

## **An Answer to Brian Haley's Commentary on the Chumash Western Gate**

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In his *Acta Americana* article "Going Deeper: Chumash Identity, Scholars, and Spaceports in Radić and Elsewhere," Brian Haley writes that "it is difficult to find any accurate information in Radić's essay," concluding that it can be dismissed as only "gossip and propaganda."<sup>1</sup> He is referring to my previous article "The Chumash as the Keepers of the Western Gate"<sup>2</sup>.

It pleases me when errors I have made are revealed to me, for it best suits my purpose (deeper awareness of my birthplace) to acknowledge and correct them. Concerning the broadest issues dealt with in my article on the Chumash and Point Conception, Brian Haley has however not succeeded in convincing me of error on my part. He quotes an email I sent him (without identifying it as such) in which I state I do not want to get involved in this debate. I still do not want to. But he forces me to do so nonetheless. The sources of my "gossip and propaganda" include such works as *California Indian Shamanism*, *December's Child* and *Crystals in the Sky*, some of the most important works published on California's ethnography, acknowledged as such by most anthropologists.

Despite the rigorous scientific framework of Haley's recent article, and his collaboration with Larry Wilcoxon on "Anthropology and the Making of Chumash Tradition,"<sup>3</sup> my previous criticism that his and Wilcoxon's conclusions are the result of speculation and presumption still stands. One relevant example of such presumption is his statement that "Radić has not actually read any of the works of the scholars he criticizes." Rigorous scientific methodology yields to pure guesswork, and this is what John Anderson and myself have objected to in Haley and Wilcoxon's research. The ancient Greek cynic philosopher Herakleitos wrote: "Knowledge is not intelligence." There is no question that Brian Haley has read many more recent articles and books dealing with the scholarly debate over ethnicity than have I. However, from the knowledge that has been gathered to date, totally incorrect conclusions have been drawn.

For example, Haley and Wilcoxon proclaim that the “complete incorporation [of the Chumash] into the Spanish mission system [had occurred] by 1804,”(p. 768) although such a rash conclusion is pure guesswork, more pseudo-data to support their untenable theory.

Both Haley and Wilcoxon claim to have gone deeply into the subject of the Chumash culture. My belief is that all the European and American textual sources which they rely upon reveal only a tiny fragment of the Traditional Chumash culture, and that to go into depth in the available written material is not to go into depth in the ancient Chumash culture. The 8,000 years of Chumash presence in the region around Santa Barbara should humble an inquirer. How can the awesome scope of such a culture, emerging from eight millennia with profound silence, be truly *known* scientifically speaking? Haley refuses to realize that what he doesn't know about the Chumash is staggering compared to the available written data he has access to. The countless hundreds of millions of (needless to say, *undocumented*) couplings between men and women that have occurred in this area of California for eight thousand years up to the present day, producing unknowable lineages all over the land, are of course part of the vast ocean of information to which Haley has no access. And yet he bases his conclusions on the erroneous belief that he knows what these genealogies are. In his first preface to *Handbook of the Indians of California*, Alfred Kroeber wrote: “The vast bulk of even the significant happenings in the lives of uncivilized tribes are irrecoverable. For the past century our knowledge is slight; previous to that there is complete obscurity.”<sup>4</sup> Haley refuses to include this complete obscurity of the pre-Harrington past in his deductions. He insists on clubbing us with his favorite derogatory term "neo-Chumash" to refer to the Chumash whom he does not recognize as such. By what authority remains a mystery. I do not know the infinite genetic roots of the people whom Haley disdainfully labels "neo-Chumash". Our main difference is that I acknowledge my ignorance, while he has not yet confronted his own ignorance. He has drawn conclusions based on his knowledge, but he has not counter-balanced them with conclusions drawn based on his ignorance.

Haley still maintains that the Western Gate is a recent fabrication, as he did in his collaboration with Wilcoxon in 1997. In the earlier article (which Haley presumes I have

not read), the main piece of data presented refuting the Western Gate as part of Chumash oral tradition is “an explicit denial of the Point Conception story” by Harrington’s main “informant”, Kitsepawit (Fernando Librado). Harrington noted that Kitsepawit “said dead went to west. Did not go to Pt. Concepcion. No ghosts or anything about Pt. Concepcion as far as he has ever heard.” (p. 774) It should be remembered that the core of Chumash ritual at the time was a secret society called ‘*antap*’ that had gone underground for the sake of survival in the face of genocidal practices and mass conversion to Christianity, and that the Catholic Fernando was not an initiate in this underground spiritual brotherhood. “To west” in this coastal region is towards Point Conception and Point Arguello, which are the last western points of land before the Pacific Ocean, over which the souls of the dead voyaged to reach Shimilaqsha, the realm of the dead. (A similar oceanic cosmography is to be seen among the Yurok of northwestern California.) That Fernando claimed never to have heard the story need not imply that the story was not prevalent among ‘*antap*’ officials. Other places in Native California, while being supremely sacred, were considered taboo for just anyone to visit. Avikwame mountain on the Colorado river is one such sacred place among the Aha Macav (Mohave) people, part of an oral tradition of extremely ancient date. Even among people in western society, general ignorance reigns concerning Apollo’s shrine at Delphi, despite being an extremely important part of occidental oral and written tradition for thousands of years.

