieldwork research.

Ethnographies give an anthropologist an overview of a culture before fieldwork begins. In the field, an anthropologist collects data as a participant observer. Participant observation forces the anthropologist to immerse himself into a culture rather than simply read ethnographies. The anthropologist can observe and experience a culture’s social organization, problem solving, language, ritual, descent line, and diet. Hopefully, the anthropologist will gain rapport with an informant. An informant can give an ethnographer an inside look at a particular culture. However, one must be aware that these informants may give information that they think the ethnographer would like to hear during an interview. After the anthropologist completes the field work, s/he may do a qualitative analysis of the material collected or keep it in the quantitative form depending on the purpose of the study. My use of ethnographies will remain in the qualitative, because I will be looking at my personal experience moving towards a theory of the personal.

When using ethnography, the fieldworker must take the time to recognize the changes s/he has undergone as a result of the research and how she might have effected and continue to affect the communities she has worked in and with. In his book

Fieldwork, Bruce Jackson points out that the fieldworkers and ethnographers are not merely observing a culture, but because of the familiarity they have with the culture and individuals, they actually participate in the moment (1987:16) and the research changes the anthropologists (9). If an ethnographer changes after her fieldwork in studying the other, then she too must change when studying herself. Therefore, as stated in the introduction, my thesis is an auto-ethnography- a study to more fully understand myself as a cultural being with my own ways of knowing and being.

As a young anthropologist, I wanted to understand culture more deeply. I wanted the raw emotion, too. However, I knew I also wanted to go further while paying tribute to anthropologists who came before me. So I started looking for those voices, finding Clifford Geertz (who borrowed philosopher Gilbert Ryle's idea of thick description to create context of [my] story within [my] culture making it relevant to others), Susan Bennett- an auto-ethnographer, and Dorothy Foote, a recent PhD from the University of Maine who did an auto-ethnography for her dissertation. Their own theories and research encouraged and challenged me to more deeply look at self rather than other. That being said, I had to begin seeing the personal experience as fieldwork (Foote 2006: 52), and realize that "theory is story," in this case, my story (54). But what exactly is this idea of auto-ethnography and how can it be objective? It is not objective, rather subjective- a study of the self as subject. Dottie Foote uses Carolyn Ellis's definition of auto-ethnography and so will I as a new explorer in the study of self as relevant academic work:

Auto-ethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural [and universal]. Back and forth auto-ethnographers gaze, first through ethnographic lens, focusing on social and cultural aspects of

their personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved-by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations...concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thoughts, and language (50)

Pursuing this idea further, I began to look into my journals as my data and a jumping off point to explore other's works and stories. By doing so I was able to find patterns and transitions in my own world view, ideas, and feelings. Reflecting back on my journals allowed me to see where I have been, who I was, where I am going, and who I am becoming. The journals also helped me to highlight my transition from anger to inner peace as well as my discovery of seven ways in which to heal and expand inner peace. I will be discussing my process of transformation in Part II and the seven ways in Part III.

Part II- From anger to inner peace

Here I will attempt to tell my own stories that have made me challenge the dominant cultural story. I will share my own stories of pain, cynicism, hurt, and suffering which caused me to go in search of my own healing. By sharing my stories, I offer them up as a gift in hope that they encourage others to go in search of their own healing. Through life experiences and through media, I have been witness personally to happenings that seemed too much to bear, which in turn led me to pain, cynicism, hurt, and suffering. However, it also led me on a journey to reach understanding and become active in various communities. But it took a long time to reach a jumping off point where my peace activism came not out of anger but out of inner peace. I hope to share my

journey and take an academic risk by going deep into the self, going personal, re-claiming my story, the “I”.

As stated earlier, I used my journals as data. They show my raw emotion and allow me to see where I have been and where I am going. I must admit that I am rather self-conscious about using my journals as data. I took a long time before deciding the use of journals was another way of knowing and understanding. I finally decided it was okay when I delved into Socratic thought. I discovered that Socrates believed that “his philosophy brings no knowledge at all...what we do in philosophy is to examine ourselves” (Wallgren 2006: 42). Granted Socrates was killed for his discovery of psyche, but I figured it would be okay to study self in my life time. I could use the personal and move toward a universal (44) while at the same time discovering “how we should live” (43). Socrates took a risk and put himself out there, sharing his inner self. He did not argue to win, believing “that philosophy is a cooperative engagement. In it we search together and support each other” (47) because one person does not have the keys to truth, but if we all share our stories we come to realize our spiritual interconnectivity and we can pursue truth and wisdom together (61). I used my journals to illustrate that by working on self and healing self, others to may work on self and heal self, and ultimately society.

What is my story?

Everyone has their story, from Johnny Appleseed to Vandana Shiva. And each and every story offers something new to the never ending overarching story of human history. Now what is my story and its role in the overarching story? Below I have presented a selection of my journal entries, they come from a trip to Miami, a march from

Boston to New York, relief work in New Orleans, and entries where I reflect these trips months later. I have attempted to arrange them in a way so as to highlight my transformation from anger to inner peace. However, I do acknowledge that I am still in this transformation to inner peace.

August 5, 2004- *Rain, Rain, Rain, stress, stress. Wow who knew people would count on me.*

August 6, 2004- *Did laundry with Mo today, got "lost" on Rt14A, had some pizza, took a nap at the organic farm in Canterbury, Ct. The owner was a naval corpsman during the Vietnam Conflict. He gave me some salt water to gargle with. C- braided my hair. We had floutas, salsa, and stuff for dinner. Watched the stars/clouds. The guys took the fire for their caucus. The women had their caucus. At first I was skeptical, only ever reading about women's only meetings in history books.*

August 12, 2004- *I was pretty stressed out and still sick. Watch Mister Rogers with A-God made the sea and he loves you...At midnight some people turned on The Miami Model. It gave some people PTSD. I asked them to turn it off. Two hurricanes are going up the coast.*

August 13, 2004- *God watches over us when we are away from home. Some people went to the mall to do an action while others went to an organic garden. The medic team split up to cover both activities. I got stuck with the mall action. I felt that there was no*

discussion and people that did not want to participate were dragged along. We stay at an Episcopal Church in New Britain. It rains. Snapper and I sit in the rain and talk while watching some marchers spange [to ask for spare change] near the place we were staying. Did they need the money, probably not. The town is poor, why didn't they have any respect for the local who might have needed the money.

August 31, 2004- *Some kids get beat up at the Library [New York City]. I get really pissed off and want action, don't really want to do the medic thing. A-, O-, and I decide to jump barricades at -. Get arrested and paraded down the street. Play duck duck goose at Pier 57.*

November 4, 2004- *Last night, I marched in the streets with great sadness. I watched as the police wagons and squad cars turned their lights on and their sirens blaring. Some of the foot soldiers of Chicago's finest were scared while others were angry. But at the end of the day, they still got their paycheck.*

All this summer, I watched the escalation of police forces in both Boston and New York. Sometimes, I wish I wore makeup for all the photos they insist on taking. The FBI came knocking on the doors of political activists. The Boston Police built special protest pits for dissent. New York's Police force decided to pen in protestors and then arrest them, 300 at a time. Our dissent has never fit in their ballot boxes nor can it afford to stay in specially made protest pits. We need to break down the fear barriers. The police, the state, their leaders cannot stop the masses. Their only weapon is fear. They can

destroy the body, but the only weapon they have is our fear. We need to start ignoring their orders and begin building the society we want to live in.

December 10, 2004- *Starting in January and today, I am gonna learn and experience how to be a better leader, to see all sides of the story, and how to relate to everyone- the politician, the business man, clergyman, cop, janitor, housewife, soldier, Muslim, Baptist, teacher, nurse security guard, bus driver, carpenter, all in love.*

January 24, 2005- *We destroy each other and yet more are born everyday. Wars do nothing to control populations. For a short time, people are left in misery and many are left behind. But children soon come and replenish the dead double.*

September 13, 2005- *What is the purpose, Lord? Are we here as punishment or to do your work? I so want to do your work, YHWH! You created so much beauty with your daughter, Sophia [Greek for Wisdom]. Lead me towards that wisdom. I plead to be able to love your creation more fully, Lord so I can love you more fully. A life of prayer, yes but a life of service, Lord. Blood on my hands, Lord. My son, Your son, my brother hanging on hanging on the cross, Lord. We hung you in our guilt and in our sin on a cross, afraid to stand up against the elite. But how hard it is to stand up against those who have the land, the money, the guns. Oh Lord, I cry out to you. My God. Is it truly your plan to let us destroy your beautiful, self-sustaining creation. Please, Lord, save us- save your creation. I can no longer continue to live without knowing that you will come and give us a new creation. Oh Lord, children living and dying in poverty. Lord, please.*

September 16, 2005- *The Lord has truly made this day as to rejoice and be glad!*

Alleluia! Thank you, Lord for opening my heart today. What a beautiful experience to feel your love- to have conversations about community and love with so many beautiful people. Truly you are the tree of life that sustains us.

Violence.

What be it?

Am I violent?

I am violent.

Am I the problem?

I am the problem

I must work on myself.

Can I practice peace?

I can practice peace.

December 23, 2005- *Oh the drama existence- because even in the darkest despair, the darkest night, there is room to dance and sing and love.*

March 5, 2006- *I sat in a train yard somewhere in Alabama or maybe Louisiana. I listened to a Johnny Cash rendition of The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down. I watched as a beautiful old woman with a bun walked down the aisle with her black traveling suit on. I think about the train heyday and what it must have been like. I recall my grandfather's stories about greyhound buses at sketchy gas stations and hopping freight trains in California. I thought about an article in the paper about Greyhound cuts. They cut out all the small town stops where little old ladies would get on to visit their children and grandchildren in larger towns and cities. And they would be more isolated now. The next day I saw a billboard advertising faster non stop Greyhound service with all these towns grandmother would have gotten on to visit family blurred out and I started to cry.*

“Tickets, Tickets,” the conductor cried. I looked up to find a black woman in a conductor’s uniform, her perfume was sweet. I have never seen a woman conductor before.

