

## INTRODUCTION

## ONE

### An Indigenous Point of View

AS A WRITER AND A NATIVE SCHOLAR OF MAYA, I want to present some ideas on how Indigenous People create knowledge as they relate themselves to the natural environment. For Mayas, it is important to build a Native theory as a contribution to the dialogue between anthropologists and Natives, and this is what I propose in *Mayalogue*. This dialogue must include the nonhuman persons as part of the cosmic web of life we call *q'inal*, which means *life, time, and existence*.

It is time to remove ourselves from scientific materialism, which has neglected the subjective dimensions of human experience for the past five centuries among the Mayas. Postmaterialist scientists and writers continue to free themselves from colonialist and materialist ideologies as they widen their views of the natural world, while enriching their human experience. The ways in which Indigenous People see the world and their cosmologies have been considered a distortion of reality; by rejecting these other ways of knowing, colonialist writings dismiss the Native's belief systems and values of respect and compassion that leads to a peaceful relationship with the natural world.

My current task is to write on these Native ideas, hoping to show how the world works for us (Maya cosmology). It has been a while—since graduate school from 1987 to 1992—that I wanted to write on this concept, but

my work was always postponed because I had to follow the academic tradition, which only approved as scientific the writings that fit within Western frameworks or paradigms.

In addition, my knowledge of Maya culture was put aside during my training in graduate school, where influential works of Western thinkers were the only required text to be used in the classrooms. No Latin American scholars were read, which made me realize that Native traditions were far removed from being considered as a possible source of knowledge. In academia, Native knowledge was seen as irrelevant or even nonexistent. That is why, as a Native scholar, I had to go back to my Maya tradition and rethink what should be an intellectual contribution of modern Mayas to the social sciences and humanities.

I had to follow the great Lakota scholar Vine Deloria, who has hoped that Native Americans would develop a Native theory based on the philosophy of cosmic unity or connectedness with everything that exists in the living universe. Vine Deloria envisioned that “the next generation of American Indians could radically transform scientific knowledge by grounding themselves in traditional knowledge about the world and demonstrating how everything is connected to everything else” (Deloria 1999:39).

The concept of relativity or interrelatedness is a key issue that has differentiated Native human action and attitudes in relation to the natural world. Fortunately, little by little, non-Indigenous People have come to understand that Indigenous Peoples’ worldviews are different and diverse as are the thousands of other cultures that exist on earth. We can argue that there are many worlds “to view,” and not just one world that everyone must see and agree on, as we were led to believe by Western philosophy and the Cartesian doctrine of scientific objectivity.

Since the early years of contact, called the “discovery of America” by Europeans, the Creationist (Christian) paradigm enforced incorrect views of Indigenous People as half humans. Effectively, the powerful Christian Creationist paradigm excluded Indigenous People from the Great Chain of Beings (God, archangels, angels, saints, and humans created by God), thus, classifying them as creatures outside of God’s creation. The negation of the humanity of Indigenous People had a negative effect throughout time, because Native people were not considered “real” human beings, but beasts or cruel savages. The doubts on the rationality of Indigenous People of the Americas gave rise to the famous debate between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda at Valladolid, Spain in 1555 (Las Casas 1974).

But then, the Catholic King and Queen wanted to know more about their new domains, so they ordered the *encomenderos* to provide reports on the people and cultures that they have found on these invaded territories. A questionnaire was used to elicit information from the elders of the land, so that they could tell them about their antiquities. Curiously, almost all reports contained the same answer to the question concerning their religious belief—that the ancient Mayas: “*Tenían el conocimiento de solo un Dios que crió el cielo y la tierra y todas las cosas*” (had the knowledge of the Only-One-God [Hunab’ K’uh] who created heaven and earth and everything that exists) (*Documentos Inéditos* 1898:78). The Spanish *encomenderos* and priests learned immediately that the Indians of the Maya region of Yucatan had a common religious belief on the Only One God (Hunab’ K’uh), or the power of the universe that created everything that exists. Because of the existence of certain similarities in the spiritual world of Europeans and Mesoamericans, it was possible for Indigenous People to adopt and rework some religious symbols into their belief systems. In this way, a syncretic religion was created for accommodating Indigenous worldviews within the imposing and dominant Western religious traditions, such as Catholicism (Bricker 1981; Farris 1984; Ruz y Navarro 2005).