Harrington was informed about the “gate” at Humqaq (Point Conception) by Qilikutayiwit (María Solares). Concerning her source, Haley and Wilcoxon refer to John Johnson’s Ph.D dissertation “Chumash social organization: An ethnohistoric perspective (1988),” in which María’s source for the story is revealed as Ygnacio Telenahuit (1789-1865), nephew of her paternal grandfather Estevan Colocutayuit (1775-1846), from whom Ygnacio supposedly learned the story. Again, Haley and Wilcoxon draw the wrong conclusions from this data, which indeed is evidence that the story of the desolate “gate” to the west of established villages was in existence in the oral tradition long before María was born. This data, confirming an oral tradition in which the story of the Western Gate was passed on from generation to generation before María Solares was born (for it was obviously told to her grandfather who was born in the 18th century, and

told to the teller before him, and to the countless tellers receding into the maw of the past) was strangely used by Haley and Wilcoxon in their arguments denying the ancient oral tradition behind this story, which they maintain is of recent date: “The notion of the Western Gate lacks the qualities of age and persistence deemed crucial by the [federal] guidelines, and Chumash is far from being a continuous and bounded category of identity.” (p. 766) They are referring to the term “Chumash”, used by the mainland speakers of Barbareño to refer to the sea-faring residents of the Channel Islands. Haley and Wilcoxon point out that the name “Chumashan” was used by the ethnologist John Wesley Powell in the 1880s to designate the aboriginal speakers of the various “Chumashan” languages. The ethnologists’ choice of “Chumash” to designate the entire Chumashan-speaking population on California’s central coast was however not “arbitrarily” chosen as Haley and Wilcoxon believe. That anthropologists began the “making” of Chumash identity at the outset by “arbitrarily” giving them this name is very devious argumentation that ignores the facts. Barbareño was the Chumash language spoken at Syukhtun, the main town as stated already in 1542 in Cabrillo’s logbook. It is likely that already in 1542 among the inhabitants of this very important town of Syukhtun, the Barbareño name “Chumash” referred to perhaps the most influential of all the Chumashan groups, the star-gazers, myth-makers, navigators and water-people of the Channel Islands, who later became coastal inhabitants on the mainland around the new town Santa Barbara. It is a much more meaningful choice than many other Native Californian tribal names.

“Yurok” means “downriver” to the Karuk, even though the Yurok of the Klamath river still use this name to refer to themselves. Many Native Californian groups today go by names given them by anthropologists. The Cahuilla did not call themselves Cahuilla in the past, which is said to refer to a tribe in northern Mexico. The Serrano (“mountain people” in Spanish) still call themselves by this name chosen by anthropologists, even though they are aware that their native name is Maarringa’yam. The Juaneño (Acjachemem) are indirectly named after the Italian saint Giovanni di Capestrano whose name gave rise to mission San Juan Capestrano. Most bizarre of all Native Southern Californian names is Luiseño, for some mysterious reason named after the French king Louis XI! Haley and Wilcoxon’s argument also would adversely apply to the Tongva, a

newly acquired or “arbitrary” name of people formerly called Gabrielino, driven almost to total extinction by American society.

### **Art and Anthropology**

Haley offers little of substance to back up his numerous criticisms of the writings of Dr. John Anderson, who is a critic of Haley and his close colleagues. John is the editor of the highly successful Chumash Internet Project, and is currently assisting the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation in developing an ethnohistory of the pre-twentieth century which will be presented to the federal government when this band seeks reinstatement of their legal status. Haley mocks Anderson’s legitimate use of “Dr.” before his name, and makes the puzzling suggestion that the reader dismiss him as only a “layman.” It is puzzling indeed that Haley thinks he can strip Anderson of his academic credentials from the University of Wisconsin (M.A. in Philosophy, and a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies, with an emphasis on epistemology and community theory). Moreover, Haley asks his readers to dismiss Anderson’s scholarly writings because he has gone to the trouble of making them available to interested readers, museums, and book stores. Without apparent logic, Haley observes: “None are to be found in the Library of Congress or at vendors like Amazon.com.” He fails to inform his reader that Dr. Anderson has published in numerous professional journals, over a thirty-year career, and that these articles are available through any good research library. Such grumbling discredits Anderson no more than it would Thoreau and Whitman, who were also self-publishers and self-marketers of their (mostly unread, in Thoreau’s case) books. Haley elucidates with scientific precision: “To the best of my knowledge, Anderson has no credibility as a scholar among Chumash specialists.” If the Chumash themselves are to be regarded as “Chumash specialists,” then Anderson has a great deal more credibility among them than does Haley.

Haley also believes that as an artist, and a “layperson”, I am also unqualified to comment on Native Californian cultures. As such, I am a “Barthian legitimizer” in his view, a term equally as meaningless as “neo-Chumash”. He seems to reproach the editors of *Acta Americana* for “placing propaganda disguised as scholarship in a professional journal.” Equally so, he does not think that my “ability to publish in a scholarly journal”

is a good thing, for in such a “role” I am able “to recruit more outside legitimizers (*Acta Americana* readers) who might raise their voices loud enough to overwhelm Old Chumash (and other) objections.” This view was not held by the editors of *Acta Americana*, who believed that as a self-taught student of Native Californian cultures, I had something of interest to say. For this open-mindedness towards a “layperson” I am especially grateful to Jan-Åke Alvarsson, Åke Hultcrantz and Staffan Brunius.