March 7, 2006- *Last night, I went back to Slidell with Julian . We sang songs by the campfire including “For What It’s Worth” ...This morning Julian, Dan, Alec, and I picked up Grace up in Algiers- Julian and I had dropped her off at Delgado Community College. She told a story of how Habitat for Humanity started. Clarence Jordan who had an integrated farm influenced the founder of Habitat for Humanity who asked why he wasn’t building houses other places. He asked why she wasn’t.*

We are now standing outside St. Mary’s of the Angels School with a zoo of college students...We cleaned bathrooms, picked up trash, and started peeling lead paint off the walls of a first floor conference room.

March 18, 2006- *May all who suffer in this world be comforted by the Almighty, healed from their sicknesses and strengthened by the most High. May humans become stewards of creation. May we pick up our brothers and sisters and grow in Christos [the anointed usually with oil for healing], learning from Tsunamis and Hurricanes, earthquakes, famine, and droughts that we are one and must treat each other so.*

January 31, 2007- *So ends January 2007. I am angry that women are continually left behind, Lord. I am confused, Lord, and feel alone.*

February 4, 2007- *Argh! There is joy and sadness in my heart all at the same time. How? Why?*

Part Three- 7 Ideas of Peace and Healing moving from Personal to Universal

November 18, 2003- *The Vice City looked like a nightmare not vacationland when I arrived Tuesday night. Police at every corner dressed in full riot gear and massive guns to boot. Fences protecting the public from the capitalism and exploitation inside the Intercontinental...I did not know how to process the scene I had found myself in. I felt like a soldier waiting to go into battle, battle I had been training for months and yet when I reached the rendezvous point, I found myself in panic. Battle fatigue before I even ran out of the trenches to the frontlines.*

Through my journals, I have come to realize that I have been searching for a way to heal and a way toward peace. I can see now that I was/am protesting the dominant paradigm and wanting something more. I wanted an applicable way in which to journey toward peace. I found the journey in myself, in conversation, and through ideas. And on that journey I dis-covered seven ideas of peace and healing that I believe move us from the personal to a universal while acknowledging that peace is not an end point but a process and a journey.

So what can we do in our everyday lives, to bring about and to create a culture of peace? We can start by re-discovering the lost arts of story telling and communication. I have been able to move from anger to inner peace by listening to other's stories and by beginning to find out what my stories are. Through personal experience and the stories coming out of these experiences, I have been able to come up with these seven ideas which I hope to be my contribution to the universal- the one story which we all fit into. I

will use these ideas as points of departure for my personal stories and the stories that I researched to better understand my own stories.

1. Purposely/purposefully seek out positive stories
2. Meet people where they are at
3. Learn to create healing spaces and ceremonies
4. Create quiet, safe, reflective, beautiful, and healing spaces
5. Re-discover the importance of nature...in un-covering inner peace
6. Learn to forgive and be forgiven
7. The power of a hug

1. Purposely/purposefully seek out positive stories:

Stories of gritty, difficult situations where individuals are beginning to transform

Friday November 21, 2003 - *yeah food - oh wait no one in their right minds eats at 4:30 in the morning. MMM warm milk, fake pancakes, and brown stuff they call meat, oh and I almost forget two pieces of stale white bread and a packet of sugar. 9 am I was shackled to Andy - I had to hold my hand up so it wouldn't hurt his broken hand, Rue, and three other girls. I was just happy to be able to talk to some people. Still no phone call and the only lawyers we could have were public defenders because the whole place was secured and no one could come in or out unless they had permission. The bond hearings were held in a chapel!!!! And behind us in the waiting room was a wall of "peace and freedom" or what looked like war and slavery, but I cannot really tell anymore. At the hearing, I was given a chance to plead guilty with no appeal. I chose not to comply with that and was given a \$1000 bail...*

What is philosophy but the love and search of wisdom? For Socrates, it was a chance to dis-cover the self and learn about the self. As I have opened up to delving more deeply into myself, I have been able to purposefully seek out positive stories and in turn go through a transformation process where I can look at situations not as hopeless but as opportunity for building more peace in my life and the lives of others around me. In doing so, I have found my love of wisdom, and I have grown to more deeply know myself so that I can more deeply begin to understand the world around me.

In order to change from a culture of war to a culture of peace, healing our bodies, our spirits, and our relationships, we must first start telling new stories, ones that acknowledge and honor both the hurt and joy in our lives. We can find these stories in alternative newspapers and our own experiences. I will be sharing a few of these stories- from the early past and from today.

Our national news more often than not is saturated with the hurt, the violence that creeps into our lives- the economic, physical, racial, sexual. If we constantly listen to and tell stories that do not celebrate life and communion with ourselves, each other, and nature, then our lives begin to and continually reflect all those negative enemy based images- images where the other, the unknown must be defeated. We begin to blame the poor, the black, the women, the weak, the foreign, *the others*, instead of looking at the deep rooted systematic problems of structural, economic, racial, sexual violence, and so on. When we are constantly exposed to, and I would add, bombarded with these stories we start to believe that these stories are the only way of being and the only pattern of behavior for us to emulate.

However, if we begin to expose ourselves to positive stories, exploring their meaning and then retelling these stories, we begin to change our overall attitude and we are able to cultivate healthier bodies, spirits, and relationships.

Sometimes it seems hopeless when we are surrounded by negative energy and the really bad stuff happening all around us. We only hear stories about the crime, the wars, and all the ways people hurt one another. However, there are stories out there where people are working together and winning against corporations, where they are forgiving themselves and each other, and feeling a whole lot better. The stories are hard to find, but they are out there, we just have to seek them. Sometimes when we find these stories, we may not know what to do with them because they challenge our dominant cultural story. Additionally, we also need to realize when we share these alternative narratives that others may not know what to do with them. In order to tell such stories of social change, we need to help ourselves and others open our hearts to a new social narrative.

While sitting in the dentist's office, I read about a Bronx woman building a Green Belt in the Bronx. She got some grants that enabled her to begin green businesses to provide jobs for her neighbors while at the same time cleaning up the neighborhood. Her story inspired me to continue searching for the stories of everyday people making positive differences in their lives and communities.

In Texas, Susanna Almanza organized PODER (People Organized in Defense of Earth and its Resources). PODER means power in Spanish (Wallace 1994: 187). The community needed to create their own organizational power to combat the pollution coming from gas terminals owned by some of the major oil companies- Mobil, Texaco, Citgo, and Exxon (188). The chemicals in the gas terminals were known to cause cancer

and damage to bone marrow, liver, kidneys, and in some severe cases the brain. Susanna knew that the community needed to come together to stop the companies from using the chemicals so close to their neighborhood and school. The facility was three thousand feet from the school (188)! She decided to organize PODER to bring the neighborhood together to stop the facility from using toxic and deadly chemicals that leached into the soil and air and caused detrimental health problems for her community.

“These people were really sick. We had leukemia and other cancers. We had people with severe respiratory conditions. We had a cluster of seventy-five homes where at least one person in each home had asthma. A lot of people said that now they could relate to why they were ill and their children were ill. We told the people right away that the campaign was going to be a long campaign because we were fighting multibillion-dollar corporations. But they felt like they really wanted to take on the campaign and work. Then we had to decide what the community wanted”, said Susanna about the organization of the campaign (Wallace 1994: 189). PODER worked with the community to figure out what their needs were. The community decided that they were “not just going to be a dumping ground for everything that nobody else wants” (192). Through their joint efforts as a community, they were able to force the oil companies to make changes in how they stored gas.

I chose to include the PODER story as just one example of the many community organizations that come together to address community problems such as pollution and access to education.

2. Meet People where they are at.

I saw a kid fall so all I could think was to try and pick him up. I went down and then my partner saw the cops pull off my helmet so she jumped on top of me to protect my head. Of course for her loyalty, she got whacked a bunch of times in the back with night sticks. The cops pulled us under the police line and cuffed us. Of course, they cuffed us too tight...one officer yelling at his partner to pull the cuffs tighter. This was 9:47 am. The officers escorted me to the edge of the street after yelling at me to get up from the ground. We sat there for a long time, feeling our hands go numb and watching ambulances come in for the injured cops and the water cannons. We saw multiple undercover cops getting ready to venture into the realm of protesting. After sitting in the heat for a good hour, we were frisked (three girls and two guys - one with a severe concussion) and a husky female cop yelled at the girls for having infected ears - your earrings would be bleeding too if they got boxed. After they kindly took my inhaler from my care, I was thrown into a paddy wagon alone. The female cop in the wagon kept asking me questions about why protestors become violent. I told her I couldn't answer that and she said come on, woman to woman, I am not your arresting officer, its okay. I told her again I could not and then she asked me about immigrants. I only explained why we were there and she said she was concerned about the orange plantations in Florida and dropped her interrogation. I then got to listen to her talk to her boyfriend about insurance...

Some walls are built on pride, some walls keep the child inside, some walls are made of fears that love let go will disappear. If there's any hope for love at all, some walls must fall- Mary Ann Kennedy

You take people as far as they will go, not as far as you would like them to go- Jeannette Rankin

Knowing the self can help us to know the other. If we are able to meet the other knowing full well what our own needs are and who we are, we cannot help but approach the other with love because in actuality the other is just another self wanting to be loved, and accepted by the other. But we have to practice seeing the other as another self with needs just as we have (Rosenberg 2005: 113). Why would anyone want to change if they feel forced into the change that they do not choose?

How many problems could be solved, I wonder, if we all met people where they were at? If I approached someone with anger in my heart and negative words on my tongue, what walls will the other put up? I can tell you they will probably also have anger in their heart and a few choice words for me as well. When I approach a problem with aggression instead of a heart of peace, why would anyone want to stop what they were doing to make sure my needs are met? Instead, they are trying to get their needs met as well (Rosenberg 2005: 96). But what if I approached them with love in my heart and a quiet tongue, where I listen to and share in their story? What are their needs, how can I learn from them, and at the same time help them along towards right living and beauty?

