“Like this it stays in your hands”:
Collaboration and Ethnopoetics

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The responsibility that comes with knowledge in an oral tradition is the subject of a talk by Yoeme deer singer Miki Maaso, which we translate and discuss in this essay. How knowledge and responsibility are linked in ethnopoetics is our subject.

Projects that produce American Indian oral traditions as “oral literature”—as texts for ethnopoetic analysis, discussion, and appreciation—have been sponsored most frequently in institutions of “higher education” (colleges and universities) and conducted by individual scholars as a part of their own research agendas. These projects generally have proceeded from conception to publication through four phases: planning, performing/recording, transcribing/translating, and analyzing/writing. Community-based American Indian intellectuals have been most involved in the second phase, as performers, and in the third phase, as transcribers/translators, and most uninvolved in the first, as planners, and the last, as writers.

We understand “collaboration” as a process of working together cooperatively on projects. We recognize that in studies of oral traditions what have been called collaborations are highly variable endeavors. The field worker who buys an hour or two from a narrator may come away saying that he or she collaborated in the recording of an oral tradition. And from one perspective they did. More commonly and in our own usage, collaboration connotes a much more intricate sharing of the work of recording oral traditions as well as an aspiration to make that work less hierarchical than it has been in the past. Judging by our own experience, collaborations, even those that involve the same participants at different times, are never static processes. Goals—such as “equality”—may be invoked, but just what constitutes “equal” participation in a given project is determined not only by the roles and desires of the participants but also by the particular historical context within which they work.

A much more negative connotation of collaboration looms large in
most particular historical contexts concerning American Indians. Collaboration in this sense is well expressed by a definition from the American Heritage Dictionary: “to cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupying one’s country.” Frances Karttunen’s Between Worlds (1994) is a very wide-ranging, careful study of a dozen such collaborative contexts. At the center of each is an individual torn between a desire to cooperate in a joint intellectual effort with someone from the “other side” and the recognition that such cooperation will constantly raise the issue of treason in the native community. Karttunen demonstrates in very specific ways that these “interpreters” throughout the world have acted as “bridges between their own worlds and another, unfamiliar one” (Karttunen 1994:xiv). The span to be bridged has frequently been opened and defined by paired roles: visitor/resident, colonist/native, ally/enemy, administrator/ward, investigator/informant, teacher/student, employer/employee, and so on.

Sorting through the ways in which these pairs are or are not equivalent with each other and with the roles the two of us assume in our own project is too large a subject for us here. What we acknowledge at the outset is a history of differential power relations between Indians and non-Indians in “collaborative” work that we renounce but cannot escape. This is a sense of collaboration we work vigorously not simply to resist but to transform.

In this essay we ask narrowly focused questions in relation to these large issues: what difference does it make when collaboration between community-based American Indian scholars and university-based non-native scholars extends through each of the four stages we have outlined above? What happens when Native Americans are involved as planners and writers, as well as performers and translators? We will address these questions together in this essay. Everything we have written we both have read, considered, and edited. Still, we have maintained our separate experiences and voices here. The original author of each section is identified as FM (Felipe Molina) or LE (Larry Evers). In addition, we use four asterisks as a marker to signal a shift between our voices.

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FM: I have become interested in the many aspects of the deer dance songs since I first worked with Larry Evers on the deer songs back in the 1970s. Since that time I have learned and studied many deer songs. The young boys I have worked with are now adults and some have continued to practice and participate in the village pahkom (ceremonies). It seems as if more and more young folks are interested in the deer songs all the time. I
Luis Maaso, deer dancer, performs to the deer singing of his brother Miki (third from right) in the rama (ceremonial shade structure) at Felipe S. Molina’s home, Yoem Pueblo, Marana, Arizona, December 22, 1987. As he sings, Miki Maaso plays hirukiam, wood raspers held on a half gourd resonator. Two of his sons (first and second from right) also play hirukiam as they accompany Miki. Another son (fourth from the right) plays a water drum, a half gourd floating in a basin of water, as he too joins in the singing. Audience members visible behind the deer dancer are Yaqui men who are learning the arts of Yaqui deer singing and deer dancing. Photograph taken by David Burckhalter and included here with his permission.
continue to teach them if they are willing to learn with their good hearts. The songs say and teach so much. It is really a remarkable way to learn and then teach. As the elders say in their sermons, a Yoeme must learn and then teach to the young the Yoeme truth as well as the elders’ truth. This knowledge will make it easier for a person to go into the spirit world after his or her time is up here on this weeping earth. With all that I had already learned and a great desire to learn still more from the elder deer singers, I came up with an idea to hold a deer singers’ conference. I brought this idea to Larry’s attention. Larry also liked the idea. We dwelt on the idea for days. I even mentioned the singers I would invite to participate in such a conference. We made a list of them. We talked about this conference for many weeks. I imagined the many deer singers sitting in a big circle and talking about certain words and ideas that I wanted to learn more about. I was really excited about the whole thing.

Finally, after talking and thinking about it, we decided that such a conference was possible and that it was a great idea but that we weren’t quite ready for it. Finding the money and organizing it would be a big job. We both had many other things to do. Maybe someday in the future it would be possible, but for now, we said back then, it was a little too much work. But it was definitely something we wanted to do.

Then one day I was casually browsing through some books at the University of Arizona Main Library when Joseph Wilder came by. Joseph is the Director of the Southwest Center at the University of Arizona. His father, Carleton Wilder, wrote a book about the Yaqui deer dance. Joe has had an interest in the Yaqui people for a long time. We greeted one another, and he invited me into his office. After we talked for a while, he asked me what projects Larry and I were doing. “You and Larry are always making things happen,” he said respectfully. Then he told me that he had some funding monies and asked if we wanted to work on a project. I was completely surprised and happy at the same time. Right away I mentioned to him my idea for a deer singers’ conference. Joe was all for it. I thanked him and left his office feeling elated. I couldn’t wait to run over to Larry’s office and tell him the great news.

Larry and I talked over how we could best use the funding to make my conference idea happen. We concluded that we would not try to bring all of the many singers on my first list and talked now about whom we should actually invite. Finally we decided that we would go to Potam and talk with some people there about it before we decided. So we started planning and the project was underway.
**The two of us have worked together on a number of projects during the last fifteen years. Some have resulted in publication: a videotape on the deer dance, *Seyewailo* (1978); books on two song genres, *Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam* (1987) and *Wo’i Bwikam: Coyote Songs* (1990); and a monograph on Yaqui history, “*Hiakim: the Yaqui Homeland*” (1992). Our common goal in these publications has been to reproduce texts that we hope will interest and serve both Yaqui and non-Yaqui audiences.

Felipe Molina has participated actively in all stages of these projects, though I initiated each. In the context of our work, then, the deer singers’ conference was unique because Felipe took a lead role in the collaboration. He had the idea for the deer singers’ conference, secured the funding, and took the lead in both conducting the conference and carrying it through to publication on audiotape and in print.