One need not be an anthropologist to be knowledgeable about indigenous American cultures and histories. The so-called “objective observer” from the scientific community who in no way wishes to mix his own feelings with the native people he “studies”, just may not see the forest for the trees. This thoroughly scientific approach led Alfred Kroeber and others to apply Freudian prejudices to the Yurok that could even include such deep insights as their being “paranoid”, “anal retentive”, or suffering from other psychoanalytical ailments. The accompanying coldness of such scientific methods (which have offended many native people) may just mean that the best observers of these cultures have been non-anthropologists. For example, the historian Francesca Fryer’s in-depth non-fiction trilogy, *Sandspit*, dealing with the Yurok of northwestern California and their interaction with white society, provides a more rounded, human, view of this culture than Kroeber’s. Not being an “objective observer,” Ms. Fryer dares to mix her own life and feelings with her subject matter, and in doing so provides the reader with an emanation of *living people* absent from many anthropological texts.

Haley’s cold scientific term “neo-Chumash” denotes real individuals with real feelings and knowledge about themselves and their community. His approach lacks genuine empathy from the heart and soul. It just may be that culture is not at all something conducive to minute, a priori scientific study, but to random encounters and unexpected revelations that are part of the artistic process. The artistic method of observing Native American cultures was used with astounding results by George Catlin, before there even was such a thing as anthropology. Franz Boas is generally acknowledged as “the father of American anthropology.” When I once suggested to an archaeologist in Santa Barbara that George Catlin in fact deserves this title, even though he was a mere artist, I was given a look that said: “Here is an ignorant fellow.” George Catlin is considered scientifically inaccurate and overly romantic. And yet his epic

overview of Native North and South America came before even Franz Boas was born. The artistic structure behind my words seemed to irritate Brian Haley, despite the fact that the art of a given culture is uppermost in the study of anthropology. In the same respect, the artistic structure in Catlin's writings on Native America often escapes the anthropologists, who give the man and his opus less respect than they deserve. In an essay published in 1887 entitled "The Structure of Geography," Franz Boas wrote: "Cosmography is closely related to the arts, as the way in which the mind is affected by phenomena forms an important branch of the study. It therefore requires a different treatment from that of the physical sciences." Franz Boas was trained from an early age in the fundamentals of western classical music, and took a serious interest in indigenous songs. His ethnomusicological results from the British Columbia Jesup expedition was one of his great ethnographic achievements.<sup>5</sup> This closeness to the art of music, and to the arts in general, gave Boas the insight he revealed in the above quote. The "different treatment" to be given the artistic phenomena (rock art, myths, songs, dances) studied by anthropologists – a *spiritual* treatment – is not yet in practice. It was however George Catlin's normal treatment of the native cultures he studied. One of the major historians of North America, Bernard de Voto, clearly saw the (unpaid) debt America owes George Catlin: "So far as the plains tribes are concerned, in fact, and despite all the observations of earlier travelers among them, American ethnography may be said to begin with Catlin." (*Across the Wide Missouri*).

That which is under study in the field of cultural anthropology is culture. That element of culture which endures longest and is the most meaningful is Art. Here is where George Catlin possessed expertise in Native American cultures that no anthropologist has access to. *To have this expertise, one must be an artist.* The medicine men whom Catlin encountered did not question his credibility, but immediately recognized his "great medicine" and saw him as a colleague. In *An Anthropologist Looks at History* Alfred Kroeber lamented unnatural, abstract sciences, and saw creative intuition as superior to scientific observation. Feeling like an outsider in the more theoretical sciences, Kroeber – echoing Boas' "different treatment" – wrote: "Our true paternity lies elsewhere."

The "different [artistic] treatment" Boas saw as necessary for the study of cosmography is the treatment I give Chumash culture. I do not give it my professional

scrutiny. It is a sacred calling for me. Herein lies the “different” nature of my prose compared to other articles in this journal, which, it seems, discredits me in Haley’s eyes. His deduction that I am ignorant about Chumash culture is indeed true. But so is he. Even J.P. Harrington, the expert par excellence, was ignorant of Chumash culture. One source of some of the “gossip” in my article is *Crystals in the Sky* by Travis Hudson and Ernest Underhay. This work gathers much of Harrington’s material on the Chumash, and reveals that despite his profound data gathering, he never came into contact with the spiritual leaders of the secret ‘*antap* society, who controlled the artistic ceremonies and spiritual traditions of the Chumash from time immemorial. The closest Harrington got was his Christian “informant” María Solares (Qilikutayiwit), daughter-in-law of the ‘*antap* leader Rafael Solares. That is: the veritable nucleus and core of this ancient culture was so secretive that even Harrington was denied access to it. Going into depth means to understand that despite his unequalled expertise, the colossal amount of information that Harrington *never* collected puts even him among the ignorant.

### **“Neo-Chumash” and “Old Chumash”**

In Haley’s artificial dichotomy “neo-Chumash” and “old Chumash” (whom he identifies with Catholic Chumash), one can wonder *who* these “neo-Chumash” are who suddenly “appeared” from nowhere to monitor construction companies digging up ancient cemeteries, and making life difficult for those Haley calls “older, historically-rooted [Catholic] Chumash communities”? For Haley, they are “a new ethnic community that has formed in late 20th century California.” Did the “neo-Chumash” come from outer space, or were they always there? If Haley does not want to come right out and say that they are fakes, then who are they? Why are they “new”? We can recall the colossal gap in Harrington’s data which is the determined secrecy and silence of an entire ceremonial community, and wonder if Haley and his colleagues actually have *all* the threads to the modern Chumash communities. What he calls the “neo-Chumash ethnogenesis”, in which data gathered by ethnologists is used by modern Chumash claimants to “make” a tradition they did not have before, is a sinister use of knowledge that is damaging to non-reservation native communities. Shall not “this little matter of genocide” be an extenuating circumstance for a culture almost driven to extinction to

regain its lost traditions in any way possible? And if they first heard of the Western Gate from *December's Child*, does this invalidate its importance as a sacred shrine?