When I meet people where they are at and quiet my ego, the walls begin to crash down and sometimes I am even invited in the front door, because I am ready to meet them. Those walls break down because I do not see and interact with the other as enemy/other; I see and interact with the other as another human being. I know though that it takes practice to be able to see the enemy as another self, but it is all part of the transformative process of being.

While returning from Oregon a few summers ago, I picked up a Wall Street Journal that someone had left behind in the airport. One article really caught my attention

because it featured the Sierra Club collaborating with Nebraskan pig farmers. Here a stereotypical granola eating, tie dyed, dreadlocked, Birkenstock radical environmentalist was invited to work with traditionally conservative pig farmers. She began to build relationships with these farmers instead of pushing her agenda on them. They were also able to connect with her because this particular *radical environmentalist* grew up in Nebraska and had knowledge of the pig farming culture, thus the pig farmers were more receptive to implementing changes on their farm to promote sustainability and less chemical input because they had someone who was familiar with their culture and was not pressuring them to make these changes. The pig farmers soon discovered that they could turn a larger profit by shifting their farming practices while at the same time doing something to improve their ecosystem. The Sierra Club and the pig farmers cultivated a working relationship because each party met the other where they were at and moved beyond seeing each other as “the enemy.”

The typical tie-dyed Birkenstock hippie is not the only one discovering that the other has something to bring to the table. Jack Turnell, a rancher in Wyoming, began changing his ranching practices and actually started bringing in more profits. He then used his profits to educate other ranchers about sustainable ranching practices, and as well as to help protect and heal the land. The transformation process was initiated when he noticed there were black ferrets on his land. He panicked because he feared that the government and all the hippies would force him to make changes to protect the ferret and he would lose his profitable cattle ranching business. He, however, decided that he needed to do more research on sustainability if he was going to be forced to make

changes to protect the ferrets. He not only discovered that he could benefit from making the changes, he also saw in the tie-dyed hippie somebody like him.

“The ferrets forced me to tolerate people who I’d traditionally been an adversary of,” says Turnell. “I found out, by God, they were people, and they were interested in doing something good.” (Wallace 1994: 25) When he started turning over a profit from the changes he made, he started talking to other ranchers about his discoveries. He realized that he needed to start taking care of his land in order to grow healthier cattle. He wanted to communicate this to other ranchers so they knew how important it was to take care of the land in order to sustain the land and their businesses. Walls between former enemies came down as they worked to hear each other and solve a common problem.

Recently, I saw the film *Accepted*. It was a typical collegiate film along the lines of *Animal House* and *PCU* where students liberate themselves from the strongholds of the powers that be, get in trouble, go before a magistrate of sorts, and win. In the film, several graduating high school seniors are all rejected from college. In order to please their parents, they create a fake school- complete with website, acceptance letters, Dean of Students (someone’s drunken uncle) and a bank account. Other college rejects get accepted to the school by a computer glitch and pretty soon the students are creating their own curriculum. However, the Dean of the college across the town finds out about the students’ school and works to get the authorities to shut it down. The students were forethinking enough to apply for accreditation. When the students go before the State Board of Education their leader attempts to convince the board that the school deserves accreditation. He knows that his school does not have all the bells and whistles that sanctioned schools have, but he asks the board to think of their own dreams when they

were younger. The board finally rules in favor of the students. Before the ruling, the head of the board advises the student leader that he should not be so quick to judge those who are different from himself; they might just agree with him. As the head of the board leaves, he tells the student that he had always wanted to play the trumpet.

With a greater understanding of the other, we can affect more change than if we just went ahead and tried to force our values on others. When we invite the “other” to join us, they will have a sense of ownership in the change and will feel a part of it. If they choose not to come, possibly we can meet them where they are at and work to create a positive experience with us. Others have met us where we have been at, and we have changed because of those experiences. We must develop an understanding that the people we are working with or disagreeing with are living, breathing beings with values and worth just like ourselves.

3. We can learn to create healing ceremonies, in the moment- especially in difficult moments.

We are meeting at 8 in that upstairs room where all the statues of Mary are stored... I had always wanted to be a pirate. I mean what kid doesn't want to sail the high seas, running amok, searching for buried treasure, and watching “to see the merchant captain crying, when they see the black flag flying” (Rovics). And now I was finally going to be an initiated Pirate. We all sat around a circle in that room filled with Mary Statues.

The statues had been all over Saint Mary's of the Angels School in the upper ninth ward of New Orleans. They must have been moved into one room, when all the flooding occurred in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. When the flood waters rose, over 250 people sought refuge in St Mary's. They spent over a week in the school without running water and food until the flood waters receded. They wrote their stories on the

classroom chalkboards paying tribute to those who had perished during the storm and voicing their frustrations around the government's response. In the following months, the school became victim to drug dealers and the like. And when I found myself there the following March, the school had just been cleaned up.

So in that room with all the Mary statues, we gathered to join the class of pirates working to bring the merchant class to an end and build a better community for all. There was no electricity in the building and water had to be filtered so we lit candles and sang pirate songs; the only thing missing was flood rum. I don't think anyone knew any actual pirate songs, so there were just a bunch of grunts and arghs and cheers to drink more rum. After our singing, D- began rolling tobacco. One can not have a "real ceremony" without tobacco. One of the participants made a speech about what it means to be a Pirate and such, some more grunts. Then around the circle we named each person (Scurvy, Ginger, Whiskey, Calamity, etc). When it came my turn, the group chose Doc and threw tobacco at me, the traditional prayer medicine. I was proud of my new Pirate Name. We said our last grunts and went into the spring night air.

Harmony and Healing

J. MacAloon of the Institute for the Study of Human Issues uses the term cultural performance in defining public ritual, writing that cultural performances "are more than entertainment, more than didactic or persuasive formulations, and more than cathartic indulgences. They are occasions in which as a culture or society we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others" (1984: 1). Ceremonies can be used for both the status quo as well as for social change, an

idea which I will return to later on in the text. Unfortunately, Westerners sometimes have a hard time expressing themselves in ceremony while Native Americans use ceremonies as a way of expressing their individual and collective identities, helping them back into balance (4).

I firmly believe we need more spectacles and festivals in our everyday lives. They serve the purpose of getting us together, returning us back to balance, and besides, they are fun. They might become profane if they were everyday, but just maybe, that it is something we need in our production-driven society. In Cholula, Mexico, they have over 400 festivals a year! The dream of a “holiday everyday” seems hard to believe in our Western culture that promotes production over celebration (Pieper 3). But just maybe, there is space for the everyday ritual of celebration. Mr. Rogers promoted this everyday celebration and ritual by creating a calming space for children to learn about their feelings, each other, and the everyday worker. I believe we must follow suit.

Now that I have begun to briefly outline a theory of celebration and ceremony to bring about healing in our lives and communities, we can begin to understand ceremony. We can come to understand ceremony as a way to reintegrate us into community...into an understanding of the deep inter-connectedness of all beings. But first, we must seek out ceremonies and even create new ones.

All My Relations

The purpose of ceremony is to integrate- to fuse the individual with his or her fellows, the community of people with that of other kingdoms, and this larger communal group with the worlds beyond this one- Paula Bum Allen (Shirch 2005: 148)

It is a prayer of oneness and harmony with all forms of life: other people, animals, birds, insects, trees and plants, and even rocks. It reminds us that we are connected to these other aspects of Creation that we share a common kinship in the Hoop of Life- *Mitakuye Oyasin* is Lakota Sioux for "All My Relations."

Ritual and Ceremony can be used in a way that promotes unity and balance. Black Elk saw use of ceremony as a way to build intentional relationships with other parts of creation (Shirch 2005: 149). Rituals can create space to visualize a different and healthier way of being and knowing in the world (150). It is up to us to discover when ritual and ceremony can help us to heal broken bodies and relationships.

Linda Hogan, an elder, environmentalist, and grandmother, finds herself out of balance and ill. She grew up on a reservation and understands this illness to be an imbalance- between herself and her relations- other people or Mother Nature herself. In order to return to balance, she seeks the guidance of a medicine man in a sweat lodge ritual.

For many Native Americans, the idea of All My Relations always surrounds them. All beings are interconnected and deserve our respect (Trout 1998: 140). When we have disrespected these beings, we find ourselves out of balance and as a result we often become sick. For the Navajo this is represented by the *hozho* or “Walking in Beauty”- a worldview in which everything in life is connected and influences everything else (Alvord 14). Dis-ease is said to come from this imbalance. We live in a world where nature is disrespected and our relations are strained by war and unresolved conflict. It is no wonder there is so much depression and dis-ease. Until we realize that all is connected, we can not truly begin our healing (3). Hogan realized that she had disrupted this balance and needed to participate in a ceremony to move back to the balance between herself and her relations.

She goes to the medicine man and gives him tobacco. They sit and talk at his table. She tells him what is wrong (Trout 1998: 141). Hogan writes, “It is story, really,

that finds its way into language, and story is at the very crux of healing, at the heart of every ceremony and ritual in older America. The ceremony itself includes not just our own prayers and stories of what brought us to it, but also includes the unspoken records of history, the mythic past, and all the other lives connected to our families, nations, and other creatures” (141). If you recall, I discussed the idea that the central story includes our past, present, and future. Our moments in past, present, and soon to be the future include our interactions with others. Our story is not just our own. Everyday our stories are enriched by those who help us, whether they be those we know or the stranger who points us in the right direction (Sidy 1993: 45). We heal when our story returns to balance with the universal story. The sweat lodge ceremony allows Hogan to return to balance, to express her gratitude for those who have helped her along the way as well as to take a moment to accept the wrongs she has done to others and then to reconcile.