The conference was held December 21-25, 1987, at Yoem Pueblo, Marana, Arizona. The featured participants, who traveled from the Rio Yaqui area in Sonora to participate, were Luis Maaso, a deer dancer, and his brother Miki Maaso, a deer singer. Three of Miki Maaso’s adult children—Julian, Cresencio, and Ramon—accompanied him in his deer singing. Guillermo Amarillas Flores from Potam served as their *moro*, or manager. About ten young deer singers (their ages ranged from 12-26) from Old Pascua and New Pascua, Yaqui communities in the Tucson area, as well as other residents from Yoem Pueblo, participated. Miki Maaso and his group talked, performed, and worked with interested members of the Yaqui communities almost every hour during the four day visit. Some of these sessions we recorded; some we did not. In one sense the conference could be said to have included all the interactions Miki Maaso and his group had with the Yaqui community from the time they arrived in Yoem Pueblo until they left on Christmas day. I think that is the way Miki Maaso thought of the conference. There were a number of more “bounded” performances. On December 22, Miki Maaso conducted a long afternoon session for a group of the younger Arizona singers. He began with a talk about deer singing and followed with the performance of a number of songs. His sons accompanied him in singing, and his brother, Luis, performed as deer dancer. We invited a number of non-Yaquis to this performance. These were mostly friends who have a long acquaintance with the Yaqui community but also included several acquaintances who happened to be visiting Tucson during the winter holidays. We have transcribed the text that we discuss later in this paper from that performance. The following day, December 23, the conference continued...**
with a closed session. Miki Maaso, Luis Maaso, and the others in their group met all day with Arizona Yaqui singers at the Yoem Pueblo community building. Though many things were discussed during this extended session, we recorded only the talk about the maso me’ewa ceremony, which is a special form of the deer dance sometimes performed on the anniversary of the death of a loved one, and Miki Maaso’s versions of the songs associated with that ceremony. On the following afternoon, December 24, Miki Maaso took it upon himself to call the people of Yoem Pueblo together. He thanked them for hosting him and his group with a lengthy sermon and followed this with deer singing and dancing. By late afternoon, it had begun to snow, an unusual event in the lower Santa Cruz valley. We drove Miki Maaso and his group into Tucson where they had been invited to perform at a ceremony a family was sponsoring there. The group performed throughout the night for a large audience of Yaqui people from the Old Pascua community. At the request of the family sponsoring the ceremony we did not record any of the deer singing at Old Pascua that Christmas Eve and morning. The snow continued to fall during the night, and the deer dancer went out several times to “play” in the snow. About midday on Christmas, Joseph and Margaret Wilder drove an exhausted Miki Maaso and his group back to Sonora.

Thus far, we have published material recorded during the conference in several forms. We duplicated the tape recordings that we made on December 22 and 23 and gave copies to all the Yaqui participants. When we completed transcription and translation of the material recorded on December 22, we had copies spiral-bound and then circulated these for comment to many who were present, as well as to others in the Yaqui community and in the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Arizona. Subsequently, we published a revision of the complete transcription and translation of Miki Maaso’s performance on December 22 as “The Elders’ Truth: A Yaqui Sermon” in the Journal of the Southwest (Maaso et al. 1993). An audiocassette of the performance published there is available from the Southwest Center, University of Arizona. Not to be lost in this litany is the fact that the audiocassette includes the talk by Miki Maaso that we discuss and present later in this essay. Those who would like to listen to the Yaqui we transcribe and translate below should contact the Southwest Center at the University of Arizona for a copy.

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FM: “Ala ini tua Yoem hoara! / This is really a Yoeme home!” Miki said when our van drove into Yoem Pueblo in December, 1987. He was
Miki Maaso, deer singer (first on right), and Luis Maaso, deer dancer (fourth from right), pose with Miki’s sons in front of Felipe S. Molina’s home, Yoem Pueblo, Marana, Arizona, December 22, 1987. Photograph taken by David Burckhalter and included here with his permission.
very happy to arrive. When we parked in our yard, my mother came out to greet us. Usually the elder man of the house gives the formal greeting to visitors. I regretted that, since my grandfather had died, our household lacked an elder man to fill this role. Miki himself gave a formal speech to us at the house, and we all responded politely to his speech and welcomed him and his party in. My mother had prepared supper for them. I sensed that Miki and his sons were comfortable because the Yoeme language was being spoken in our house.

My house is small, but we managed to get everybody in and to find room for them to sleep. It was December and cold, so many were reluctant to go outside. Timothy Cruz, a young man who was staying with me at that time, worked hard to make Miki and the others comfortable. He had a big stereo and played Mexican music. Also, he rented Mexican videos to entertain our guests. We played the video we made of the Yaqui deer dance, Seyewailo, over and over at their request. Luis Maaso is the deer dancer on that videotape, and he and the others seemed to enjoy watching it very much.

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LE: I liked the conference idea when Felipe brought it up, but I was reluctant about it too. About that time I had taken on an administrative job in my department and was finding it more and more difficult to make time. I preferred some of the other project ideas Felipe and I had talked about pursuing, and I pushed in those directions: how about working on another genre of Yaqui verbal art, maybe stories? Or finding someone from another tribal background, say one of the Pueblos, to work with us on a comparative study? Or how about writing a novel together, an idea we had talked about for years? We had already worked together extensively on deer songs, and, for my part, I felt the work with deer songs had gone far enough. I was wary of pushing. Deer singing is a life’s work for Felipe, but not for me. I remember saying that I was ready to work on something “new.” Felipe and I talked through different ideas several times, but each time he returned to the conference. It was what he really wanted to do. I said, fine, but let’s wait awhile on this one. Since my role in our continuing collaboration has usually included proposal writing and fund raising, I recognize that this suggestion was a kind of trump card. What pushed me into action on this project was the meeting between Felipe and Joseph Wilder in the University Library. The excitement and the eagerness have never been more visible to me than when Felipe came over after that
What motivated the conference project for Felipe seems very clear to me. It was an opportunity to learn more about the tradition in which he participates, and through his participation to contribute to its continuance in his community. What motivated my participation was a desire to support Felipe in work he felt was important. What I wanted from the project, my “research agenda,” took shape within the framework Felipe established in initiating the project. To divide and assign motivations this way is too simple, for I am sure that as we have worked together over the years we have each internalized and assimilated the other’s agenda. But the fact remains that if I had been the one doing the initiating I would have tried to start us on another kind of project.

Once Felipe had established the conference as the project, I began to think of it as a setting that might generate a community-based discourse on deer singing and its place in contemporary Yaqui culture, a subject that we had opened in our book *Yaqui Deer Songs* but had not adequately explored. During our planning discussions I tried to foreground this consideration with a number of questions: when and how are deer singers motivated to “explain,” to talk about what they do? What form do these explanations take? How might such explanations be generated during this conference? These questions brought up a list of phrases and ideas that we had discussed and thought about together before. Finding out more about these became a part of our agenda.

The absence of commentary from community-based Native American intellectuals, “real Yaqui thinkers” in Felipe’s phrase, haunts and undermines the burgeoning ethnopoetics movement. A “you perform, we interpret” division of labor is not only pervasive, but is frequently assumed to be inevitable. Moreover, the fact that when community-based American Indians do participate in ethnopoetic projects their contributions are rarely represented on title pages and in copyrights further bedevils the field. The inaugural volume in an ambitious new series on Native American literatures from the Smithsonian Institution, *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*, edited by Brian Swann, is unfortunately exemplary in this regard. The book collects articles on Native American poetics from some twenty-three authors. Not one is a Native American. This is an absence noted by the editor. He quotes Judith Berman on the subject in his introduction: “The meanings and uses of Native American literature can be very different to the Native Americans who make it than to the scholars that study it,” she says. “The question must be raised whether we really want to confine the privilege of explaining native culture to those who have
mastered Western academic discourse” (1992:xix). I join a chorus (that I am sure includes the contributors to the Smithsonian collection) in answering quickly: “no.” But the challenge remains: when, where, and how will other kinds of explanations emerge? Where are the community-based “explainers”? How can we listen to them? What places can be created to make what they have to say available to more of us outside their communities who would listen? How can they be encouraged to author their own explanations?

I have used the phrase “community-based American Indian intellectuals” several times now. Let me comment briefly on what I am trying to get at with this identification, for it is a distinction that will raise very sensitive identity issues for some. I mean the phrase to be descriptive, not evaluative. What I am trying to describe are those “real Yaqui thinkers” whose intellectual authority is recognized within a Yaqui community. People in the community may or may not agree with what they say but they do recognize a “community-based intellectual” as a “real thinker” and as a member of the community. A “community-based American Indian intellectual” may well participate in other arenas as well. He or she may have an appointment at a university or community college or a school district. “Community-based” and “university-based” are not mutually exclusive in this distinction. Still, there are many American Indian intellectuals whose authority is recognized within higher education who are unrecognized, even unknown, in the tribal communities with whom they claim affiliation. The authority they claim as American Indian intellectuals is certainly real and valid, but it is significantly different from the authority of someone, like Miki Maaso or Felipe Molina, who is community-based. I understand that this opens a very complex issue, one that I am not able to pursue here. What, for example, is a “community” in this usage and how does “community” relate to family, clan, village, or the corporate entity known as tribe? What of the very real and vital urban Indian communities that exist in so many cities? What is an “intellectual” in this context? Are “real Yaqui thinkers” only those with a special, or even exotic, ritual knowledge? What other community knowledges are valued in this way?