Haley accuses me of using “ethnohistorical descriptions of the early to mid-19th century as if they were about the early to mid-20th century.” He chose not to provide examples of these faulty time frames for the simple reason that he can find none in my article. One need not exert oneself to understand obvious facts like María Solares’ information coming from the early 20th century. One reference to the mid-19th century in my former article is the seaman Richard Henry Dana’s account of Point Conception in 1835, a time frame which is made quite evident for the reader. I also mentioned a priest at mission San Buenaventura in 1848 who had a feathered medicine pole destroyed. I likened this feathered pole with the one on the Chumash cemetery Shalawa Meadow today. Again, these two separate time frames are made very evident to the reader. More recently, on January 25, 1992, Chumash clan members met at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History to discuss such misrepresentations such as Haley’s which they believe have harmed their people. Many of the Chumash people present that day Haley would regard as “neo-Chumash”. Attending the meeting were museum director Dennis Power, Leslie Power, anthropologists Steve Craig and John Johnson, archaeologist Clay Singer and Phil Holmes of the Park Service. Among the Chumash present were: Kote Lota (who invited me to the meeting), his wife A-lul’Koy and John Ruiz of the Owl clan; Sal Perez, Redstar and Mati Waiya of the Turtle clan; Charlie Cooke of the Eagle clan; Pilulaw Khus of the Northern Bear clan; Choy Slo of the Blackbird clan; Lydia Rodriguez, Anwai Wilanci (Shoshone) and Alan White Bear, who was at the time chairman of the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation. Some drove many miles from San Luis Obispo, Santa Ynez, Santa Paula and Thousand Oaks to attend the meeting.

At issue was a reluctance by certain anthropologists to regard the majority of contemporary Chumash descendants as legitimately linked to their ancestral culture. This attitude based on research such as Haley’s, the majority of people with Chumash ancestry regard as insulting. Along with the insistence of some that this is none of the museum’s business, it was pointed out that mission records only offer a fragment of the whole picture, at times quite inaccurate, and that only they, the Chumash, know these intricate family ties in full – information they regard as totally private. A-lul’Koy said

that it was degrading to have strangers scrutinizing one's family and making decisions about private matters that only her people are qualified to make. She stated that things her "auntie" told her about her family tree contradict the mission records. Haley's colleague John Johnson examined the mission records for her family as well as those for her husband Kote's family. Earlier, he told the present writer that Kote was not Chumash and things Kote said about his ancestry should be "taken with a grain of salt." This is a roundabout way to call a man a liar, and Kote was understandably offended. This was one of the offenses that led to the museum meeting. There was anger expressed at the meeting over insinuations that they are not Chumash based on this faulty data, and all desired to establish equally as good relations with the museum as they had with the Park Service. Speaking directly to John Johnson, Kote said, "You are hurting a lot of people – a lot of families." (Brian Haley as well hurts these people, these families.) John Ruiz was irritated at how relations with the museum had deteriorated since the death of Travis Hudson and the tomol (plank canoe) project a few years ago, when the participants were denoted as "Chumash" when it suited the museum's publicity needs. But now they were humiliated by on-going insinuations from the museum that they were not Chumash. All present were very upset over this. Posing the question, "Are there pure-blooded English, Germans or anything else?", archaeologist Clay Singer answered that there is no such thing as a pure-blooded anything, for the nature of human society is to "bleed and breed" over national boundaries. It was agreed, even by the museum staff, that there was a need for the scientists to broaden their understanding of the meaning of "Chumash".

Finally, the main purpose of the meeting was on the table. However unwillingly, John Johnson offered an apology to the Chumash present, as he apologized years ago for a damaging *LA Times* article that hurt many people. (The museum's official minutes of this meeting do not mention this apology.) The general feeling was that it was hoped a third apology will never be needed. Johnson was thanked ironically for having united all the Chumash clans in a way that they have been seldom united. Normally, the Chumash community keeps a low profile, and even anthropologists know little of their activities. But, as Mati Waiya put it, once burial grounds are desecrated or other offences committed, they emerge in defense of their homeland with a very determined sense of purpose. They asked the museum to have a better idea of what is happening in the

Chumash community at large, to have more empathy with real, living human beings, and not mere scientific concern for a culture officially deemed extinct. The museums and university departments that anthropology fostered have not traditionally had the welfare of the living people whom they study as their primary concern. Anthropology leans more towards dead cultures than living cultures. The artifacts, the human remains, the ethnographic literature and the good-paying academic careers play a greater role than genuine good will for the people being scrutinized in a scientific manner. The culture that *was* takes priority over the culture that *is*, as the legacies of Boas and Kroeber illustrate.

Choy Slo was most often silent at the meeting, but when he chose to speak, his voice reverberated authoritatively with thousands of years of Chumash culture. He wished to emphasize the *gravity* of this issue, gravity which has consistently been ignored by American society and anthropologists. Should the offences continue, and this grave situation be regarded in a nonchalant manner, Choy Slo spoke of “other levels of war.” As quiet testimony to the gravity of his words, Alan White Bear, who was then war chief of all the Chumash clans, stood in the back with his arms folded, listening to every word. Choy Slo added: “We are the keepers of the Western Gate.” He summed up by saying that the balance tips in favor of thousands of years of habitation of this land, as opposed to less than two short centuries of American presence in California. Looking at the museum spokesmen, Choy Slo said: “You work for us.”