After she tells the medicine man her story, he sends her away with a task to complete before the actual ceremony can begin. She has to take the tobacco and place it into green tobacco ties which are known as prayer ties (Trout 1998: 141). While traveling in Montana, I saw prayer ties in trees everywhere and was warned not to touch them. She then gathers wood and food for the ceremony. She brings all this to the medicine man and they travel to where the ceremony will be performed.

In order to begin the healing ceremony, Hogan needs to return to balance, taking time to acknowledge that all are connected. She and the others in the sweat lodge listen to the beats of the drums and “remember that all things are connected” (Trout 1998: 142). The ceremony uses sights, smells, and songs to bring the broken back into the

community. Hogan smells the smoke, sings the songs, and speaks her sorrows, telling her story. After the ceremony, she is able to feel re-connected with all her relations.

Our dis-ease is not just personal, it encompasses all. Fred DuBray of the InterTribal Bison Cooperative and Lakota Tribe advocates for the American Bison and the Indian populations that believe reestablishing healthy buffalo populations on tribal lands will help re-establish hope, pride, and prosperity for Indian people. DuBray states, “We recognize the buffalo as a symbol of our strength and unity, and that as we bring our herds back to health we will also bring our people back to health” (Wallace 1994: 30). He then goes on to discuss general Indian spirituality and what role the Buffalo plays in this spirituality. To DuBray, everything is connected and related. His people have grown “alongside other creatures- buffalo, prairie dogs, eagles” (30). Until those who participated and continue to participate in the colonization of the United States realize their part in the destruction of nature and their relation to nature, we cannot truly heal ourselves.

We are all connected. DuBray sees everyone as relatives- the trees, the buffalo, his brother, his mother, “you have to take care of them. If you don’t have any relatives, then there’s no one to take of you. If you’re related to everything, then everything will take care of you, everybody will take care of you” (Wallace 1994: 31).

Healing Ritual

The Beauty Way, the Night Chant, the Mountain Way are various songs that are supposed to cure different types of disease (Alvord 2000: 6).

Dr. Alvord, the first woman Navajo surgeon, discovered that these songs did indeed help patients when a medicine man sang over one of her patients. She took notes of his changing status, “I glanced at his chart: his heart rate was steady, and his blood

pressure had stabilized. There was a new red flush of circulation in his cheeks” (2000: 7).

Retired Yale Professor and physician Diane Komp also explores the use of ceremony and prayer in her novel, *The Healer’s Heart*. A pastor begins to make visits to AIDS patients in the hospital. The patients begin to get better, no longer needing as many drugs, leaving the hospital earlier, and not having to make as many visits to the hospital as they had before. Ironically, the hospital cancelled the pastor’s program because they had less beds filled. In many studies, doctors are finding out that the use of ceremonies to treat illness actually has a positive effect on patients (Schirch 2005: 163). Ceremonies and rituals connect people to others and give them strength to continue fighting diseases or concentrate on what might be ailing them in the first place.

What exactly do these healing rituals entail and why do they work despite belief to the contrary? Although modern medicine for the most part sees healing ceremonies as “forms of regression to an ignorant, pre-scientific and superstitious past” (Markides 2006: 1), more and more studies are showing that prayer and ritual have positive effects for ailing patients and promotion of healing for these patients (12). Ceremonies help the individual because the ceremonies reintegrate the individual into the group - individuals as social beings within a group. When the sick are isolated in their hospital beds instead of being included in community life, their isolation plays a role in their continued illness.

Emile Durkheim studied suicide in the growing industrialization of the 19th century. He saw that individuals within community have a better chance of weathering suicidal thoughts than if they were separated (4). If individuals are social beings, their illnesses can in part be cured by participating in community instead of being isolated

from the community. Healing ceremonies provide for these needs- a way to return to balance and to include the sick in the community.

I myself have been skeptical about healing ceremonies and their effectiveness. My 2nd grade teacher took me to church with her once while they were having a healing ceremony for the parish. St. Thomas, in Naperville, IL is known as the hippie Catholic Church in the area because they sing upbeat folksy hymns, decorate the church with rainbows and bright flowers, and have healing ceremonies. To be honest, I was sketched out by the ceremony, where people would lay their hands and pray over those who wanted to be healed. But I decided to go with it because I was witnessing something that I had never seen before and I always realize when I pre-judge something or someone, I usually seem to come to enjoy the activity or person.

Later on, I found others who taught me to create healing spaces and provide mental first aide to people in crisis. I decided maybe those hippies at St. Thomas had the right idea after all. Now I look for ceremonies that may provide the right medicine for those in need of healing.

4. Create quiet, reflective, safe, beautiful, and healing spaces/times...time-outs in our all-to-busy lives, places to uncover inner peace.

Saturday November 22, 2003- By then I had already pretty much resigned to being in the TGK [Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center] for awhile. How was I supposed to know if I was ever going to get out, locked in a cell in the corner to rot for all I knew. In the morning, the women arrested at the jail solidarity were given their bond hearings. The guards called everyone out for the hearing. It is sad when you look forward to that two minutes of human contact. Two of the girls arrested were from Maine College Action Network. They had been wondering where I had disappeared to after Thursday morning.

Although it wasn't exactly the place that I wanted to see them, it was good to know that they were alright. Two other kids from MCAN were shot up, two managed to escape and go back home without any harm, and two boys were locked up. A whole lot of groups of twos..... Then since I did not have a hearing, the kids that were out of their cells and not called were yelled at for being out of our cells. Yet they summoned us. Fortunately, sort of, in the afternoon I was given an emergency writ hearing.

Creating a space...

A woman in her kitchen, pouring tea slowly into cups standing in a circle on a round tray...slowly...slowly...listening to the sound of the liquid as the cups filled...a slender stream of fragrant steaming tea...knowing that each woman waiting in the next room in a small circle listened to each one, also as the tea was poured, knowing that the quietness of the pouring and the warmth of the cups held between each pair of hands made a difference, was somehow important...knowing that this moment and this way of living out this moment was significant...that it made a difference in the meaning and experiencing of life.

A difference in the experiencing of life...a woman pouring tea, knowing this difference, trusting the knowing, enabled, by her trust, to pour even more slowly...listening to the tranquilly flowing liquid...listening...listening... (Duerk 1999: 55).

Trying to escape the stressors and structure of everyday is nothing new. 17th and 18th century Japanese intellectuals found their retreat in the form of tea which has grown into a highly structured ceremony. Japan has historically been an isolated nation- by geography and later as part of governmental policy. However, foreign travelers have

always been able to transmit small bits of their culture despite constraints by the Japanese government. Japan received tea by way of China in the late 16th century (Graham 1998: 1). The intellectuals, the literari and artists of Japan sought to imitate the artists and poets of the Chinese Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). They focused on the art of tea drinking which they discovered from contact with Chinese travelers to Japan (3). These intellectuals started a trend which eventually moved from their informal way of emulating Chinese artists to a structured formal ceremony fused with *Chanoyu*, an aesthetic practice of Japan.

Natural space has a central role in Japanese culture. Tea plays into this part of the Japanese culture (Kakuzu Okakua). Tea culture comes out of a certain respect for nature and the art of life. Some tea aficionados escape into the quietude of mountain retreats to enjoy nature's splendors while others meet in tea rooms to participate in the tea ceremony. Wherever one chooses to participate in the taking of tea, art and poetry and their relationship to nature are very much a part of the ceremony, with some rooms of tea houses dedicated wholly to art. The tea room transfers the energy from the mundane everyday to conscientious refinement- a balance between the profane and the aesthetic, mixing the practical and the beauty of nature into one ritual. The tea-room creates the calming, healing, sacred space that Mo taught me to create in order for the tea ceremony to occur in a proper aesthetic environment.

When I first started working with patients, I myself was not very patient, I wanted to jump right in there and solve the problem. Mo, a nurse from Montana, took me under her wing and showed me how to create a calming space. The space was not only for the patient but also for the healer. It gave the healer a space in which to be calm and to help

heal another person and invited the patient to participate in her own healing. Tea does just that- it allows space for both the healer and the patient to participate in the healing, slowing one down, so no one jumps right in like I had been tempted to before learning to create healing and calming spaces. After learning from Mo, I have gone on to create these spaces as well as learn more about how to create these spaces, through tea or otherwise.

When Patricia Graham, a Japanese tea ceremony researcher, participated in a tea ceremony, she witnessed a ritual that has gone over three hundred years of perfection and dialogue. Each tea ceremony master makes the ceremony their own (1998: 4). Although each master follows his own art, a code of tea written by Luwuh, a Chinese sage and poet, provides guidelines to what types of porcelain and utensils can be used, how the tea is brewed and when the tea is served and to whom (Kakuzu Okukua). During the ceremony, the special guests are served tea first and then the others serve themselves. At many ceremonies, there are so many people gathered that each guest is given a ticket telling them when and where they will have tea. After the guests had drunk their tea, Patricia found herself whisked away into another room filled with art depicting nature's offerings before the next part of the ceremony began. Only a few receive the esoteric wisdom of the tea master while others move onto other rooms.

The culture of tea in Japan has always had heavy influence from the philosophical schools of China and Japan including Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism which has led to the spread of tea culture and the modern Japanese tea ceremony. The ceremony is infused with ideas from the metaphysical philosophers such as Zhu Xi of the Song Dynasty who saw tea as a way to place humanity into the universe's story (Graham 1998:

66). Intellectuals flocked to the culture of tea, poetry, and art because they were sick of the traditional rigid intellectual environment:

An implicit manifesto of retreat or even dissent from the rat race of politics and bureaucracy, [the tea ceremony] belongs to the dialogue ever present in Chinese life between the official endorsement of order and hierarchy and the individual's will to escape from such constraints to seek a deeper spiritual meaning in the natural world (50).