In any case, I believe that Felipe proposed a “conference” as an activity familiar both within the mission of our sponsor, a university research center, and within his work in various school-based, bilingual, cultural programs. During our planning we worked together to redefine “conference” to suit our needs: the featured participants would be those recognized for their knowledge in the Yaqui world; the setting would be a heka (a shade house with one or more open sides, also called a rama, from Spanish, ramada; see Molina and Shaul 1993) at Felipe’s house, not on
campus or in a convention center or hotel; the language of the conference would be Yaqui, not English or Spanish; and the conference “proceedings” would be published in forms that were useful and readily available to Yaqui communities as well as academic communities. For us, that meant making audiotapes as well as printed versions published both in Yaqui and in English translation.

Although we redefined the setting considerably, Miki Maaso, the featured “visiting scholar,” was quick to remind us that in order to participate he must accomplish redefinitions of his own. Early in his talk, translated below, he stresses the unconventionality of the occasion: “like this, nobody said it to me nicely.” How one learns about deer singing, and how members of the community react to how one learns, became a major theme of his talk. “Nobody taught me,” he says repeatedly, “I just caught it on the blowing wind and put it together in my head.” Miki Maaso thus raised a set of issues for himself: what are “traditional” settings for the transmission of the special knowledge of deer singing in Yaqui culture, how does he as a singer relate to them, and how does an unconventional setting such as this “conference” figure in? Our previous work with Don Jesus Yoilo’i, a respected elder deer singer from Potam, touched on some of these questions. Don Jesus described his participation in sessions during which he and his peers gathered to practice the songs they had learned from elders. He called these occasions schools, *ehkuelam* (Evers and Molina 1987:65-66). From Don Jesus and other singers, we learned that an “apprenticeship” is common. Such an apprenticeship might include hanging around with a deer singers group, sitting with them during a ceremony, then being given a chance to sing during the early morning hours of a ceremony or at other “off” times, and eventually coming into a group as a water drummer or assistant (second or third position) rasper (Evers and Molina 1987:77). Miki Maaso acknowledges these opportunities but says they were not available to him. He heard the songs and more of the elders’ truth from singers at Pitaya Pueblo, “but those Yoeme elders did not teach me” (lines 157-169). He suggests that in fact used a series of cautionary customs to keep him from the instruments of deer singing: “not just anyone can pick up these raspers.” “Like this,” he says, “they used to scare me.” Rather than the “schools” of Don Jesus or an apprenticeship process, Miki Maaso emphasizes a more individual source for his knowledge about deer singing. He locates this knowledge in a solitary, spiritual encounter with the powers that reside in the mountains surrounding the Rio Yaqui pueblos, in the *yo hoaram*, the enchanted homes, of the *huya ania*, the wilderness world.
FM: Miki Maaso tells us that many people claim that he received his knowledge from the *yo ania*. However, he tells us that he received his knowledge from the freely blowing wind. To hear a statement like this is not uncommon in Yoeme communities. During the deer singers’ conference, Miki Maaso was confident and comfortable with the audience listening to him. He felt they could understand him, so he wanted to convey what he had in his heart and mind.

Sometimes it is hard to bring up personal and spiritual thoughts to a group because many times the listeners are not ready for such information. When I myself have to talk about Yoeme culture, I am sometimes uncomfortable because people may not understand or accept the talk. I say this because Miki tells us that he received knowledge from the blowing wind. He says it this way to mean that it could come from the *yo ania*, the *huya ania*, or directly from God. He does not want to be more specific than that. He brings it up because he is comfortable with his audience, but even with this audience he does not want to be too specific.

The Yoeme spiritual worlds are still discussed and they have been written about to some extent. By now knowledge of them has reached many non-Yoeme people. I think Miki stressed this subject during the deer singers’ conference to expose the young audience to what is out there for them. He doesn’t go into detail about these worlds, but he does touch on them. When elders talk about certain people with special talents, they say, “*a miiki* / he is given it” or “*a mikwa* / he is being given it.” These talents are received from those spiritual worlds and from God. Parents and elders talk to their children and friends about those spiritual worlds and point out that through the will of God or involvement with the spiritual worlds their children might receive some of these talents in their lifetimes.

It was good that Miki Maaso decided to share this personal information with the group because it teaches and helps the young people understand and to respect those aspects of Yoeme life, especially the spiritual worlds.

LE: How are we to understand “*waa yo’ora lutu’uria* / the elders’ truth”? And how does the truth that Miki Maaso has acquired and now discusses relate to it?

Reading the published literature on Yaqui culture I learn that the
elders’ truth may be thought of as knowledge about living in the Yaqui world that, by virtue of being held in the memories of respected community members, is considered to be central. The role of the community looms large in the definition of this knowledge. Knowledge could only be considered to be “the elders’ truth” if it is enacted in the community and recognized by the community. Edward H. Spicer writes that those who actively recognize the obligations of Yaqui religion and who submit themselves throughout their lives to fulfilling them are “said to have lutu’uria, to have demonstrated this highest of all human qualities” (1980:85). Acts in the world of Yaqui ceremonialism are a key element: “Whatever goodness of spirit one may have must be expressed in ceremonial labor if it is to be recognized and spoken of as lutu’uria” (Spicer 1980:95). Lutu’uria cannot be realized merely by having thoughts or dreams or visions of certain kinds.

There is then a sense in which the pahko becomes a kind of “proving ground.” Not just anyone can pick up the deer singers’ raspers. Whatever misgivings the community may have about an individual who does pick them up are quieted when that individual answers a sacred request and performs during a community pahko. Miki Maaso is quick to remind us of this in his discussion of the sources of his own knowledge about deer singing:

I continue to stand up with that,
the sacred request that settles in my hands.

The pahko is a place where an opposition between knowledge gained in the towns and knowledge gained in the mountains is negotiated.

Certainly, as Miki Maaso describes it, his knowledge, his lutu’uria, has an oppositional quality. He is explicit in saying that it does not come from “the eight holy churches that sit side by side,” that is, from the traditional religious centers of the eight Yaqui pueblos. Rather this knowledge comes from the mountains where another world exists that mirrors the one that occupies our everyday senses. Subsequent performance during the ceremonies in the towns will be the occasion for this knowledge to be recognized and validated. Service performed in the context of community-sanctioned ceremonialism marks Miki Maaso’s knowledge as “lutu’uria.”
FM: *Waka uhbwanta*, the sacred request, is an important Yoeme custom. Miki Maaso dwells on it in his sermon. The noun *uhbwani* is closely related to the verb *bwaana*, to cry or to weep. The sacred request is an essential part of every *pahko*. The *waka uhbwanta* is made by the sponsors, who are called *pahkome*. They approach the ceremonial groups they need for the *pahko*. Usually this is the church group and the deer dance group. Formal speeches are given and other customs follow. For example, to request the services of the deer group, the *pahkome* go to the *moro ya’ut*, the lead manager. After he agrees that he will get the necessary performers together for a deer dance, the *moro ya’ut* accepts a lighted cigarette from the *pahkome*. This seals the agreement. The *moro ya’ut* then carries the sacred request to the various performers taking along cigarettes provided by the *pahkome*. Once accepted, this agreement cannot be broken. This is the way we approached Miki Maaso about participating in our conference.