The sacred literary book of the Maya called *The Popol Vuh* is a good example for discussing Indigenous cosmologies. For example, the myths of origin and creation in the *Popol Vuh* are like the stories in Genesis of the Christian Bible. Although, a major difference is that for Indigenous People “creation” did not occur in a distant or unknown “mythical” place (Eden), but on Indigenous territories. These places of creation are a part of the sacred geography such as the “emergence holes” or *sipapuni* among Navajo and Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, United States. In other words, Indigenous People have strong connections with the land, which is the center of their spirituality. To understand earth is to understand ourselves, since everything is interrelated and dependent on human action, which must be based on the values of respect and reciprocity.

With this open-mindedness, Indigenous People, especially the *ahb’èh* or *ajq’ij* (Maya diviners and guides) achieved wisdom by paying attention to nature, while living and experiencing the gifts of life emanating from nature, earth, and the universe. Thus, the common Native phrase “We all are relatives” is a universal Indigenous truth that is shared and promoted by Indigenous People, then and now, as well as by traditionalists and modern Native scholars everywhere.

Most Indians hear this phrase thousands of times a year as they attend or perform their ceremonies, and for many Indians without an ongoing ritual life or religious belief, the phrase seems to be simply a liturgical blessing that includes all other forms of life in human ceremonial activities. But this phrase is very important as a practical methodological tool for investigating the natural world and drawing conclusions about it that can serve as guide for understanding nature and living comfortably within it. (Deloria 1999:34)

As we can see, the concept of interrelatedness with nature and the cosmos is not new, but it is something ill explained and misunderstood by scholars and missionaries. Ancient pre-Hispanic Maya documents such as the Madrid and Dresden Codex show even with illustrations the ritualized relationships that exist between humans, nature, and the supernatural world.

When human beings are not able to perform or practice this respectful relationship, and instead there is an abuse of nature, even warring with other nations for invading and appropriating the other's resources, that reciprocity and unity is ruptured, thus bringing destruction, epidemics, hunger, and death. Respect for life in all its forms is a way of maintaining balance and harmony with the natural world and the universe.

Similarly, the ethnohistorical and prophetic documents called *Chilam Balam* provide us with abundant stories that explain how human beings have suffered hardships because of their reluctance in following the natural law that enforces balance in the world and the cosmos. The Mayas believe that the candle of life can be turned off because of bad management of resources and human's neglect of other living beings. The ethnohistorical texts mentioned above documented the sacred knowledge of ancient Mayas, and this knowledge was maintained for centuries by the *ahb'èh* (calendar experts and diviners) who passed it down to new generations through stories, prayers, and ceremonies. Among the Jakalteq Maya, the *ninq'omlom* was the person who knew the ancient prayers by memory and could recite these poetic or flowered words in discourses that lasted many hours during the Maya New Year ceremony. These sacred discourses or prayers were pronounced eloquently, utilizing the poetic or literary devices called couplets and parallelism. This was the most appropriate way to ask for the well-being of humans, animals, plants, and Mother Earth, while giving thanks to Hunab'K'uh for the gift of life and the goodness of creation. In other words, human beings were created to fulfill a sacred mission, which is to nourish and sustain God and His helpers. They wanted to be invoked and remembered on earth, so

they said: “Let us try to make obedient, respectful beings that will nourish and sustain us” (Goetz and Morley 1950:86).

In our modern world, where children are not in contact with nature but immersed in a virtual fantasy fighting monsters and dragons in computer games, it is hard to understand and value nature as our ancestors did as members of a moral community. That is why some Indigenous People, such as the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) have insisted on the concept of the “seventh generation”—that, we humans can make our own living from earth and use the resources consciously, making sure that we don’t put in jeopardy the ability of future generations to make their own living from the same natural resources that earth provides (Lyons 2008; Barreiro 2011). The concept of the seventh generation is an important doctrine or rule to follow. The reason is that, while Indigenous People insist on a respectful and rational use of nature, the doctrine of science and technology ignores this Indian philosophy of life and cosmic unity.

In the past, the most common argument against Indigenous spiritual beliefs in relation to earth and the cosmos was that Indians lived in a mythological world in which their primitive mind could not distinguish reality from fiction. Others insisted that Indians had a wrong observation of nature (earth), which they believed to be a living being, giving spirits to everything that exists in nature. This wrong explanation and interpretation of Indigenous behavior and spirituality was called “animism” by early-nineteenth-century evolutionist scholars (Tylor 1889). From anthropological and sociological explanations, animism is considered an inferior state of mind of the Natives, who believe that sticks and stones or any material object have souls, and this was a proof of their lower stage in the evolutionary process.