Throughout the ceremony's three hundred year history, many masters have created their own ceremonies and poets have written extensively on this art of tea. Baisaō (old tea peddler) is known as the first master (Graham 1998: 68). Although, having an intestinal disease in his early 20's could have prevented him from traveling, he nonetheless managed to continue his studies under various philosophers, write poetry, and drink tea:

This place of mine, so poor
I'm often even out of water
But I offer you an elixir
To change your very marrow
You'll find me in the pines
By the Hall of the Thousand Buddhas
Come take a drink, who knows?
You may reach sagehood yourself (50)

Drinking tea was one way for seekers to reach enlightenment or become a wise sage as illustrated in this poem written by the old tea peddler. Other poems tell of the Zen influence in tea culture:

Your life is a shadow
Lived inside a dream
When you know it's unreal
You transcend "self" and other"
...When mind is not involved in matter
You find suchness everywhere.
When each person can grasp
These truths for himself
His mind is pure and clean

Like heaven in an empty void (73)

Tea poetry has pointed out that the participants may find retreat in tea while also continuing to live in the world:

Though I can not free
From the world of corruption
I can prepare tea
With water from a mountain stream
And put my heart to rest- Murase Kōtei (90)

Medicine and tea have always had a successful marriage whether tea was drunk as an elixir or part of a ceremony to bring one back to balance. Kaibara Ekken, a Confucian scholar wrote in 1713 *The Precepts of Healthcare* that sencha (infused tea) had positive effects on the body and aided in digestion (Graham 1998: 74). The Chinese and Japanese see dis-ease and illness in the same light as the Navajo- an imbalance. Taking time for tea, using it as medicine as well as in ceremony, allows the drinker to be brought back into balance, into inner peace.

Yerba Mate

We left Montana at 6 am heading towards Oregon. We were all crammed in a Honda with our luggage and a bunch of medical gear from the Wilderness First Responder Training we had just attended. We followed the path Louis and Clark traveled 200 years before. Of course, we had paved roads and a car, while they had canoes, pack animals and their feet. I wondered what their first reactions were when they saw all the beauty that Mother Nature had created over thousands of years by glaciers, earthquakes, and rivers. I could only look out my window in the back seat to see this beauty. The luggage prevented me from seeing the other passenger in the back seat and the front wind shield, it was like being in my own little compartment.

For twelve hours, we drove passing rail cars, rivers, and mountains. Throughout our trip we passed around a gourd filled with delicious bitter tasting Yerba Mate, a traditional highly caffeinated green tea from Argentina. We drank Mate, had car-top picnics, and spent the hours discussing literature, forest service practices, the state of public education, and the history of the Earth First! movement, amongst other things. The Mate made the trip bare-able and we could even laugh about our compartments in the backseat while enjoying the Idaho Bitterroots, the Washington State wheat fields, and the company of good friends.

“Tiffany, I went to the health food store and asked them where the Mate was at. I made my roommates drink it,” a fellow student confided to me at a recent leadership conference. During the fall semester, a friend and I had shared with this student the delights of Yerba Mate and she was hooked.

For me, tea is one tool I use to plant and grow more peace. I find much satisfaction in knowing that someone has found a pocket of peace in the few moments they take to steep and sip tea. My brother’s skepticism towards my passion for tea changed to passion too one day when he told me he realized that tea had a purpose in his life and calmed him.

Tea again opened up space to talk about conflict and stress when I saw a co-worker’s need for a peaceful space; tea offered him that space for conversation and also gave him a key towards a peaceful moment away from the stressful one he was experiencing. He later said how much he appreciated the cup of tea and how it helped him to become more rational and relaxed in his decision making process. In both my

brother's and co-worker's cases, a conversation about taking time for calmness and stillness in our lives helping our over all being occurred.

When I was younger and still today, my grandparents have provided my cousins, brothers, and me with the simple ritual of tea drinking and conversation. Every year at Christmas, my grandparents would pack us into their Cadillac (apparently the Cadillac is a status symbol for the Silent Generation) and drive down to Chicago's Drake Hotel for their high tea. We would look at all the shop windows and the large Gingerbread City in the Great Hall of the Drake Hotel. Then we'd all sit down to tea, little sandwiches, and cakes. Sometimes my grandmother brings this fun ritual home, and brews tea and makes tea sandwiches, and we all sit down to a lively discussion of politics, life goals, stories, and weather. I did not understand the significance and importance of this ritual in my life until I was invited to take my first sip of Yerba Mate from an "authentic" Argentinean gourd. And from that moment I too was hooked.

5. Rediscover the importance of nature, and her cycles, in uncovering inner peace and returning to balance.

Thank you for your healing and most Holy Power, Lord. Oh to be a student at your feet! Your breath created the sun, the moon, the oceans, mountains, trees, rivers, stars, animals, and man. How dare I ever ask to study your loving ways. I ask because I trust in you alone as my strength, my guidance, and protection, Without, I cannot share what I hold and cherish in the deepest depths of my soul. To ever think for a moment that I do anything for honor and gain without your support is to deny my existence. I exist alone in your most abundant love and for your glory...

There is a tree in paradise. The pilgrims call it "the tree of life" All my troubles, Lord, soon be over- Peter, Paul, and Mary

It's time to sing out, tho the story never ends, let's celebrate, and remember a year in the life of friends. Remember the love...Seasons of Love- Jonathon Larson

Each culture has its own way of telling how and why the seasons change. In addition to marking the changes in seasons, seasonal celebrations have been utilized by humans as a means to heal and recognize the continual changes that each being goes through (Berry 1999: 57). The Ojibway of Michigan have such a story on how the leaves came to change color (Otto 1991: 55). A dog (*Mu-kaw-gee* or Friend of the People) and a trickster (*Nana-boo-shoo*) contemplated the creation of plants. Nana-boo-shoo wondered why all the plants looked the same. He wanted them to be different and beautiful. His friend, the dog, suggested they go to a quiet place in the hills to think about what to do next. The trickster decided he would paint the flowers various colors. However, he was not very careful where he painted and pretty soon many of the trees he created had paint splattered all over them. He noticed his mistake but declared anyway, "It is good. From now on when *Pee-boon* (winter) is getting ready to arrive, the trees and bushes will change color. This will alert the bird and animal brothers of what is to come" (Otto 56). We too can enjoy the change from fall to winter, when we take the time to look at what Mother Earth has given us, four seasons in which to grow and learn.

In the Western World, the New Year begins on January 1st. It was not always this way. Pope Gregory XIII of Bologna changed in 1582 the first of the year from April 1st to January 1st (New Advent). Our current calendar is named after this pope, the Gregorian calendar. We now celebrate April Fools Day, because of this change. For Native Americans, the New Year begins closer to April 1st when new life is in the air. I wonder if Gregory was deliberate in moving the New Year closer to the celebration of Christ's birth in the dead of winter and away from his death and rebirth in spring. One can only

wonder. The Native American New Year begins as the snow melts and flowers break out of the ground (Otto 1991: 57). The Great Spirit brings this rebirth and is praised for this gift. Unlike the Gregorian Calendar which splits the year into 12 months, Native American time is measured by the 13 full moons in the year (Otto 58), the sun marking the days as well. These moons are named after the activities that happen during that time period, so the moon's names vary from region to region (Aveni 2003: 16). Each moon is connected to everyday activities. Furthermore, the sun and moon are relations- Brother Sun and Grandmother Moon are the Native American's, more specifically the Ojibway's, relations and not just objects in the sky. Even when the days grow dreary, Simon Otto keeps faith knowing that Brother Sun will always come out again. In the Judeo-Christian faith, we have a story of the great flood that tells us that the sun will always rise, God promises, "As long as the earth lasts, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 9:22). Although, the majority of western culture has moved away from acknowledging and celebrating the seasons, we still have stories to turn to in order to learn about the seasonal changes from a non-scientific and inspirational perspective.

Native Americans are not the only ones who celebrate the cycles of the moon and the change of seasons. The Jewish calendar today continues to follow the Lunar Cycle, a practice since before the time of Solomon. He tried everything in order to understand existence says the story of Ecclesiastes¹. He had the privilege to do so as the King of the Hebrews. He tried women and drink, labor and study, morning and celebration, only to realize that man knew not what was to come. Through trying and testing all that was

¹ Solomon was not the author of Ecclesiastes. The author paid tribute to King Solomon by writing down a treatise under his name (NAB 734).

available to him, he came to the conclusion there is a time and place for everything. Everything and being has its season and its purpose. Mother Earth spreads seeds in the fall, rests in the winter, allows for rebirth in the spring, and harvests her bounty in the late summer and early fall. Each season has reason for celebration. Solomon's culture based its calendar on the moon (which is still kept). Each cycle of the moon had its celebrations and each season had its own celebration. Celebrations centered on planting, harvests, forgiveness, thanksgiving. What celebrations can we find today that celebrate planting and harvesting, forgiveness and thanksgiving? How can we use celebration and ritual in our everyday lives, while remembering the words of Solomon and the song of Pete Seeger?

To everything (turn, turn, turn)
 There is a season (turn, turn, turn)
 And a time for every purpose, under heaven
 A time to be born, a time to die
 A time to kill, a time to heal
 A time to laugh, a time to weep

As the song "Turn, Turn, Turn" expresses, there is a time for every season. The earth goes through changes and the sun gives off various amounts of light during different seasons, thus offering us a natural way to find balance and harmony.

I never really paid much attention to the sun's activity. I remember in elementary school making some contraption to see a solar eclipse and coming home from school early so I could watch the eclipse from the backyard. I do not remember seeing the eclipse. Maybe I made the tin foil box wrong, but I waited and waited and never saw the eclipse. I believe it was almost a full eclipse too! After that failed experiment with a cardboard box and tin foil, I never gave much thought to the sun for a long time. It was not until I went out to Montana with a friend did I even really pay attention to or

acknowledge the sun's cycle. It was the Summer Solstice and we stood in a circle passing around some sage to waft around our bodies to cleanse them and to give thanks to the buffalo that still survive near Yellowstone.