LE: Our use of traditional customs when we approached Miki Maaso is one reason that he chooses to respond to our conference as a *pahko*. He goes to some length to note that he is participating in response to a sacred request and comments on how hard it was for the sponsors of the event, us, to deliver that request. He regards and treats us, self-described “project directors,” as the *pahkome*, the sponsors of a *pahko*. In positioning himself to “lecture” at the conference, he takes a place in the *heka*, just as he would for deer singing during a *pahko*, seated on mats facing the area in which the deer dances take place. Perhaps more importantly, he chooses to use the Yaqui sermon, *hinavaka*, as the genre in which to talk about deer singing. Throughout he emphasizes that the elders’ truth is not easy, that it is not just a matter of talk. It may be easy to talk about, he says, but it is hard to live. Talk must be lived to be “truth,” and living the truth is not easy. Spicer writes, “the harsh disciplines of Yaqui religious life are inextricably connected in Yaqui thought with the hard times of ordinary life and regarded as the essence of the Yaqui lot in the universe” (1980:312).

“Saving” or “preserving” oral traditions “for future generations” is easily the most frequently cited goal in ethnopoetic projects launched from institutions of higher education. But, as a rhetoric, it has frequently been used to enable goals very highly distanced from any context for community-based learning.
Felipe’s most constant institutional affiliation during the years I have known him has been with the schools and more specifically with bilingual, multi-cultural projects in the schools. He links “study” and “explanation” with teaching and sees the schools as a place for the perpetuation of Yaqui culture through formal education. A major reason that he is motivated to bring Yaqui oral traditions into print and onto electronic media is so that they can be used in the schools. I think it likely that many other community-based Native Americans who speak their languages, who are knowledgeable about their cultures, and who are willing and able to enter the dialogue on how their cultures are explained are similarly situated in the schools. Thus, we advocates of ethnopoetics who sit in our English, anthropology, or linguistics departments at universities and wait for American Indian peoples to walk in and begin a dialogue are likely to continue to talk to ourselves. Significant numbers of American Indian people are hard at work in the schools, trying to bring their traditions into print and onto electronic tape, thinking about the issues of cross-cultural communication that arise when they do so. Community-based bilingual or “cultural” programs—in community schools, in tribal cultural affairs offices, or in community museums—are neglected opportunities for those who would like to find common ground on which to develop cross-cultural explanations.

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FM: How do we know a sermon is a sermon? Well, first of all it is sacred. God and all the saints are mentioned, then the ancestors, and so on, usually at the beginning of the sermon. Miki Maaso, however, does this to close out his talk (lines 393 and following). Maybe he did not begin in the traditional way because we threw him off by rushing in and telling him what to do, or perhaps it was because this was a new situation for him. I know he was wondering, “what am I supposed to do? This isn’t a pahko, but it’s sort of like one. . . .” He had to figure out how to make his words and ideas fit the occasion.

Also, we know that this is a sermon because it is not ordinary language or speech. It sounds different: the tone changes, the rhythm is more abrupt, not harsh, but measured. Also, it contains much of the elders’ truth, the Yoeme truth, and goodness, which is the same as truth. The Yoeme say tu’uwata nooka, “talking about goodness,” in reference to the content. A sermon can include nothing bad, no insults, but only goodness.

The Yoeme say that it is hard for one who is ka bwe’um hiapsek (“not having big heart”) to give a sermon. Speakers are said to be ka
LE: Muriel Thayer Painter writes that sermons or ritual speeches are a part of almost all Yaqui ceremonies, and that they are “thought of as general instruction for the people in ancient Yaqui spiritual and religious beliefs and moral codes, as well as explanations of the meanings of the ceremonies” (1986:112). A hinavaka is a formal speech delivered on a wide variety of Yaqui occasions: baptisms, weddings, wakes, and all village pahkom. In English, Yaquis refer to a hinavaka as a sermon. The sermon is usually delivered by elders who have particular roles in the ceremonies. Deer singers, for example, give a sermon at a prescribed time during each ceremony they perform. This time is early in the morning, an hour or two before dawn. They may talk about the difficulty of accepting the sacred request to participate in the ceremony, about how they made it through the long night, and about the thanks they have for the sponsors of the ceremony. Painter writes that Yaqui sermons “are delivered in a formal, authoritative tone and with dignified demeanor. All are, or are by tradition expected to be, couched in the Yaqui language. . . . When an informant quotes from a sermon or speech, his conversational, informal manner changes, and he speaks in a loud and measured tone” (1986:113).

The particular “sermon” we are considering here was delivered at what we called a “conference,” so a comparison with the “lecture,” the genre most closely associated with a conference, is useful. Erving Goffman writes that “a lecture is an institutionalized extended holding of the floor in which one speaker imparts his views on a subject, these thoughts comprising what can be called his ‘text.’ The style is typically serious and slightly impersonal, the controlling intent being to generate calmly considered understanding, not mere entertainment, emotional impact, or immediate action” (1983:165). In a lecture, as in a Yaqui sermon, evidence of a “high style” is desirable: elegance of language, and other aspects of “expressive” writing allow the audience, as Goffman puts it, “to feel that its producer has lent himself fully to this particular occasion of communication” (189). “Truth” is an issue as well: “constituent statements presumably take their warrant from their role in attesting to the truth, truth appearing as something to be cultivated and developed from a distance, coolly, as an end in itself” (165). A key difference between the aim of a lecture in higher education and a sermon in Yaqui culture, then, is where truth is located. A truth without heart, one held only in the head, is no truth at all in Yaqui
FM: The common phrase “like this it stays in your hands” is usually said right at the end of a formal speech, a sermon, or general advice. It means that the talk contained good information and knowledge, that it was related to others, and that it can now be used to benefit oneself or others while they are here on earth.

In a sermon when the elder speaks in a formal voice, he talks about different aspects of Yoeme work or ritual. The sermon contains information or knowledge that has been passed down from one generation to another. Connections are made to ancient Yoeme truths and to modern Christianity. The one who gives the sermon relates to the audience why it is important to carry on the Yoeme traditions and the Yoeme truth. In one part of the sermon the sermon-giver will say that all adults have the responsibility to teach the little angels (children) the Yoeme truth because when adults die, they are asked up in heaven if they did their duty on earth. The sermon also explains why a person on earth may be required to serve the community and God in song, prayer, or dancing. So like this the sermon continues, and towards the end the following words are always said:

Inia velekika itom achi Hesu Krihtota mampo taawak
itom ae Maria Santisimata mampo taawak
wame si’ime santorata mampo taawak
si’ime anhelesim mampo taawak
Aet chukula inia velekika enchim mampo taawak
Tua Dios emchiokoe u’utteasiavu

This much in our father Jesus Christ’s hands stayed
in our mother the most Holy Mary’s hands stayed
in all the saints’ hands stayed
in all the angels’ hands stayed
After that, this much in your hands stayed
True God will bless you strongly.

When these words are said, the person receiving the knowledge is given blessings to receive the help of divine forces to work with the duty that has been given to him or her. It is now the hearer’s responsibility to use the knowledge for personal benefit and also for the benefit of others, especially children and the people who are in need.
We have shown how the involvement of community-based American Indian intellectuals in the crucial initiating/planning stage affected the collaborative project we have described. As usual, much more remains to be said. We look forward to developing more extended commentary on the role of audience: how various audiences, Yaqui and non-Yaqui, have responded to our work and other ethnopoetic scholarship like it.

In concluding, we want to join others who have called for involvement of American Indian intellectuals in all stages of university-based projects that focus on Indian communities. Peter Whitely, for example, has recently issued a passionate call for such involvement in “The End of Anthropology (at Hopi)?” (1993). How can we make research on American Indian traditions something more than “a bourgeois language game about the oppressed?” Whitely asks. In answer he turns to a speech delivered on January 23, 1991, by Vernon Masayesva, chair of the Hopi Tribe, at Northern Arizona University titled “Native Peoples and the University Community.” In this talk, Vernon Masayesva proposes “involving Indian people in formulating research questions.” He predicts that “any university-sponsored project, regardless of how noble its aim might be, will surely fail if consultation with Indian tribes is not part of the planning process from the project’s inception.” Whitely, Masayesva, and others during the last two decades have issued the calls. What remains in very short supply are responses. Reports on action, what has happened when community-based American Indian intellectuals were involved in all stages of research projects conducted in their communities, are few and far between. This is what we have begun to provide here.