There is, then, confusion in the understanding of what Indigenous People have called “*pixan*,” the soul bearer or spirit of creation. In Maya philosophy, the concept of *pixan* or the “spirit of creation” is the essence of that “thing” that exists (humans, plants, animals, mountains, rivers, objects, etc.) as belonging to the universe of earth and the universe of heaven. In other words, the living earth and everything that exist on it shares the same breath of creation and all must reciprocate to maintain balance and harmony for a healthy relationship. For the Mayas then, as for other Indigenous People, earth is a living being (*itzitzal yeyi*), a concept used by the *Jakaltek* Maya referring to the generative power of earth to give and sustain life in all its forms, colors, texture, and shapes.

We will always refer to the malicious actions of destruction by early missionaries such as Diego de Landa, who was a fierce enemy of Maya culture.

He condemned their religion and ways of life as the teachings of the devil. Then, in the twentieth century, Mayanists have continued to condemn Maya people as idolaters, as they are said to adore hundreds of gods (Montejo 1993). This misunderstanding is now being clarified by some modern anthropologists who have been more cautious in asking the opinion of “day-keepers” about Maya spirituality. On this issue, Ted Fisher has said the following:

Despite having different names, different symbolic associations, and different contexts of activity, these “gods” are described by most *ajq'ijab* as aspects of a single, unified force that animates the cosmos. Viewing unity in diversity is characteristic of Maya cultural logics in a number of domains, and such unity is conceptually associated with balance and harmony within and between both the physical and the metaphysical worlds. (Fischer 2001:180)

Another front of attacks against Indigenous beliefs and worldviews has been carried out by fundamentalist religions such as Protestantism. Fanatics of Protestantism claim to have taken a millennial mission to convert the Indians before the end of times, which will come soon according to them. In other words, Indigenous People are still considered to be lost in a world of paganism as they keep practicing their ancient traditions and ceremonies. Adding to this misunderstanding are those New Age individuals or pseudo-scholars who are engaged in creating esoteric worlds for the Natives, to the point that some have considered themselves as the personification of ancient Maya rulers. This is the case of Jose Argüelles who claims to be the personification of “Lord Pacal” of Palenque, who was supposed to have come to life in 2012 (Argüelles 1987).

My intention here is to discuss how Native knowledge is produced (Maya epistemology) by referring to the traditional knowledge that I learned as a child and as a Maya man who has lived and struggled between two worlds. The ideas presented here are samples of surviving Native knowledge in Maya communities, which early scholars have referred to, but without deepening into its meanings and methodology. This is an effort to synthesize the knowledge system of Indigenous People based on the tri-dimensional cosmic unity and relationship between humans, nature, and the spiritual world. These teachings are not new, but a way of life preached and promoted by Native prophets and wise men and women in ancient times. This was the case of *Topiltzin-Quetzalcoatl*, the ancient Mesoamerican prophet who was responsible for teaching a philosophy of life while maintaining human virtues and values of peace, harmony, and respect for earth, the sacred, and the universe.

It is difficult to comprehend the many characteristics of Mesoamerican civilization if one does not take into consideration one of its most profound dimensions: the conception of the natural world and human being's place in the cosmos. In this civilization, unlike that of the west, the natural world is not seen as an enemy. Neither is it assumed that greater human self-realization is achieved through greater separation from nature. To the contrary, a person's condition as part of the cosmic order is recognized and the aspiration is toward permanent integration, which can be achieved only through a harmonious relationship with the rest of the natural world. By obeying the principles of the universal order, human beings fulfill themselves and meet their transcendent destiny. (Batalla 2002:27)

Similarly, Deganawidah the prophet and Peace-maker of the Iroquois was also a main figure who established the Great Law of Peace and Unity, which was observed and followed by the Iroquois Confederacy. His philosophy has to do with respect and thankfulness to the Creator, who provides the earth with all that we humans need for our subsistence. In his teachings he specified that humans must give thanks, as follows:

To the forest trees for their usefulness, to the animals that serve as food and give their pelts for clothing, to the great winds and the lesser winds, to the Thunders, to the sun, the mighty warrior, to the Moon, to the messengers of the Creator who reveal his wishes, and to the Great Creator who dwells in the heavens above, who gives all thing useful to man, and who is the source and ruler of health and life. (Peterson 1990:76)

This same philosophy of life was preached by Native American chiefs who fought for their land and territories against early European colonizers. In the United States we have the classic case of Chief Seattle, whose thoughts and teachings have remained today as a quasi-religious approach and prayer to nature. In the same way, the great medicine man, Black Elk, kept alive his vision throughout his life, fulfilling his mission to serve his people and to maintain the unity of tradition and Native spirituality (DeMallie 1984). In modern times, Native American leaders such as Chief Oren Lyons (1994) have insisted on the defense of the rights of all living beings and not only that of humans. This philosophy of unity was taken seriously by the Indigenous working group within the United Nations as they developed the now Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UN 2007).