The family background of the people at the museum, unknowable to outsiders, is a matter of word of mouth, that to dispute is extremely impolite. How can they all be liars? My impression then (as it is today ten years later) was that these people were serious and intelligent Native Americans who had a legitimate grievance against such presumptions as Haley’s that they are Johnny-come-lateleys in the Chumash world, simply because they have not been as visible as the “old” Catholic Chumash families about whom Haley writes. A question that Haley may find difficult to answer is, why did the museum director call the meeting at which an official public apology was offered to the “neo-Chumash” present by Haley’s colleague John Johnson? Johnson’s public apology was given (however unwillingly) with the blessings of the museum. Why did he do this if it is truly believed that they are indeed “neo-Chumash”? Was it a farce? It may in fact have been a farce, considering that no mention of Johnson’s official public

apology to the Chumash was included in the official minutes of the museum meeting, and that these “neo-Chumash” insinuations still persist.

### **A second look at Haley and Wilcoxon 1997**

Let us examine Haley and Wilcoxon’s reasoning in “Anthropology and the Making of Chumash Tradition” a second time. They fluctuate between the “making” or “invention” of Chumash tradition (implying something that didn’t exist prior to that), to a “reconstruction of ethnicity” or “regeneration”. Haley and Wilcoxon write:

”Anthropological knowledge generated by research is incorporated by our subjects and changes their own understanding of their cultural identity and heritage.” (p. 762) I agree with this statement. What I do not agree with are the conclusions drawn from it. The *tomol* (plank canoe) project of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History is the best example of this phenomenon. The participants experience it as a “reprise” of a tradition put on hold, the tradition of canoe building, paddling and navigation prevalent in Chumash society for thousands of years. The first modern *tomol*, named *Heliki* (Falcon), was paddled around the channel islands on a ten-day adventure in the 1976. Haley and Wilcoxon believe that the participants in this adventure, among whom was Kote Lotah, “shed former ethnic identities to become Chumash following transformative life crises and experiences, including divorce, battles with substance dependency [...] and discovery by a Traditionalist’s ‘genetic memory’ time-traveling method.” (pp. 766-767)

Not all anthropologists share this view. More recently, in 1997, *'Elye 'wun* (Swordfish) was launched in Santa Barbara (Syukhtun) harbor in a historic reprise of the ancient maritime tradition, after nine months being constructed. In 2001, Chumash men and women again paddled *'Elye 'wun*, this time from the mainland to Anacapa and then Santa Cruz islands. This crossing is remembered as a joyous and historic event.<sup>6</sup> The highly qualified editorial staff of *News from Native California* give the *tomol* project their full moral support. The issue of “old” and “new” Chumash is not dealt with in their journal. The “reprise” of the *tomol* tradition would not have been possible without prior anthropological research. But the great joy and satisfaction it generates is sullied by the idea of “neo-Chumash” individuals “inventing” a maritime tradition millennia old.

Among the Lakota of the mid-19th century there were certain people (many from Red Cloud's band) who converted to Christianity, enjoyed food, trade goods and privileges from the white society not easily available to the bands still leading a nomadic life. They became extremely fond of things like coffee, whiskey and metal pots and pans, and were called "hang-around-the-fort" people. For this reason they were more visible than the Oglala of Crazy Horse and the Hunkpapa of Sitting Bull, who shunned contact with the "dominant society". Had there been anthropologists in those days, one could imagine that they would have acquired "informants" from the Christian "hang-around-the-fort" people, because they were the most visible tribal members. A similar situation occurred in Southern California with, for example, the Chumash. The bloody revolts that occurred in Southern California reveal that not all the tribes were willing to docilely accept becoming "mission Indians", much as the people of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull were not willing to accept Christian domination. In 1810, thirty-three Chumash were flogged in Santa Barbara for nine consecutive days, after participating in the unsuccessful revolt against Mission San Gabriel in Los Angeles. In 1824, a gruesome flogging of a Chumash neophyte at Mission Santa Inez resulted in the largest rebellion in California history. Such genocidal practices occurred all over California. The floggings and mass murders have stopped, but the oppression of the Chumash people continues in more devious ways today. The modern citizens of Santa Barbara remember the devastated Chumash culture when it is too late. Ironically, the Spanish expression *hablar de Santa Bárbara cuando ya ésta lloviendo* (literally: to speak of Saint Barbara when it is already raining) means to remember something when it is too late. Fernando Librado and María Solares were both Christian Chumash who were Harrington's "informants". These two well-known people were however not allowed access into the innermost spiritual realm of Chumash society which, it should be emphasized, *was totally unknown to Harrington*. None of his many "informants" were 'antap (secret society) initiates.<sup>7</sup> The "fort" in this instance of "hang-around-the-fort" people was the mission system, which was gradually replaced by the museum system. Curators replaced *curas* (priests), and "informants" replaced "neophytes". All the while, the ceremonial world of the Chumash to which Harrington had no access continued in secrecy. It forbid even Christian Chumash access, as I have previously written of María Solares, whose mother was an initiate in the sacred

mysteries at Tejon, but who was not allowed to take her deceased mother's place because of her conversion to Christianity.<sup>8</sup>