Waa Yo’ora Lutu’uria

Miki Maaso

Yoem Pueblo
12/22/87

transcribed, translated, and annotated by
Felipe S. Molina and Larry Evers

Miki Maaso (MM):

a pos empo vea ameu vicha a teuwane
uka lutu’uriata in nokaka’u
vempinto kaivu tua ne hikkaine
nepo vea enchi tehwa bwe kia vea emowa teuwane empo vea

Felipe Molina (FM):

heewi
nian hia ori . . .
bwe nianta pensaroa
empo witti a teuwane heewi
uka lutu’uriata ameu a teuwane
wate enchi hikkaine
wate into revereveti a hikkaine ta
ka si’imek hikkaine
ta chukula ni vea im vea empo gravaroa
num vea epo si’imek teuwane
nepo vea chukula veana
ringo nokiu vicha yechane
vempo’im na makak
vempo vea a nokne
nuen vea nuen hia . . .
tu’isi witti yeu simnetea

MM:

heewi

FM:

empo vea kia witti a weiyane Yoem nokpo
nuen vea a hu’uneiyane

MM:

heewi

puex uusim itepo
inim te hokame itepo
vahikai
waka woi vahi lutu’uriata ket inen kechia
eme a waata
into wa enchim hiapsi
enchim mannini sentidom ket inen ket eme
a waata kechia eme inika waka
lutu’uriata polove erensiata hakwosa iat
tiempopo
waka yo’ora lutu’uriata eme waata
eme aet hiapsek
eme aet hiapseka na kuakte
into eme aet hiapseka yeu matchu
into eme aet hiapseka to’ote

si’imeta eme aet pasaroa waka severiata

si’imeta
hi’ibwapewamta va’ahipewamta
kotpewamta yeetem si’imeta eme aet pasaroa
ta eme inika ta’avae a waka woi vahi lutu’uriata waka
   yo’ora lutu’uriata hakwosa vea tiemopo
ite huni ka
itepo huni ka huname yo’oram itepo ka am ta’a
into inepo ka am ta’aeme san si
waka woik vahik lutu’uriata ket inim wame maso
   bwikleom huevenakai
inim bwiapo emou kom yaaha
inim bwiapo emo mak na kuakte
wawatekai achaim
hunanam itom
hiak vatwe vetana avo emou kom yaaha
waka uhbwanta weiyakai inim wain emou kom yaaha
inim wain vicha rehte
ta waka inika polove erensiata inika a hu’uneiyakai
inena hu’uneiyakai emou inim kom yaaha
eme intoket hunaitwelichi
eme a hikkahak waka nokta
eme amet a mammattek
ta eme tua a hu’uneiyavaeka
hunanam in hoara solarpo
ket neu yahak inime achaim tua ne wok hiawak
haksa in katekapo
   into haksa in na weyepo
tua net cha’aka waka
pasota wokita yak
aet tatavuhtek
iansu ket inim oora weye wa enchim uhbwani into wa
inen enchim teuwaka’u into inen enchim ne
   hikkaevae’u
inimi’i enchim
pweplopo inimi’i enchim na kuahktepo
waka woi vahi lutu’uriata
eme a hu’uneiyavae
ne huni kechia inepo kechia
waka yo’ora lutu’uriata
haksa chea inepo waka yo’ora lutu’uriata chea tu’ik
   inepo teune
ta ine po kechia
neu ka eteowak ini’i
kom o ian enchim eteho
inian kave newa teuwak into inian kave tulisia newa teuwak
waka woi vahi lutu’uriata
haisa ina ta’a ne’u 80
ka newa teuwak
tane
aam hikkahak ala waka hiawata ne hikkahak como emo venasia
ta inena bwikne into im wami into ineni ti kave neu hiak
porke hunak wa yo’ora lutu’uria
hunak tiempo po nakwan
yo’oriwan ini’i inim vo’okame
itom hoka’apo
wa karpeta yo’oriwan
into wame hirukiam inim to’okame 90
woika vahika inim to’okame
ka kia have huni amet mammamtetuawuan
porke hunak wa yo’ora inika naken
hunait mamtekatek haivu kia
noki ama aune
ka kia have huni aet mamtene
haku vosi weyekai
tua ama aune . . .
inika itom waka hirukiata tovoktako aet mamtekatek
wa ka bwe’um hiapsekame
tenku aniapo vea a vitne inika’a
itom inim polove lutu’uriata 100
inian a teuwasuk
e achai
e nukmeela
kat aet mamma iniachi
nim vo’okamtachi

hiovukun hune ka kotne ti hiune
porke ni wa yo
yo ania
inian lutu’uria katek
inian vempo a naksuk 110

yo ania ini’i
ka kia huni have aet mammane
inian a teuwak huname wame yo’ora
inim bwan bwiapo na kuaktisukame
ne huni ka am ta’ak
into vempo huni ka ne mahtak
poke inian neu hiusuk
inika ne mahau tetewasuk
ka ian emo venasia in emo vicha a teuwa venasia
    kave inewa teuwak
into ke in achaitakai
into wa chea in sai yo’o takai huni’i
ka inian newa teuwak
kave ne mahtak
ne kia waka hekata chasisimemta hunaka inepe
inepo a bwisek
into in kovapo namyak
into wa Dios humak hunen hia
into wa hua ania vetana wa
yo ania humaku’u into wa
huna humak hunen hia yo hoara humak
inika humak ne makak
huntuksen inepe
waka hekata . . . .
    vem hikka vem bwiksuka’u into vem hikkaisuka’u
    chea vtnataka vem hikkaika’u hunaka lutu’uriata
    in kovapo taawak in mamni sentirompo taawak
hunuen na hu’uneiyak
ka iniani
enou vicha
ina teuwa kave inewa teuwak
inian ket eme aet mammattene
ma inepe nim kateka emou vicha a teuwa ho
tulimaisine emou vicha kateka a teuwa
    ta ini itom hakwo . . . yo’oriwa nakwa
tua wa maso bwikreo yo’owe ka amau vicha
    ye viiva mimika
into wa sewundo ka amau vicha
    ye viiva mimika
into wa chea ultimou katekame huni ka
    ye amau vicha viiva mimika
into wa vaa hiponreo huni’i into ka au
    viiva netanwa
into ka amau vicha nooka
into wa maso bwikreo yo’owe huni ka amau
    vicha nooka
iyimin kaveta yopna
amau vicha kaveta yopna
intoke tua ka nooka huni’i
anaka a nokria waka hua aniapo waka
    sea yolemta
hunaka nokria ala
porke inian katek
inian a teuwasuk wame yo’ora lutu’uria
inian a tookokok ta inepo ka am
    vichak
inian waka hekata waka vuitemta
inen ne amet a hikkahak
hunamani
pitaya pweplopo
inen ket ne amet a hikkahak 160
ta huname yo’ora kokosuk
Jose Maria Hapachituka’u
intuchi wa Galavis
ket inian a teuwak intuchi ket wa senu yoeme
Luis Chone’elateame
Aldamasteame ket inian teuwak
tua inian in mampo a tosiika huna’a
tua huname kechia hu’ubwela au haptek
ta ian wame . . . chea yo’ora lutu’uria inian a
    hikkahak
ta huname yoem yo’owe ka ne mahtak
huntuksam inepo vea hunaitchi 170
yeu sikapo vea inepo vea inika’a
waka bwikata haisa ina natene’u
ta huname ka ne tehwak
ta hunaka waka hekata
    waka chasisimemta polovesi ina mavetakapo amani
hunaka lutu’uria
ta ne . . . ta inepo huni ka hunea . . .
ta ne waka polove waka erenciata
neu toosakawakamta
wame pahkom

o chea malatune 180
o chea achatitune
chea ito venasia polovetune
hunaimak ne kiktesime
waka uhbwanta in mampo yehteko