These ideas of unity, interrelatedness and common origin have been also taken by some Western scholars as a new understanding of life and have

reworked them into a new philosophy of relationship called “biophilia” (Wilson 1984), or the natural kinship with all living beings. Others, of course, are engaged in developing policies for the protection of the environment, taking the debate of reciprocity and respect for life and earth, to the concept of land ethics, as developed by Aldo Leopold (Leopold 1949). Still others have extended this original Native American concept of unity and respect for nature, focusing their criticism on the interactive use and abuse of natural resources, while proposing a moral ecology, as they question the following: “How can we appreciate the logic of peasant-based ecologies without giving into essentialism and romanticism? I suggest a notion of ‘moral ecology of nature use,’ which offers an alternative to the rampant hit-and-run ethic of environmental modernization or its antithesis, the fencing off wilderness from human use” (Parajuli 2001:571).

Fortunately, now, some scientists have taken this issue of cosmic unity and universal kinship more seriously, to the point that more attention is given to these original Native ideas. We need to do more, because it is well known that Native ideas are accepted as rational only if Western scholars or scientist promote them. But when Indigenous People are the one who write and refer to these universal ideas of kinship and cosmic relationships, they are immediately dismissed as nonsense. For this reason, Indigenous scholars must continue to struggle to have their ideas accepted, just as Western thinkers propose their own theories and truths. Of course, not many scholars or scientists write and publish on Indigenous epistemological truths. Some write on these issues of natural relativity with certain fear or caution because Indigenous epistemologies are not totally approved by the scientific community. Those who write and make proposals supporting this philosophy of cosmic unity are writing, as Peter Knudson says, “at the border of scientific heresy” (Knudson 1991).

Of course, there is always the problem of romanticizing the lives and knowledge of Indigenous People, a practice that has become pervasive among New Age people and “wannabe” Indians. For this reason, the writings of scientists and Western scholars supporting Indigenous wisdoms and worldviews are always important because they can show that scientists are not a separate species of beings cultivated in laboratories, but human beings who should be in touch with the natural world. There is hope for scientists to embrace or to pay attention to Native knowledge and recognize it as valid information for complementing their scientific worldviews. On this hopeful future, Peter Knudson has written, “I nurture a growing sense that the West has much to learn from the accumulated ecological wisdom of First People



whose lives and cultural traditions have emerged from a daily intimacy with the natural world” (Knudson 1991:90).

As we Mayas witness the continuous destruction of the environment all around the world (e.g., the Lacandon, Petén, and the Amazon rainforests), we ask ourselves, When did humans lose their way and became heartless and mindless people, to the point of forgetting their mission as guardians of the natural world? The *Popol Vuh* mentions different eras or periods of creation, while emphasizing the failure of the first humans made of mud and wood, the metaphor for senseless human beings. These creatures were mindless, and they acted without respect for nature, as they abused their utensils and domestic animals. For their senseless action, they were punished and vanished from earth by a flood. These teachings from the *Popol Vuh* remind us of previous eras and the wrong actions of humanity in ancient times, which invited destruction and the dismantling of the world. These are ecological teachings that constantly remind the Mayas of their mission to nourish their Creator, while making their living out of the natural world—always with respect, so that life is replenished on earth.

Obviously, we can also find distant lessons from other non-Indigenous cultures that can help us to understand the needs for a harmonic coexistence with other living beings. Nevertheless, these teachings may have been already forgotten, while fear has resurfaced in the mind and heart of modern human beings living mostly in the Western world. The Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío wrote a great poem called “Brother Wolf,” which is a parable about human fear and the violent behavior against certain animals that are killed or persecuted in their own habitats. I read this poem when I was in middle school and I have internalized it because of its poetical substance and the message of compassion that it provides for correcting human action.

In the story, the poem tells, Saint Francis of Assisi goes to confront the wolf that has eaten sheep and shepherds in the prairie, trying to stop the bloodshed. The saint made peace with the wolf and invited him to the convent to live peacefully, an invitation that the wolf accepted. There, the wolf lived as a docile pet, living with humility and without harming anyone. A little while later, the people got used to its harmless presence among them. After seeing the wolf as a humble and defenseless animal, the people started to kick and hit him with sticks and stones. One day, when the saint was absent, the wolf was insulted and humiliated by the people, so the wolf returned to the prairie where he started to attack and devour people and animals, as before. Once again, the Saint went to convince him to stop such destruction, but the wolf told Saint Francis that the people maltreated him for no reason,

and that humans were worse than beasts. The wolf said, “If I kill and cause fear in humans, it is because that’s my nature. I do it to secure my food, unlike humans who kill and destroy not for food, but because they take pleasure by killing and doing damages to others without compassion” (Darío 1985).