Haley and Wilcoxon themselves were given the truth from the horse's mouth by two unnamed Chumash "traditionalists" ("neo-Chumash" in Haley's terminology) whom they interviewed many years ago. The two Chumash spoke of the "call of the blood" that was leading them back to their roots, which Haley and Wilcoxon did not take seriously. However, in evoking his grandfather, the Kiowa medicine man Mammedaty whom he never met, the poet N. Scott Momaday also wrote of "a memory that persists in the blood, and there only."<sup>9</sup> My ethnic background is Serbian, Greek, Scottish, Irish, English, possibly French and German. This is information that comes directly from my mother, and I can't imagine someone wanting to dispute this. I grew up in Southern California totally ignorant of my mainly Greek and Serbian roots. When I studied Serbian culture later, and learned of the battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389, in which the entire Serbian army was wiped out by the Turks, and how the bards played their stringed instrument called *gusle* as they sang of this epic event throughout generations and centuries, I also experienced the "call of the blood", especially considering that as a poet one becomes a medium of the epic past. To seek out forgotten traditions is a very American endeavor, for the violent making of the United States not only destroyed many traditions of the First Nations, but also those of Africans and Europeans who found themselves stranded on a new continent. Wherever human cultures exist, a continual process of metamorphosis is at play, in which contact with other cultures brings about such myriad changes that "authenticity" is an eternal variable. The ancient Greek orator Isocrates (436-338 BC) once pondered over "what it means to be Greek." He came to the conclusion that "the word 'Greek' is not so much a term of birth as of mentality, and is applied to a common culture rather than a common descent."<sup>10</sup> If one believes Isocrates, then Haley and Wilcoxon's hair-splitting over genealogies is revealed as being beside the point. The essence of Chumash identity is much more than blood lines. It is a state of mind.

The biologic and geologic memory of the continent persists in blood, stones, mountains, trees and fossils. This primordial continental memory is universal to all born on it, though most Americans are oblivious to it. Australian aborigines call it "dream time." There is an essence here independent of European traditions, although we must use

Europe's traditions to speak of it in our mother tongue. A common prejudice in anthropological research since Franz Boas is that “authenticity” mostly concerns data from a pre-contact past, and that changes made in cultural traditions during and after the Conquest are less “authentic”. The Canadian historian Wendy Wickwire wrote recently of Franz Boas: “Because he was a salvage ethnographer, however, his view of oral tradition was narrow. Unless his informants’ animal stories were linked to the remote past – ideally, the precontact past – he did not place high value on them.”<sup>11</sup> The dilemma of authenticity in modern Native American cultures arises like a many-headed Hydra when cars replace war-ponies, telephones replace smoke signals, universities replace the wilderness, and English replaces ancient languages. Today we hear modernized Coyote tales in which the Trickster is portrayed as everything from a pimp to a Zen monk.

The Western Gate is a modern English term that puts all who love California in touch with a profound and ancient phenomenon. Its age, as a Chumash spokesman told Haley and Wilcoxon, is “immaterial”. Meteorologically speaking, surfers and navigators know the profound impact Point Conception has on surf (especially north swells) and weather patterns in general. Weather satellite images often show huge weather systems coming down from the Gulf of Alaska and pivoting around Point Conception to effect surfers waiting for big waves far south in San Onofre and Baja California. It is not far-fetched to couple this vital meteorological influence of Point Conception for millennia with an equally as vital spiritual influence on a culture present in the region for 8,000 years. The oceanic importance of Point Conception, totally removed from any connection to Chumash culture, was expressed by the seaman Richard Henry Dana in his classic *Two Years Before the Mast*, as I wrote in my previous article. Chumash culture was unknown to Dana (although he surely beheld “mission Indians” during his stay in Santa Barbara in 1835), and yet he attached supreme importance to the point, calling it “the Cape Horn of California.” Dana was astonished by the power of the winds at Point Conception, and never in his sailing career, even rounding Cape Horn, had he experienced such fierce winds. This phenomenon was obviously not ignored by the Chumash, and even if, as Haley and Wilcoxon point out, there are other sacred sites in the realm related to the journey of a dead soul, it is difficult to find one with such ferocious raw power as that of Humqaq. Haley and Wilcoxon were told point blank by an unnamed Chumash leader

that belief in the sacredness of Point Conception, “whether 10 minutes old or 10,000 years is immaterial.” (p. 777) Even today, Brian Haley refuses to see the simple wisdom of this utterance. He continues to baffle us with his academic pride. One Chumash man my age told me that ceremonies took place on Hammonds meadow in Santa Barbara during his childhood, decades before the 1970s which Haley and Wilcoxon declared as the time Chumash traditions were “made”. I have no reason to doubt what I was told by this intelligent and respected Chumash elder, but the two anthropologists have chosen to consistently *not* believe what they were told.