tua ne hunaka hiokoleka ne na weye
ubwanta
weiyamta
polovesia waka vatorata
santorata
wohnaiki pweplom santa iglesiam
    vellekatana hokame
into waka vihperam yumako
wame bwere pahkom
inen tam mavetak
inen te amet paso wakte
tua inia veeki tiempo weye
inen ne amet ne
ka tu’ik
into waka tu’ik
inen ne amet a vitchime
inen ne a hu’uneiyak ineo
eme ket inen a pasaroane inimi’i
200
tua polovesimachi
tua ka aou papewasimachi
ta ket eme inian a inene
tua chea vatnatakai apo señor Díos achai o’ola
tua inika’a ka emou chupane
ta inian machi wa . . .
Díos Señor achai o’ola apo enchim aniane
enchim takaa into waka enchim hiawai
tua kave emou omtine
210
tua kave emou waka huenak pensaroane
porke ka tu’i
porke hunama ka ye ania
wa ubwanta itom mampo yechakame
ka ye ania
waka ko’okoata ama aukapo
ka ye ania
chewa polove
inen ubwanta hosuk
ian into te aman kechia
wa ili hittoata vetchivo te aman a makne
polovesi ko’okoet
aman ta vikne
ti kave eu hiaka eu hahaptene
hunaka enchi tu’ika weamau ala
wa tui servisio en mampo yehtene
tua hunak empo
hunama vo’oka petensiapo vo’oka vea
ili vaa emo mimikaka
o wana
230
ka pappeaka vo’oka huni empo yehteka vea
empo pensaroane
si’imeta pensaroane

ne wana tu’ika weamau
into ke have huni waka ubwanta in mampo yechane
hiva empo pensaroane
e’e ta ket Díos ket apo enchi aniane
into wa hua aniapo wa yoeme
huna ket wa sea yoleme ket enchi aniane
huna ket ito vetchivo
santik iglesiam
wohnaiki pweplu santik iglesiam hooka
wam hua aniapo
kaupo
haksa ha’ani
wam pocho’oku
chea yo aniapo
hunama hooka
hunama si’ime ayuk
wa enchim inim itou nattemai’u
into wa enchim neu nattemai’u
inian a hu’ueniyaka ket eme
vichau vicha ket eme at tekipanoane
inpo kechia
ket emo venasi ne ket
inian a ta’apecan
ta inepo ka inian a makwak
into ne ka inian a hu’umeiyak
inian a hu’ueneiyaka
wame enchim
chikti mammi sentidom
hikau tahtahti tonnuatuaka vellekatana
eme aet mammatteka aet paso waktine
into eme aet kupteka totene

eaet remtisakane
aet emou temaine
eme chea uusim

ka yo’owe
inen enchim mampo taawane wa lutu’uria
enchim sentidompo inen ket eme a mammattene
enchim mampusiam enchim nunubwa vetana
vatan vetana waka mamni sentidota haisa eme a hippue
hunum katek wa enchim wa enchim mampusiamo
natekai vatan vetana ayuk
nu wa enchim sentidompo katek
mamni sentidom ti katin hihia wame yo’ora inian na
kuaktisukame
tua inian eme a hu’ueneiyaka
aet yeu matchusakane
aet kuptisakane
nuhmeelam inim hokame
into waka sewa yolemta
waka nokta

inen ket eme a waata
into ket inen ket eme a hu’uneiyavae
iniet chukula kechia

**waka kanaria** naate
inika huni ka ne mahtasuk
inika si’imeta ka ne tehwasuka
polovesi ne im katek
polovesi te inim hooka

in usimmake
vahimmake inim ne katek
inepo am usek inime’e emo venasia
como haisa enchim yoemiam
yoemiamtukapo amani
inien nam uusek
ta inime huni ne
waka woi vahi lutu’uriata ka teuwak
ta ket vempo ket haisa auka
polovesi ket inim kechia

waka inika’a
kaveta au yumao
kaveta au pappeo’u
ket inen kechia
netwelisi ket humak a makwak
wa yo ania humak ke inen ket a
waka . . . inen ket

inien ne
aet
vem na kuaktinepo huma inien a makwak
kechia vempo humaku’u
ta tuasu tu’i kechia
ket halekisia ket
au hapsakane
ta inepo ne im aane
wa Diosta taewaim ne mikau
inepo ne waka tui lutu’uriata ket
inepo wam in hoara solarpo
in na kuaktepo inen ne am tehwane inepo

tua inien ket eme a hu’uneiyane
into inien eme am hu’uneiyane
inime in uusim
emo venasi uusim
inim emo vicha hokame

vaataponamta
Julian

iyim neu katekame into
Cresencio

wannavo neu katekame into
Ramon

nen ket eme a hu’uneiyane
inime waka hua aniata
vichau vicha eteho
yo aniata
kaupo aukamta
waka yo’ora lutu’uriata kaupo
vem na kuaktisukapo
waka kutata
waka huyata
kauta tetata va’ata si’imeta
inen a eteho waka yoawata aet
na weesuka’u
wame yoawam
haksasene’ekapo nau yahaka
waka va’ata vem haiwa’u
inen ket a eteho
inian natwelisi a ta’a
huntuksan ama na vuhti achaim
wa woi vahi lutu’uria

waka kanariata
enchim hikkaivaepo amani
into inen enchim a ta’avaepo amani

hakkuvotana yeuwa sikapo
into hakkuvotana yeuwa weye’u
into haksasoro yeuwa weye’u

inen eme a hikkaiva waka si’imeta
nokta
nen eme a waata
into inien eme a hikkaivaeka
nim wakim vicha
waka woi vahi lutu’uriata net hikkaivaeka
ket avo vicha eme ne nunuk
avo vicha te paso watek
chikti im yoremiammake mochalanawi
nim te yeu yahak
enchim hoara solarpoo
ta inen ket te waka woi vahi lutu’uriata
haksa chea inepo a teune waka
chea yo’ora lutu’uriata
ven aet na kuaktisuka’u
huname kave

polove
tolochiataka hehheka
hakun tiempopo luutek huname’e
waka see’eta veletchik
huni te hakam vitne

**tua te kantelammak am haiwaka huni’i**
kantela taimachiriamake haiwaka huni’i
   te kaveta te hak vitne
370
ta inen in mampo taawak wa lutu’uria
wa woh naiki pweplom santik iglesiam vellekatana
in tekipanoane’u
ka in mampo a sutohak vempo
wa hiawai wa vem teuwaka’u
inen ket in kovapo taawak
huna
hunatuka’u wa woh naiki pweplo santik iglesiam
vellekatana
inen a teuwasuk
into inepo aet hikkubwawa
into inepo aet ta’ewa
380
inian ket eme a hu’uneiyane
nuhmeelam inim hokame
ni wa woi vahi lutu’uria
inen ket chea vatnaataka

señor itom achai Diosta
vatan vetana mampo tawak
into wa intom aye Marīsa santisima
vatan vetana mampo tawak
aet chukula ket inen enchim mampo tauwak
390
eme inen ne aet nok hikkahak achaim
nuhmelam yeu tahtia wa woi vahi lutu’uriata

FM:

heewi

MM:

tua su tu’i
The Elders’ Truth

Miki Maaso

Yoem Pueblo
12/22/87

transcribed, translated, and annotated
by Felipe Molina and Larry Evers

Miki Maaso (MM):

Well, you will speak the truth that
I have spoken to them.
They really will not understand me.
I will tell you. Well, so you will be able to tell them.

Felipe Molina (FM):

Yes
like this says . . .
well, like this we are thinking.
You will say it straight, yes?
The truth, you will say it to them.
Some will understand you
and some will understand pieces but
10
will not understand it all.
But later this here that you are recording,
all you will say, will be there.
Later I will
put it in the English language
when I give it to them.
They will read it.
Like that, like that says.
They say it will come out good, straight.

MM:

Yes.

FM:

You will just give it straight in the Yoeme language.
Like that you will know it.