For thousands of years, humans have used the sun to tell time, saw it as a god, and had celebrations centered on the sun. Today we do not find even the time to celebrate much of anything. Whole structures were built for the sun and served as a meeting place for people. For example, Stonehenge “was a multipurpose work of architecture that brought semi nomadic people together at the right time to conduct religious rites, to see the sky gods in their places, to convene a market, to tell stories, to socialize” (Aveni 2003: 95). The Summer Solstice was a time for people to acknowledge that the sun had reached its northern standstill (94) and a time to celebrate the feminine in the form of human and crop fertility (99). The solstice was also celebrated in China as a time when the feminine was taking over from the masculine. The solstice focused “on the interchange of yin-yang forces, which feistily contend with one another at this critical time of year. They say that now the elements that make up life shift and move. And we must respond by desisting all human activity to await the return of the ethers to a more settled state” (96). For the Chinese it was the key to finding a balance, and thus, inner peace.

6. Learn to Forgive and be Forgiven

April 28, 2006- For October break, I had a choice to go either to the J.E.D. Collective Garlic Fest in Greene, Maine or a Catholic Religious Retreat in Connecticut. I love garlic, but I decided to visit an elementary school friend at Yale and go on the retreat. I needed to get away from dear ole' Maine after having to respond to a heroine overdose. I

was upset not that the person had almost died, but that this minority student was kicked out of the University for the offense. My heart ached. I needed a space to heal and celebrate. During the retreat, we did an exercise surrounding The Good Samaritan which focused on our own healing (Luke 10:26-37). And at the end of the retreat, each of the participants took a travel rock out of a bag. I took out a rock engraved with the word Joy. At the time, I wanted something cool like Justice or Freedom and I got Joy instead. Since then I have found Joy in so many things and I use the prayer book I received from the retreat to celebrate during the many holy seasons of the Church. It gets me through the day.

Thanksgiving Day

*'Neath these tall green trees we stand asking blessings from Thy hand.
Thanks we give to Thee above for our health and strength and love- A Grace*

Creating space for gratitude, thanksgiving, and mutuality

An Immigrant's Story

Hopped on a merchant marine ship after World War II, headed to New York from Italy- worked in Chicago running cocaine for horse races, got caught, jumped off the boat, swam to shore, went back to Chicago, only to move to Boston, helped other immigrants.

Opened up a restaurant, fed homeless people- gave them work, a drink, food, and ten bucks would search for them if they did not show up for work. Helping your community succeed- jobs, a place to stay, clothing, dignity, taking care of community life more enjoyable than only looking out for yourself- excerpt from story shared around the

Thanksgiving table

Our story begins in a time of celebration, a time to lift up thanks for the bounty and love in our lives. And yet this day brings more stress than joy. Instead of kindness, we see fights in the grocery store.

School children listen to stories about the First Thanksgiving, about how the Indians and the Pilgrims came together to give thanks to Thee Above. Then they grow a little older and find out that it is a myth chalked full of lies. Well, what is wrong with the myth, where lion and lamb lie down together in pastures of green (Isaiah 11:6)? A story where Indians and Pilgrims sit down to share in the earth's bountiful harvest may not be true, but it may be the story that needs to be enacted in a world where Sunni and Shiite, Catholic and Protestant, man and woman, black and white, poor and rich do not come together to lift up thanks (King, Jr.). We need that story; how can we tell it while acknowledging and seeking to remedy the past wrongs?

As I sit here writing, I am surrounded by friends preparing for the Thanksgiving feast that is not so far (by car) from the first Thanksgiving experienced by Europeans in the *New World*. I think to myself, yes, the Thanksgiving once again needs to be celebrated without Black Friday [day after Thanksgiving that starts the holiday shopping season], without the fights in the grocery store, without all the hoopla, just friends, family, and strangers lifting up thanks, underneath the green trees, sharing the earth's most bountiful before we move into the tradition of thanksgiving.

Before Europeans landed on the Eastern United States soil, the Iroquois celebrated a Thanksgiving of their own. Thanksgiving allowed the Iroquois Federation a chance to show their gratitude to the Creator Spirit and Creation and return back to balance. When the Puritans came, they brought with them their religious fervor and

thanksgiving celebrations of their own. They celebrated Thanksgiving because they had survived the winter and had bounty at the end of the harvest season. Unfortunately, they mostly ignored the celebrations that were already in place for Thanksgiving, paying lip-service at most and attempting to destroy the life-ways in the New World at least.

As a white woman and academic, I must acknowledge that it is not up to me to define the story of the Native American experience. I can listen to it and respect that experience. In a way, I am afraid to even go there, fearing that I will generalize the Native American experience, romanticize it, and trivialize it. However, if I do not go there, looking at my own racism and my own part in continual colonization, I will only continue to be part of the problem. First, I must be conscious of my part in colonization, accepting my fault and responsibility and moving on from there. Only then can I begin to discover my own Thanksgiving celebrations. I will attempt to follow the lead of Deganawida, the organizer of the Iroquois League, who wanted to help restore the wrongdoers (i.e. colonizers) to balance, “healing wrongdoers, not defeating them” (Welch 2004: 35). Here we have Indian leaders accepting the multiple stories of cultures, while the European conquerors only wanted one story- their story, and they used violence to spread their story.

Can I as a white individual, and whites as a race, ask for forgiveness and start telling a new story which is in actuality old- a story where different cultures can live together? Maybe it is a pipedream but then again, maybe it can be reality, when we take time to acknowledge the *other's* place in our lives. The “Two Row Wampum” belt story is just that story that shows how two cultures can be in harmony:

These two rows will symbolize two paths, traveling down the same river together. One, a birch bark canoe, will be for the Indian People, their laws,

their customs and their ways, the other, a ship, will be for the white people and their laws, their customs, and their ways. We shall travel the river together; side by side, but in our own boat, neither of us will make compulsory law or interfere in the internal affairs of the other. Neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel (Welch 2004: 35-36).

Kathryn Shanely, a professor of Native American studies, asks non-Indian peoples to stop the practice of “selectively tak[ing] elements from Native Cultures but ignoring the specificities of history and language.” She proposes that non-Indian and Indian academics alike learn about Native histories and insights and be what Subcomandante suggests- a voice for the voiceless, “to offer to be an audience and then amplify those voices barely heard, or not heard at all without a committed audience” (Welch 2004: 38). Academics and non-Indians can also re-discover non-dominant history, stories, and celebrations at the same time. We can find a collective way of knowing where there is a both/and instead of either/or based “on the wisdom and history of all Americans, learning from the complex interactions of our mistakes, our atrocities, and our noble ideas” (41) Until we can tell different stories we cannot as Vine Deloria, Jr- the modern critic of anthropology suggests, find the “forces of reconciliation and reparations” that “continually present us with the opportunity to get involved in the creation of a society more in tune with humans needs and highly compatible with the best of Indian and non-Indian beliefs and practices”(33).

I decided that I could get rid of my fear of generalizing Indians as well as acknowledging the pain caused by a long history of physical and cultural genocide in this country, by learning about these stories and re-discovering stories of celebration in my own culture. I can still recognize Thanksgiving as a National Day of Mourning as well as

a time to express my thanks for all the good in the world, working toward spreading more of that good.

Many agricultural societies have harvest festivals where they celebrate the change in seasons- from China to South America. Celebrations surrounding the seasons and life cycles are cultural universals (Aveni 2003: 139) Many world harvest celebrations occur in August, though the American Thanksgiving falls at the end of the harvest season, suggesting a prayer of thanksgiving for the bounty and hope that it last through the winter (140). Although we still celebrate Thanksgiving at the end of the harvest season, our society has moved away from an agrarian way of living where the celebrations were rooted in the agricultural cycle. Our early forefathers warned us that we should remain an agrarian state rather than an industrialized state even if they did not support a national Thanksgiving (i.e. Thomas Jefferson) (137). Much can be said for that today as we have continued to industrialize. For the majority of American citizens we have lost that connection to the land, getting our food from the grocer's freezer. We have for the first time in history, even begun to import grains from abroad. Am I suggesting that we return to an agrarian society, where Thanksgiving is connected with the agricultural cycle? No, I am acknowledging Thanksgiving's roots and looking at stories that make connections between cultures and cultures' connections to the land.

Thanksgiving is not only a chance to acknowledge Mother Nature's role in our existence, it is also a chance to re-ignite relationships and promote peace. Historically, it has been a chance to return to a balance with nature and to spread peace. The Native Americans that the Puritans met in Massachusetts were the Wampanoag, part of the Penacook Federation (Aveni 2003: 142). In Algonquin, Penacook means "Children of the

Pine Tree” (Sidis 2007). Traditionally, the pine tree was a tree of peace which was also used as a tea and for salves for healing. Although the Wampanoag were treated unfairly and their land stolen, the idea of peace and Thanksgiving has survived both in literature and practice. Now we have a chance to honor the tradition of Thanksgiving by seeking forgiveness for the wrongs of the past, looking at Thanksgiving’s past purpose and giving our thanks for the good in our lives, once again working to regain balance and inner peace.

When George Washington was President, he proclaimed that Thursday, November 16, 1789 would be a day of Thanksgiving. He proclaimed that the people would “meet together and reorder sincere and hearty thanks to the great Rulers of nations for the manifold and signal mercies which distinguish our lot as a nation: particularly for the possession of constitutions of governments which united and, by their union, establish liberty with order” (Aveni 2003: 143). The celebration remained a New England holiday with few references by writers and poets:

This is Thanksgiving Day - a good old festival; and my wife and I have kept it with our hearts, and besides home made good cheer upon our turkey, and pudding, and custards, although none sat at our board but our two selves. There was a new and livelier sense, I think, that we have at last found a home, and that a new family has been gathered since the last Thanksgiving Day- Nathaniel Hawthorne November 24, 1842 (143)

Come home to Thanksgiving! Dear Children, come home!
From Northland and the South, from West and the East,
Where'er ye are resting, where'er ye roam,
Come back to this sacred and annual feast
- Horace Greeley 1846 (Etzioni 2004 204)

As the New Englanders moved westward, the holiday spread to other parts of the country becoming more of a national holiday. In Oregon, Thanksgiving became a public holiday

in 1859, “a day to be kept for PUBLIC THANKSGIVING, to be observed throughout the state in such a manner as the good people thereof may deem appropriate” (206).