Nor did Haley and Wilcoxon believe their Chumash sources who maintained that their tradition had been transmitted to them orally by elders “who had long maintained traditional beliefs in *secret* [my italics] from non-Indians, scholars, and Christianized Chumash.” (p. 767) The two scholars categorically do not believe this, and add: “It [the secret oral tradition] is, they claim, one of the last aspects of their culture which has not been ‘taken away’ or ‘spoiled’ by ‘Western Civilization.’” (p. 767) The crux of Haley’s argument is that these people whom he denigrates with the label “neo-Chumash” are liars who have created an “imagined community” comprised of individuals who have “shed former ethnic identities to become Chumash following transformative life crises and experiences,” (p. 776) thus perpetuating the “arbitrary origins of Chumash identity.” (p. 768) These are very serious allegations, and, coupled with Haley’s attacks against me, John Anderson and the Chumash spiritual leaders, it will be difficult now for him to save face, even if he admits that he has inappropriately defamed those critical of his findings. Haley and Wilcoxon emphasize the “shortage of evidence” concerning orally transmitted knowledge, the Western Gate, and “this system of ‘gates’ with their respective ‘indigenous keepers,’” alluding to the Eastern Gate at Montauk Point, Long Island (New York) and the Shinnecock people, who are in ceremonial contact with the Chumash.” (On my way out to Montauk Point in 1972 on a camping trip, I was arrested and sent to jail in East Hampton for disobeying a “No Trespassing” sign posted on the beach.)

In 1978, at the time of the occupation of Point Conception (see my previous *Acta Americana* article) anthropologists Steve Craig, Chester King and the staff of the Santa Barbara Indian Center published a report entitled “The religious and historical significance of the Point Conception-Shishilop area to Native Americans”. Haley and

Wilcoxon conclude that “the report is seriously flawed” because “participant testimony” is “taken at face value.” (p. 771) The essence of the blunder committed by Haley and Wilcoxon is that they do not believe what they have been told, do not take it “at face value.” That is, Chumash leaders with whom they do not agree are very simply *lying* in their view of things. As for those of us who do not believe they are liars, Haley is concerned over our “behavior” which he diagnoses as a disorder caused by “simple faith in the stories received from one’s neo-Chumash constituents.”

Another such story that I have “simple faith” in is the Pipe Stone quarry in Minnesota, which George Catlin visited in the 1830s. Like Point Conception, it also had spiritual significance to tribes all over North America, and not just local significance. When this occurred is not important. Nor is it important when the “pan-Indian” spiritual significance for Humqaq (Point Conception) began. It is now a fact, one that Haley and Wilcoxon are more and more hard-pressed to deny. Although they don’t identify their sources, it is possible that the same Chumash leader who told me of the Eastern Gate of the Shinnecock, Kote Lotah, was also their source for this information. I believe what I was told by this intelligent and highly respected spiritual leader, Haley and Wilcoxon do not. Despite what seems a very meticulous article complete with multiple references for a single sentence, three pages in fine print filled to capacity with sources and references, the whole giving the appearance of an ultra-scientific (and therefore truthful) endeavor, Haley and Wilcoxon themselves are the inventors of a tall tale, not the Chumash. Anthropologists Steve Craig and Chester King believed what they were told by the Chumash about the Western Gate, *not* from infantile credulity, but from an intelligent assessment of the material before them. Craig and King, like myself, do not automatically assume that the Chumash leaders are liars because of a “shortage of evidence.” The bible for Haley and Wilcoxon is Harrington’s notes on the Chumash. When Craig, King and staff conclude that the Chumash islanders attached spiritual significance to Humqaq, Haley and Wilcoxon oppose them merely because this information “is not found in Harrington’s notes.” (p. 771) The unfortunate thing here is that they do not acknowledge the existence of data *not* found in Harrington’s notes or in other ethnographic studies, data which cannot be questioned although it is unknown to us, part of the secret core of

Chumash culture, the huge gap in Harrington's data that has been confirmed by Hudson and Underhay.

As I wrote previously, in 1978 the Chumash and other Native Americans set up an encampment at Point Conception to protest the development of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal proposed for this sacred site. Twenty years after the encampment, a participant, Mike Khus, published an article entitled "Humqaq" in *News From Native California* (fall 1998) in which he reassessed the importance of the encampment to the Chumash. He commented on new threats to the shrine at Humqaq from the expanding commercial spaceport, as well as other development proposals in the vicinity. Mike Khus has a master's degree in history from Stanford University, and teaches high school history in central California. He is a member of the (federally unrecognized) Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, among whom are the "neo-Chumash" of Haley's article. Khus has been active in cultural and federal recognition policy issues for many years, and serves on the federal Advisory Council on California Indian Policy. Brian Haley has little understanding for the 1978 occupation of Point Conception, and believes that it was at that time when the Western Gate was "invented" as a political tool to acquire power. The editors of *News From Native California* are extremely involved with Native Californian communities on a daily basis, and are themselves linguists and ethnologists highly respected throughout California. The fact that they published "Humqaq" with their full support again illustrates that Haley's view does not find universal support among his colleagues. He and Wilcoxon wrote of the occupation: "It was here that many Traditionalists learned and perfected many of the new traditions." (p.771) They give anthropological sources for this belief, but testimony to the contrary by Chumash people made directly to them in their fieldwork Haley consistently refuses to believe. The sunrise ceremonies, sweathouses and other events during the occupation mentioned by Mike Khus are not "new traditions." We read of sunrise and bathing ceremonies among southern Californian tribes in the 19th century. The mound on which Syukhtun was built bore evidence of sweathouses, a practice that is generally accepted as being native to the Chumash, and not a "pan-Indian" acquisition, nor a "new tradition." Credibility in this matter is not so much an academic matter of which anthropological sources one cites, but a poetic matter of having felt the fierce winds of Humqaq, heard the roaring surf, seen the

cormorants diving, the seals body surfing, and experienced the awe which this sacred place inspires. The shrine is there for anyone to see. It is the place itself.