MM:
Yes.

Well, children, we,
the ones who are sitting here, we,
three,
the two or three truths, also, like this, also,
you want it.
And your heart,
your five senses, also, like this, also, you want it, you also want this
truth, the poor inheritance, from somewhere in the past
at that time.
You want the elders’ truth.

**Your heart is in it.**
You walk about with your hearts in it,
and you get up in the morning with your hearts in it,
and you go to bed with your hearts in it.

You suffer everything in it, the cold,

everything,
the hunger, the thirst,
the sleeplessness, drowsiness, you suffer everything in it.
But you want to know this, the two or three truths, the
elders’ truth. Somewhere in the past at that time,
we did not even,
we did not even, we did not even know those elders,
and I did not know them.
At least you,
the two or three truths, also here,

**many deer singers**
arrive here on this land to you.
They walk about here on this land with you.

Some fathers,
over there, from our
Yaqui River, arrive here to you.
Carrying **the sacred request** they arrive here to you,
come over here.
But knowing this, the poor inheritance,
like this, knowing, they arrive down here to you.
And you also, exactly,
you heard it, the talk
you understood it from them.
But you really wanted to know it.
Over there at my home place
**these fathers** also came to me, really sought me out
where I was sitting
   and where I was walking around.
Really they made the
steps after me,
they sweated for it.
And now the hour of your sacred request is happening, and,
like this is what you said, like this is what you wanted
to hear.
Here in your
village, here where you walk around,
the two or three truths,
you want to know it.
I also, also I, also,
the elders’ truth,
where am I going to find the best of
   the elders’ truth?
But I, also,
To me, this was not told.
Like, the way you are talking now,
like this, nobody said it to me, and like this nobody said
   it to me nicely, the two or three truths.
How I could have learned it,
   and how I could have known it?
Didn’t say it to me,
but I
heard them, at least I heard the sound like you.
But nobody said to me, “sing it like this, and in this way.”
Because then the elders’ truth
then, in that time, it was cherished.
It was respected, this, that is lying here
   where we are sitting,
   the carpet was respected.
And the raspers lying here,
   the two or three lying here,
not just anybody could lay hands on them,
because the elder valued this then.
If someone laid hands on these, already
there would be talk.
Not just anybody could lay hands on it,
   walking in from somewhere,
really there would be . . . .

If someone picks up our rasper, lays hands on it,
if he is one who does not have the big heart
in the dream world he will see this,
our poor truth here.
Like this it was said,
“no, father,
no, young man,
don’t touch this,
that is lying here.

“You might not sleep,” would say,
“because this is the enchanted,
enchanted world.”
Like this truth sits.
Like this they valued it,

this is the enchanted world.
Not just anyone can handle it.
Like this, the elders said it. Like this,
the ones who walked around on this weeping earth
I did not even know them,
and they did not even teach it to me.
Because they used to talk
to me like this, they used to scare me,
not like now, to you the way I am saying it to you.
Nobody said it to me,
and not even my father,
and moreover not even my older brother,
said it to me like this.
Nobody taught me.
I just, on the blowing wind, I . . .
I caught it
and put it together in my head.
And maybe God says this,
and from the wilderness world,
the enchanted world, and maybe the . . .
maybe that, like that, the enchanted home says, maybe,
maybe, it gave me this,
and then I
I, the wind . . . .
What they heard, what they have sung, what they have heard,
what they have heard in the beginning, that truth
stayed in my head and in my five senses.
Like that I knew it.
Not like this,
the way I am saying it
to you, nobody said it to me.
Like this, you should pay attention to it,
do you see? I am sitting here saying it to you.
Beautifully, I am sitting here saying it to you.
But in the past our . . . this was respected.
Really, the elder deer singer did not give cigarettes
to those behind him.
And the second singer did not give cigarettes
to those behind him.
And the last one who sits with us did not give
cigarettes to those behind him.
And the water drummer also, cigarettes were not requested
from him,
and he could not talk to those behind.
And also the elder deer singer could not even talk
to those behind.
He doesn’t answer anybody behind, here.
He doesn’t answer anybody behind him,
and does not even really talk at all.
Yes, they talk for it, for the wilderness world,
the flower person.
For that, they talk.
Because like this it sits.
Like this, they said it, the elders’ truth.
Like this, they left it when they died, but I did not
seek them.
Like this, the wind, the one that is blowing,
Like this, I heard it from them,
over there,
in Pitaya Pueblo.
Like that I heard it from them,
but those elders have died:
Jose Maria Hapachituka’u,
and also, that Galavis,
like this also he said it, and again also that one Yoeme,
the one who is called Luis Chone’ela,
the one who is called Aldamas also said it like this,
really like this that one left it in my hands.
Really, they stood up to it in recent times,
but now the . . . more of elders’ truth, they heard it
like this,
But those Yoeme elders did not teach me.
That is why I, on that
which happened, I, this,
the songs, how I should begin?
But they did not tell me.
But the swirling wind,
is how I received it poorly.
That truth,
but I . . . but I do not even know . . .
but I, the poor inheritance
that was left to me,
the *pahkom*,

or perhaps it could be a mother,
or perhaps it could be a father,
perhaps like us they could be poor.
I continue to stand up with that,
the sacred request that settles in my hands.

Really I walk about, I pity him
the one who carries
the sacred request.
Poorly, the baptized ones,
the saints,
the Eight Pueblos, holy churches,
the ones that are sitting side-by-side,
when the vespers occur,
those large *pahkom*,
like this we are accepting them.
Like this we make our steps on them.
Really it has been for this much time.
Like this I, on it, I . . .
the bad
and the good.
Like this I continue to see it on them.
Like this, I learned it.
You also like this will experience this here.
Really it is pitiful.
Really it is a burden.
But you also like this will feel it.
Really in the very beginning He, the lord God, old father,
really he will not create it this way for you
but like this it is the . . .
Lord God, old father, He will help you.
Your body and your sound,
really nobody will get angry with you.
Really nobody will have evil thoughts about you.
Because it is bad,
because there it does not help us,
the sacred request, the one that was placed in our hands,
does not help us.
The sickness that is there,
it does not help us.
Even the poorest
like this made the sacred request
and we, also, over there
as a little medicine we will go and give it to him.
He is pitifully sick.
“Let’s go over there and see him,”
obody will be standing there and saying that to you
of course, when you are well and walking around. Then
the good fortune will settle in your hands
then you will really,
while lying there in your suffering, lying there will
give yourself a little water,
or there,
lying there without any energy, you will get up.
You will think,
you will think about everything.

When I walk about there in good health,
“anybody could place the sacred request in my hands,”
you will be thinking.
No, but God himself also will help you,
and the person in the wilderness world,
that one also, the flower person, also, will help you
that one also is for us.
The holy churches
the Eight Pueblos, the holy churches that are sitting
there in the wilderness world
in the mountains
wherever
there in the desert
in the most enchanted world
they are sitting there.
Everything is there.
What you are asking here from us
and what you are asking from me.
Knowing it in this way you also
will go forward and you also will work on it.
I also
also like you, I also
would have liked to learn it in this way,
but I was not given it like this,
and I did not learn it like this.
Knowing it like this
with all
your five senses,
all the way to the top, giving it parts side by side,
you will think about it and make steps on it.
And you will lie down with it in the evening
and it will continue to open your eyes.
You will question yourself about it.
You are very young,
not old.
Like this the truth will stay in your hands.
In your senses like this you will study it.
On the side where you carry your fingers,
on the right side, you see how you have your five senses?
it is in your . . . your fingers.
   It starts, it is there on your right side.
That is in your senses.
Five senses, remember? This is how those elders used to talk
   about it, the ones who used to walk about like this.
Really, like this you should know it.
On it you continue to awaken in the morning.
On it you continue to reach the evening.
You young men who are sitting here.
And the flower person,
   the talk,
   like this, also, you want it,
   and also like this you also want to know it.
On this also later,
   when the kanaria begins . . .
not even this was I taught.
They never told me all these things.
Pitifully I sit here.
Pitifully we sit here
   with my children
with the three I sit here.
These, I fathered these, like you
   the same way your people . . .
you became people in this way
   like this I fathered them.
But even these I
   have not told the two or three truths.
But also they also for whatever reason
   are also here pitifully.
This one,
even though nobody could attain it,
even though nobody had the energy for it,
also, like this, also
maybe what was given to me was also given evenly to them.
Maybe the enchanted world also like this, also, it . . .
the . . . like this, also,
like this, I
on it,
where they will move about, like this, there they were
also given it, maybe.
But really good, also
also little by little they will also continue