By the time of the American Civil War, Thanksgiving was a national holiday. Sarah Josephine Buell Hale, owner of the Ladies Magazine and Literary Gazette (a predecessor to Seventeen, Ladies Home Journal, Redbook) wrote many editorials dealing with holidays writing that “there is a deep moral influence in the periodical season of rejoicing in which whole communities participate. They bring out...the best sympathies in our natures” (Aveni 2003: 144). She also wrote political editorials on Thanksgiving because she saw Thanksgiving as an opportunity to celebrate peace. She wrote in an editorial in 1861 asking that the grays and blues “lay down their arms at least for that day [Thanksgiving Day] (144). In 1863, she went to Washington, D.C. for audience with President Lincoln to ask for a National Day of Thanksgiving during the bloody civil war and always. He wrote a proclamation upon her request:

And I recommend to them, that while offering up the ascription due to Him for such singular deliverance and blessings, they do so with humble penitence...commend to His tender care those who have become widows, orphans, or mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, and Union (145).

Discovery of an Applicable and Real Forgiveness

In *Peace and Change*, Elise Boulding writes a history of forgiveness in the United States. She takes her reader through the colonial era to today, focusing on communities that used forgiveness as a way to solve conflict. The stories are not just in the past, but are relevant today. She points out that we still need forgiveness in our lives to solve our societal and personal problems and we need to create a space for it:

Forgiveness needs space...that space makes it possible to see the “other” as a fellow human being, and to begin to feel the stirrings of the basic human urge to bond with others, which is so essential to our survival as a species. The stirrings of the bonding urge make possible a slow, difficult process of moving to mutual forgiveness. As has certainly been said, we cannot forgive others without forgiving ourselves (2003: 453).

I have always been aware of the concept of forgiveness as a religious idea. But I was not really ready for its application. I had all this pent up anger that I did not want to let go of. I wanted to keep it, like somehow if I let go of the anger, I would not be motivated to effect positive change. Slowly, however, I discovered that I needed to let go of the anger and learn to forgive myself and others. I signed up for an online class on forgiveness just as I was discovering the need for forgiveness in my life. I just needed to the tools. Here are some of my reflections on what I learned from the class:

What did I want to get out of it, “If I am to live in the here and now, working for a community of peace and justice among humans and the earth, then I need to learn to forgive the state, the rapists, and all those who breach our trust, because without love and forgiveness we won't stop any wars. How far do we go in forgiving someone? Are we just to work on ourselves when there is so much suffering? What tools do we have and what do we need to learn in order to actively forgive everyday? How do I forgive myself? Why is forgiveness so important?

When I work on the improvement of myself, I realize that I am not perfect and that I cannot hold others to such a high standard that I cannot obtain either. In addition, without forgiveness, we build walls that cannot be torn down.

I have learned to take time to celebrate in my otherwise hectic life. Even though, I know that there is so much wrong in the world, I learn to let go of the negativity and accept the positive into my life. So often now, I find that things are changing because I see the sunny side of life rather than all the terrible things that exist in the world. It enables me to continue working for peace as I learn to forgive others and myself for our humanity. It has been a great journey and celebration.

By taking this class, I have realized how far I have come in my personal growth as well as how much farther I have to go. The class has helped me work through my own self-righteousness and keep my pride in check.

Throughout the semester, I have found that I have been trying to understand people more and more. I am also realizing more and more the importance of not writing someone off when they are on *the wrong side* of the fence (it maybe me who is on the wrong side), it's better to give them hugs and flowers instead of aggression that I would love to hand them

[This class] is only the commencement of my journey exploring my faith and forgiveness. In the future, I hope to share and listen to more stories, more fully participate in ritual, and explore how I as a Catholic [and an individual] can better integrate forgiveness into my everyday life.

7. The Power of a hug



April 15, 2004- *I just want to be hugged and told that everything is all right. But it's not alright. People dying, children starving. Blood on our hands and food in our stomachs- why do we do what we do? And then try to escape into our music and film. When have humans had their glory day? Never. We kill, we maim, we hurt. And for what, death and profit? Why? Why? Why? I demand an answer and nobody knows...I decided to take a walk to clear my head.*

For a long time, I did not like hugs. I suppose it is because I am Catholic. We shake hands as a sign of peace. I went to a Bible Church and all these people wanted to immediately embrace me in the Lord. I could not believe this, maybe they saw a new soul to catch; I was not sure. I just met these people and they wanted to hug. Needless to say, I

freaked out. Over time, I got used to this idea of hugging and soon began to *embrace* the idea.

A few hugs remain memorable to me. My grandmother and I were waiting on the Washington Street Platform Blue Line, when a homeless man came up to me and asked me for hug. I suppose I should have thought about my own personal safety and panicked- he could have had a knife and want to stab me. But I only thought that he might need a hug.

February 15, 2003 - The United States still had not begun dropping “Bombs over Baghdad” when over 15 million people world wide took to the streets and said “Hell No, You Won’t Go.” A friend and I decided to take a bus with the local Mosque down to Devon in Chicago. Two women came up to me and asked me for a hug and thanked me so much for going with them. As a white girl, I never really thought about how my personal safety could be endangered by the state. Would *they* come knocking on my door and take my 16 year-old son? I could go out and protest without fear of retaliation. A protest that was to be held in a Palestinian neighborhood on the Southside of Chicago had to be cancelled when threats from the Chicago Police came. All the while men and boys were being sent back to their country of origin, most of the time without warning. So this hug between Muslim women and a Catholic woman meant something more than just an embrace between women, it was across cultural lines between strangers working to stop the same war.

While I was going relief work in the upper ninth ward of New Orleans, a woman named E- walked into St. Mary’s of the Angels, where our base was set up. She wanted to know how she could help out, maybe at the clinic Common Ground had first set up in

Algiers only days after the Hurricane hit. While she waited around to speak to one of the volunteer coordinators, she began to tell me her story, the day she became a hero quite by accident. In the end, we were both in tears and hugged.

Last spring, some high school students decided to come to the University to give out free hugs. They held signs with the words “Free Hugs Today” in black marker. I sat on a bench near the Union, smiling and quietly observing their work. Not only did they provide the needed spectacle that is so often missing from my college experience, they were sending a powerful message even though passer bys might not have noticed as they walked by.

Conclusion

I have only scratched the surface in the creation of a story medicine. I have explored some of my own stories of anger and the search for inner peace. In doing so, I hope that I have opened up space for others to explore the self so that we all can participate in a conversation of moving from the personal towards the universal- one story made up of many individuals’ stories.

But how do we go about making the personal relevant in the universal? I suggest that we first start looking at ways in which to tell stories. Today we have at our fingertips a digital network in which to share stories- the internet. We have open- source knowledge (i.e. Wikipedia) which is re-defining what knowledge is and how it is distributed. We also have a network of online independent media centers where the reader is the media as well as blogs for people to tell their stories. The internet provides a space for a contemporary way of sharing narrative - digital interactive narrative. The ancient art of storytelling whether around a fire or dinner table now can be online- where each person

can create their own story and share it - like a Choose Your Own Adventure story- where you or I can make knowledge our own expression - the personal which in turn adds to the collective knowledge by the sharing of our own narratives with others and learning from other narratives. The possibilities are almost endless.

Besides digital interactive narrative, how else can we begin to create Story Medicine applying the seven ideas that I have already suggested as well as dis-covering more ideas:

1. Purposely/purposefully seek out positive stories
2. Meet people where they are at
3. Learn to create healing spaces and ceremonies
4. Create quiet, safe, reflective, beautiful, and healing spaces
5. Re-discover the importance of nature...in un-covering inner peace
6. Learn to forgive and be forgiven
7. The power of a hug

I suggest that we start on a journey to more deeply and intimately know the self by walking in beauty while reconciling with those we have wronged in the past and continue to wrong today, by having tea and talking calmly, and by honoring multiple ways of knowing, meaning, and understanding. We will not get where we are headed for tomorrow but we have started today on the search for the stories of the universe, community, and individual by beginning to know the self as Socrates suggested. Right now we are still at the descriptive, gathering the data, asking the what on the search for the why. In order to get there, where ever there may be, we have to gather stories and figure out what they mean to us by first asking the what.

I know I have a sincere need to find and build community, whatever shape that may take, to celebrate moving away from death to life, to share and listen to stories and through them, to heal broken bodies and relationships including my own. I have come to realize that I need a new story to guide my life. Through the process of introspection called my honors thesis, I have attempted to find that new story to guide my life and have gained a better understanding for myself of what it could mean, in everyday terms, to start actually living from a culture of peace, here and now.

The problems that our planet and my generation face are so pervasive and multifaceted. There is poverty and war in this seemingly unforgiving world. We cannot ignore the very fact that 800 million people go to bed hungry every night. But we can begin to heal these problems by looking at the good in the world, telling those powerful stories, taking time for ourselves and others, and watching these new stories take hold. When we realize all the bad in the world, we also have the opportunity to visualize the world we desire for ourselves, family, friends, and the planet. We need a holistic approach to solve and ultimately to prevent these problems. It is my belief that we need a new overarching story, a new planetary myth of healing- a story medicine.

What stories are we currently telling: the empire's story of profit and destruction of the everyday story of people working in their communities as prophets, and healers, workers and teachers? Without a creative heart and a new planetary story, we will not be able to hear the people already working to outgrow violence and hatred, those going into the darkest most vile places and coming out with stories of brave people continually dreaming and working for a better world. Without agape, there will be no hope for inner and outer (World) peace.