Haley and Wilcoxon conclude: “We suggest that there is no neutral ground on which anthropologists can take refuge.” (p. 776) This seems quite true, alas, to their own disadvantage. Their error has caused much harm, much trouble, much confusion. However much anthropologists believe in the lack of credibility of those whom Haley defames with the name “neo-Chumash,” one of the main advocates of this theory, John Johnson, gave an official public apology to the Chumash in 1992, in essence retracting his allegiance to this theory. This official apology is a now part of local history, a turning point in which the anthropologist (even if he was not sincere) publicly said that he was sorry. Haley refers to his “ethical obligation” and his “professional ethics” in his recent article. An ethical obligation he has yet to fulfill, for which the Chumash have thus far waited in vain, is Brian Haley’s apology.

## **Conclusion**

At the end of Haley and Wilcoxon’s article are ten commentaries from anthropologists around the world. Few seriously question their conclusions and, on the contrary, most share the view of Anders Linde-Laursen from Lund University in Sweden, that “Haley and Wilcoxon nicely demonstrate how anthropological writings beginning in the 1880s invented the Chumash.” (p. 783) However, some commentators like Jonathan Friedman, another Swede from Lund University, reasoned that “if there were no such ‘scholarly’ identities involved the kind of issue raised here might not exist.” (p. 779) The scholaly identities of “neo-Chumash” and “old-Chumash” are inventions of these anthropologists. One can wonder just how much of the bitter conflict over this issue was also their making. They have clumsily entered a domain “where angels fear to tread,” and far from proceeding cautiously, helped to create schisms between family members who suddenly found themselves on either side of the artificial boundary created by such anthropological presumption. Only David S. Trigger from the University of Western Australia cast significant doubt over their conclusions: “Whether any people who now call themselves Chumash should appropriately be recognised as maintaining aspects of tradition once practiced by their earlier generations remains somewhat unclear to me.” (p.

786) Trigger also wonders whether anthropologists who *believe* what they are told by Chumash residents about an ongoing oral tradition are unsophisticated and naïve, or collaborators in a systematic fabrication. Perhaps Haley and Wilcoxon have dismissed their more open-minded colleagues a bit too hastily?

Nearly two years later in the same journal, Les W. Field published his “Complicities and Collaborations: Anthropologists and the ‘Unacknowledged Tribes’ of California”<sup>12</sup> in which he deems “anthropology complicit with colonialism,” and “anthropologists [...] as formal instruments of the bureaucratic machinery.” He begins his article thus: “California’s statehood and assimilation into the United States during the 19th century were accompanied by genocide against the indigenous population; among those peoples that survived, a large number were officially erased by a federal policy of nonrecognition in which anthropologists and anthropological knowledge played a role.” Although Field is also an anthropologist, he expresses “outrage” over “anthropology’s role in [...] historical injustices” that created unacknowledged tribes and disenfranchised Native Americans all over the country. He believes that anthropologists can help rectify these injustices. Concerning Haley and Wilcoxon’s article, Field is critical of their claiming “ultimate authority” to “utilize ethnohistoric and ethnographic data to determine the nature of Chumash identity and the veracity of land claims by Chumash groups.” Field continues: “The political consequences of these moves enable them to legitimate the federally recognized Chumash on the Santa Ynez reservation and delegitimize unrecognized groups.” (p.195)

One of several ways for anthropologists “complicit with colonialism” to remove legitimacy from native peoples in the state is to pronounce them, for example, “neo-Chumash.” This method has been a total success, for the Chumash people in question have been consistently denied federal recognition because of such self-appointed “judges of the genuineness and authenticity of tradition,” ( p. 765) and brokers of “identity negotiation”. Brian Haley continues to cause turmoil and distress in the community.

Stockholm, Sweden  
December 1, 2002

## APPENDIX

**Email to John Anderson from  
Paul Pommier, Barbareño Chumash elder  
December 2, 2002**

Dear John,

You must remember when a possum is cornered it becomes very vicious and has no where to go but to attack. It is evident from Brian Haley's recent article in the *Acta Americana* journal, that Haley and his associates are feeling the pressure, and they really do not understand our culture. We have long been survivors. They know nothing of how we survived through poverty and what was passed on to us by our parents. They are the Johnny come lately anthropologists and archaeologists. Too often, they have learn about history of our culture by scavenging from our ancestors graves. How can a few people who hold the title of anthropologist or archaeologist preach to me about their ancestors lives they learn like every one else through their oral family history in some one else's land. Why don't these people who want to challenge our history sit across the table with our elders and tell them directly to their face that they are “neo-Chumash”? I, as an elder, can tell them what an anthropological and archaeological hypocrite is, and how they enriched themselves on our burial digs and all the Chumash artifacts that have been taken to museums. They have educated themselves by desecrating our burial lands. Ask the Natives how they feel. Sit and talk to them one on one. The only education that they can so call claim is what they have learned from the destruction of our culture under this constitution. We the descendants have the rights to worship in our religion and ceremonial beliefs, be there only one drop of Indian blood that flows through our veins. I would tell them to study the life of Maria De Los Angeles the grand daughter of Chief Beato Temiacuca. Then maybe they will see how our people went underground for all these years. At this point in history we, the Chumash elders, are appreciative towards the scholars who have worked closely with us to record our traditional heritage. But we owe these scholars like Haley, who claim the exclusive federal role of “delineators of identity”, *nothing*.

## NOTES

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