to stand up to it.
But I, I am here.
When God gives me the days,
I, I, the good truth, also
I, there in my home place,
where I move around, like this I will tell them, I
really, like this, you will know it.
And like this you will know them.
These are my children,
children like you,
here the ones who are sitting facing you:
the one who plays the water,
Julian,
and here the one that is sitting next to me,
Cresencio,
and the one that is sitting on the other side of me,
Ramon.
Like this you also will know it.
These are the ones that are bringing forward
the talk about the wilderness world,
the enchanted world
that is in the mountains,
the elders’ truth in the mountains,
where they used to move about.
The stick,
the plants,
the mountains, the rocks, the water, everything
like this they talk about it, where the animal
used to walk about.
The animals,
where they came together at a spring,
they searched for the water.
Like this also they talk about it.
Like this they all know it equally.
And that is why from there on, fathers,
the two or three truths,
the kanaria,
because you want to hear
and because you want to know it, like this
where it came from,
and where it is coming from,
and what time it comes out,

like this you want to hear everything.
The talk,
like this, you want it,
and like this you want to hear it.
From here on
you want to hear the two or three truths from me.
That is why you invited me here.
We made our steps over here.
With all my children grouped together
we arrived here,
here in your home place.
But like this, also, we, the two or three truths,
where am I going to find it,
more of the elders’ truth,
what they walked around with?
They are not here.

Poor,
they are blowing as dust.
They passed away in the past.
They are grains of sand,
we will not even see them anywhere.

**Really we will be looking for them with candles.**
Even looking for them with candlelight,
we will not see anyone anywhere.
But like this the truth stayed in my hands.
The Eight Pueblo Holy Churches side-by-side
in which I work,
they did not leave it in my hand.
The sound, what they said,
like this also stayed in my head.
That,
that which is in the Eight Pueblo Holy Churches
that are side-by-side,
I have said it.
And I am pointed at for it
and I am known because of it.
Like this also you will know it,
young men who are sitting here,
this the two or three truths.
Like this, also, more in the beginning,
Lord, Our Father,
it stayed in God’s right hand,
and in Our Mother Mary’s most holy
right hand it stayed,
and later like this also it stayed in your hands.
Did you hear me talk about it like this, fathers,
young men, throughout, the two or three truths?

FM:
Yes.

MM:
Really it is good.

Line Notes

A note on the transcription: We transcribed this performance from audiotapes we made with the assistance of John Crouch. Copies of the tapes are available to readers of this translation from the Southwest Center, University of Arizona, Tucson. Roosters, barking dogs, children at play, trucks and farm machinery, adults buzzing in the kitchen, not to mention airplanes overhead, will all be apparent to those who listen to the audiotapes, but we did not try to represent any of these sounds in this transcription and translation.

During the last twenty years, an extraordinary amount of scholarly attention has been devoted to the challenges posed by transcribing oral performances into print form. Brian Swann’s collection, On the Translation of Native American Literatures (1992), provides a representative selection of this work. The necessity of “truth-in-packaging” seems to be a lesson to be learned from all of it. We should not assume that the practices of various transcribers and translators are all the same. Scholars must try to be self-aware and to describe their own practices as clearly as possible.

Our practice in transcribing Miki Maaso’s talk is as follows. We transcribe his speech into lines because we think that method better represents the rhythm of his talk than paragraphs, and we think it results in a more readable translation. A line break indicates a pause on the tape. Longer pauses receive a double line break. What we heard as we listened to the tapes is what we set down on the printed page. Our ears were our guides. We listened to the tapes several times, together and individually. In some places it was a tough call for us. We felt the transcribing could go
more than one way. Was that really a pause or not? Longer line or new
line? Playing questions like these out has led some to stopwatches,
computers, and other electronic devices to validate their decisions (see, for
example, Sherzer 1992). That kind of science is not our interest in this
project. We listened, listened again, made a decision, and went on. In any
case, each new line is represented flush left. If the transcribed line runs
beyond the right margin, we indent and complete the line. Thus the line
numbers that we provide for convenience of reference count only those lines
starting flush left. Ellipses indicate suspended or incomplete statements.

27 **woi vahi**: literally, two three; two or three, in the sense of several.

34 **eme aet hiapsek**: Your heart is in it. Painter notes that “Hiapsi means
the heart of a living person and the soul of a dead one” (1986:87) and
that “complete fulfillment of an obligation with consequent divine
favor cannot be accomplished without faith, love, and devotion. This
is more important than carrying out correctly the details of the ritual.
*Tu’i hiapsimak* (with good heart) and *chikti hiapsimak* (with whole
heart) are phrases often heard in sermons and among the people” (97).

47 **maso bwikleom huevenakai**: many deer singers. The reference is to
the deer singers from the Yaqui villages in Sonora who come
frequently to the Yaqui villages in southern Arizona to perform at
various ceremonies.

53 **waka uhhwanta**: the sacred request. From the noun *uhbwani*: sacred
request (and the verb, *bwaana*: to cry or to weep). A special request
that is made by the sponsors of a *pahko*, who are called the *pahkome,*
to the church group (*maehtom, kopariam, temahtim, matachinim*) or
the deer dance group (*moro, deer singers, deer dancer, pahkolam,* and
their respective musicians). Formal speeches are given as a part of the
request and other customs followed.

62 **inime achaim**: these fathers. The reference is to the sponsors of this
event: Larry Evers, Joseph Wilder, and particularly Felipe Molina and
Ignacio Amarillas Sombra, who walked all around the Vicam-Potam
area looking for Miki Maaso in order to give him the sacred request to
come to southern Arizona.
wa karpeta yo’oriwan: the carpet was respected. Traditionally the deer singers put down a hipetam, a mat woven from carrizo (a native cane, arundo donax). It is now common for singers to sit on a small rug or blanket as they perform. Miki Maaso uses karpeta, from the Spanish carpeta, to refer to this space, which is reserved only for the deer dancer, singers, and their helpers.

wa ka bwe’um hiapsekame tenku aniapo: one who does not have the big heart in the dream world. FM: In order to pick up the deer singers’ instruments, a person must have the power, the ability. Otherwise bad dreams or sickness could result. Many singers have dreams that test their courage. Perhaps a big snake or other large animals threaten them. If they are brave and do not fear what appears to them, they will gain the power to sing or dance the deer songs.

yo ania ini’: this is the enchanted world. The enchanted world and the enchanted homes are places in the wilderness world that surrounds the Yoeme villages. They are a source of knowledge and power. The deer singers’ instruments, the raspers and other instruments, contain the powers from the enchanted world. No one outside the deer group should handle them. See Yaqui Deer Songs (Evers and Molina 1987) regarding the enchanted world, wilderness world, and dream world.

viiva: cigarette. During a pahko, the sponsors are expected to provide cigarettes for the pahkolam to distribute to the audience. It is thought that when people smoke together there is a feeling of unity, of agreement and harmony. Miki Maaso explains that it is not the proper role for the deer singers to give out these cigarettes. During the pahko, they should not chat and banter with the audience the way the pahkolam do, but rather should only talk for the wilderness world and the flower person.

sea yolemta: the flower person, the deer.

ili hittoata: little medicine.

waka kanaria: the Kanaria. The reference is to the deer songs that Miki Maaso and his sons will perform when he completes this
sermon. See Maaso et al. 1993 for a transcription and translation of those songs.

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References


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