A Selection of Reading

Alvord, Lori Arviso and Elizabeth Cohen Van Pelt. *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear: The first Navajo Woman Surgeon Combines Western Medicine and Traditional Healing.*

I was recently at an international dinner to talk about Sister Supporting Sisters, a support organization for women of color at the University of Maine. How brave to come to a university that is prominently white!? A few of the women got up to tell their stories and read poetry. The keynote speaker spoke on the need for role models for women, minority women specifically in academics, especially in the sciences. Lori Arviso Alvord is one of those role models that the keynote speaker was talking about. Dr. Alvord not only took a risk by attending Dartmouth for her undergraduate far away from her supporting community, but she decided to continue on to become a medical doctor. In essence, she is both a role model for Navajo women, proving that anything is really possible, with the help of others, but also she is challenging the way the current medical system is working- which focuses most often only on the illness and not the whole person while bring the needed medical support for her community.

Amador, Louisa Greathouse. "Había una vez..." Universidad De Las Américas, Puebla. 6 March 2007.

It was affirming that other women in academics were dealing with story and also dealing with the idea of the tree of life in healing in general, for women in particular. Dr. Amador inspired me and washed away my doubts of the research I was attempting to make of go of. When I told her about my research, she interacted with me as an equal, with something to share with the academic community, encouraging me to finish my work and to share it with her when I was finished. Whenever we try something new, we probably are not the only one, no matter how grave the situation seems.

Barley, Nigel. *The Innocent Anthropologist: Notes from a Mud Hut.*

Nigel Barley helped me to understand that the anthropologist cannot be the lone objective scientist. How can we objectify living, breathing person as ourselves? Although, resources are always scarce for academic research, especially those where humans are involved in the most intimate level, anthropologists need to constantly be challenging themselves to work with human on the human level and not some grandiose "scientific level" because humans are cultural beings that are both being and knowing, not just knowing as science who have it in our current scientific paradigm. Maybe that is why westerners study other "exotic" cultures, secretly maybe they study them to know another system rather than to prove their own system is best. And maybe just maybe they cannot just tell anyone that secret yet because we are not ready to know the other as a valuable cultural being, just like ourselves.

Berry, Thomas. *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future.*

I have been in the long process of letting go of anger and complaining. In fact, just the other day a student leader on campus wanted to start a no complaint week, because she had failed miserably on her Lenten obligations as had I had and she believed also to complain and not do anything about it, is to well just complain. I wanted

something more than negativity and inaction due to anger. One can always do more from love as a saint than from hate as an activist. So how to go about this, how to change? I wanted to change, I was sick of judging those who were different than - the campus Greek, the campus cop, the soldier. Why would anyone want to change and work for peace if I myself could not move from anger to inner peace? So what did I do, I went to my priest to confess that I judged and I was miserable because of it. He told me to take my skateboard, say some Hail Mary's, and sit and ponder in nature. So I went in pondered in nature. I had *The Great Work* in my backpack and started reading on the Stillwater banks 'neath the pine trees. Here was my answer; Berry outlined a system in which to heal relationships with nature, community, and the individual utilizing our own gifts and the university system. Here was a chance to move from anger to inner peace once more.

Diamond, Louise. *The Courage for Peace: Daring to Create Harmony in Ourselves and the World*.

Diamond tells her own story toward inner peace while writing about how she creates spaces for others to heal and to forgive. I started reading her book on the greyhound home. I left it on the bus. At first, I was really mad that I left it on the bus. But then I decided to let it go someone else might pick it up and get something out of it. Then I found the book at a cheap bookstore at Christmastime and bought. All that worrying in South Station was not really needed. Maybe it was though, it allowed me to think about the positive of all events rather than the negative because when we invite the positive into our lives we are more resilient and more positive comes into our lives.

Duerk, Judith. *Circle of Stones: Woman's Journey to Herself*.

We grow, mostly in a circle, never returning to the beginning really, but most definitely not growing linear. Duerk tells the story of women struggling to discover self in a world that expects women to constantly serve others while ever ignoring the inner being. I suppose that Duerk's words are hard to swallow and maybe weird to the untrained eye. She offers up women's stories where they work on their selves first so that others can work on their selves, being so busy working to be better individuals that they have no time to criticize another's growth.

Finkel, Laura. *This is Maine, Baby, Not Berkeley: Vietnam Era Protest at the University of Maine, 1964-1973*.

The other day I saw a professor that I had my freshman year. He walked down the hall and then came back, "So you decided to stay?" Um yes I am right here waiting in the hall, I thought to myself. But he meant me staying at the University of Maine. He said, "You told me that you thought it was a black hole and you were leaving." And I did leave, until I realized that I could make the black hole my own. After all my father always told me that college was a state of mind. So I decided to research the history of the University of Maine, making it my story too. I realized that well Orono is not Chicago and it will never be. But it will be Orono and it has a story as well. Laura Finkel tells the story of the student movement that built participatory democracy on campus in the face of adversary where the few dared to stand up but did not give up on the other- the Greek, the ROTC soldier, the administrator, the Vietnam vet, but provided them with a space to

grow as well. So I still think UMaine is a black hole, but I made it the best black hole I could and stayed.

Graham, Patricia J. *Tea of the Sages: The Art of Sencha*.

I do not really know when I started drinking tea. I remember the first time my dad let me drink coffee. We were on a camping trip with other fathers and daughters and he let me have French vanilla coffee. It was a big deal, because my mom didn't want me drinking the caffeine and becoming addicted. I don't drink coffee much anymore. But tea, I don't very much remember. It just fell into my life and never bothered to leave. I started talking to people about tea, even getting a little upset that those colonists would dump all that good tea in the harbor. Sometimes when I drink tea, I feel sophisticated and intellectual, like part of that ultra cool underground intelligentsia that hides in cafes and converse for hours. Other times I just need a moment to myself and tea gives me an excuse. One has to wait until cools a bit and let the leaves steep. Then you let the aroma into your nose, take the tea, and let it slip down your throat. I had no idea though that there were rituals on how to take tea, until I started the conversation about tea.

Harvey, Ryan. "The Conversation Spreads."

Someone has to speak up. We always wait around for that someone. But what if we were that someone and got the conversation started? We would not longer be dependent on that someone to say what we really wanted to say in our hearts.

Herman, A.L. *Community, Violence, and Peace*. State University of New York Press: Albany, 1999.

Once the discovery of self and the individual was enough to get a man killed-Socrates. We know now that each of us has a unique soul. But during Socrates' time only the collective was recognize as something, the individual was nothing, and did not have its own soul. Today it seems as though the individual has trumped the collective. What we need is a balance between the collective and the individual moving away from violent communities to peaceful communities.

Hollingsworth, Amy. *The Simple Faith of Mister Rogers: Spiritual Insights from the World's Most Beloved Neighbor*. Integrity Publishers: Nashville, 2005.

If I had my way, I would write a book on the revolutionary ideas of Mister Rogers. Who knows maybe I will write that book someday. Mister Rogers's ideas of love and inclusion have allowed me throughout my formative years and still influence me. He always wanted to create an inviting space for children and grownups alike to love and to grow, he held our dignity and integrity by being calm and consistent and creating everyday ritual that provided us with security even when the outside world did not. So to Mister Rogers I take my hat off, if I had one.

Komp, Diane M. *The Healer's Heart*. WaterBrook Press: Colorado Springs, 2006.

Bookstores are almost like sacred temples, but the public library is really more of the sacred temple, where everyone is invited. I found *The Healer's Heart* while meandering the old Northwestern train station. In it a discovered the story of one doctor's dis-covery of healing through prayer and ceremony. The doctor, an unbelieving man,

witnessed his AIDS patients get better when a pastor began visiting them and praying for them. Medicine is not only allopathic but holistic.

Markides, Kyriacos C. *The Sociological Basis of Healing Processes.*

I read Markides' Mountains of Silence finding my inspiration in a nun who hugged trees to let go of energy and gain rejuvenation. I decided to try this out being a social scientist, I had to test these sorts of things, you know. And sure enough it worked! Call me a tree-hugger if you like, but do not dismiss hugging trees as a way to regain energies until you have also tested it. I already was coming to a conscientiousness of holistic healing before reading this text, but it solidified the idea in my head and heart (we are talking about a holistic healing) that their alternative ways of healing and they begin with the spirit. I went and spoke with Professor Markides about his work and my work. He gave me this paper which outlined research on alternative forms of healing, where the spirit dictates the outcome and those who live community and are supported by community heal faster than those in isolation. Most importantly, his work is in the qualitative, the relational, rather than the quantitative, numbers. Last time I checked I was not living in Flatland as a number or a shape and Markides's work in the qualitative, the experiential and personal, rather than the experimental and impersonal serves an important role in academia no matter how much criticism it receives.

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *Speak Peace in a World of Conflict: What You Say Next Will Change your World.*

Rosenburg suggests ways of communicating where needs are expressed. He uses his experience as a mediator and person to illustrate non-violent communication- where weapons are no longer needed if each party recognizes the other is just trying to express their needs. When we learned to communicate our needs clearly and to listen intently to one another's needs, we can build a more peaceful, non-violent way of communicating.

Sidy, Richard V. *Rebellion with Purpose: a Young Adult's Guide to Improvement of Self and Society.*

I was meandering through the Peace Studies library, when I saw the word rebellion. Of course, I had to pick this purple and red book off the shelf and start reading. So I did and found a story about the individual learning to be calm and free with one-self and learning to tell her story. It opens with the story of a lion that always gets killed, until the lion began to tell its own story. We will always be constantly crushed if we do not have a calm center and learn to tell our own story like the lion did.

The New American Bible: The Saint Joseph Edition.

I remember hearing a comparison between the Little Red Book and the Bible, where it is a sign of weakness to constantly refer back to a certain text throughout your life. I constantly refer to the dictionary, I happen to very much like the dictionary. Maybe I am weak? I suppose it is better to be weak and read the Bible and the dictionary than to talk not knowing what words I was using and what their meanings were.

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Upon graduation, Tiffany plans to work at a summer camp as a Health and Wellness Manager and then see where life takes her.