This time, the wolf rejected the saint’s invitation and did not return to the convent, but stayed in the woods, as it was its natural habitat.

The concerns for life and the understanding of human relationship and collective survival in conjunction with everything that exists on earth was a way of life for Indigenous People in precapitalist societies. Obviously, this respectful relationship with nature changed with the colonial exploitation of resources and the development of capitalist economy among indigenous people in Latin America.

In the present era or millennia, Indigenous People who have maintained their respectful relationship with their environment, have been seen as backward people who want to remain poor while sitting on enormous amounts of wealth without exploiting them. So, as industrialized countries turn their attention to Indigenous protected territories, Indigenous People find themselves in precarious situation in the middle of modern conflicts such as guerrilla warfare, drug-trafficking, mining operations, and forced migration that has dislocated entire communities. In the case of Guatemala, Indigenous communities have been accused of sheltering drug lords, so national police and the army have invaded their communities, terrorizing them in order to get them to abandon their territories. The war on drug has been used as a new excuse for directly attacking Indigenous People, to remove them from those lands waiting to be exploited and “developed” for the benefit of the elite and transnational corporations. Against these state sponsored attacks, Indigenous People have resisted total assimilation and have fought for their rights and self-determination for centuries. This is the case of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico, or the pan-Maya movement for cultural revitalization and decolonization taking place in Guatemala (Warren 1998; Montejo 2005; Del Valle Escalante 2008).

Many external forces are exercising pressure on Indigenous People’s traditional ways of life as they are being assimilated by the attractive commodities offered by modern technology and globalization. This process is seen in the massive migration of Indigenous People from their homelands to the United States, where they come with dreams of making money and having a more decent, if not luxurious, life, such as those who have always enjoyed economic opportunities and have discriminated against them in their countries of origin.

Despite all the suffering and changes occurring around them, most Indigenous People are conscious of the importance of revitalizing their cultures, and not giving up to total assimilation or de-Indianization (Batalla 2002; Varese 2006). Some Native Nations have taken the road of economic self-sufficiency as a tool to strengthen Indigenous cultures such as the case of the Pequot and Oneida Indian Nations, who have become economically successful because of operating casinos and other economic enterprises on their territories. Their ultimate concern is to empower themselves economically and to be self-sufficient by creating and running their own institutions for achieving their self-determination.

We can argue that Indigenous People have become more organized for maintaining their worldviews and religious practices that are being shaken by the waves of economic and technological globalization. For example, Maya elders who integrate the Council of Elders and *ajq'ij* (Maya spiritual leaders) continue with their missions by using the sacred Maya calendar, which guides their spiritual actions and ceremonies. For the Mayas, all human beings are born with a mission to be fulfilled on earth, and it is up to the person to find that mission and to be responsive to the Creator, while serving the community and protecting life on earth. Unfortunately, with the recent wave of massive transnational migration going on now, the early teachings of the ancestors are being forgotten. Young people are abandoning their communities, attracted by the powerful economy of the United States and the technology that compels them as never before.

Chapter 2 provides a brief historical background of some anthropological theories from which our Western understanding of Indigenous cultures was built. From these major contributions, other anthropological theories were developed and chapter 3 focuses on the process of decolonizing Native histories and cultures.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to building a Native theory that I call Mayalogue or the treaty of Maya ideas and contributions to the dialogue between anthropologists and Natives. This dialogue includes nonhuman persons as part of the cosmic web of life. Chapter 5 focuses on Native methodologies and the importance of the oral tradition as a method for documenting history, which for Mayas is cyclical, such as the closing of a major cycle called *Ox-lanh B'en* or *B'ak'tun*. Chapter 6 focuses on the process of “telescoping” of time (Bricker 1981), which is a Maya method for integrating past histories into recent ones. This process is completed with the mythification process in which a leader or a hero enters the cannon of history as a supernatural being. Chapter 7 focuses on Maya epistemology and the importance of using

Maya terminology for referring to Maya ideas, rather than replacing them with Greek or Latin terms. To use native concepts such as *oh'tajb'al*, the instrument for knowing, or the accumulation of knowledge is part of an effort to decolonize the mind.

Chapter 8 develops the ideas central to Mayalogue: the interconnectedness between humans, nature, and the spiritual world—the three elements of the interactionist model. Chapter 9 refers to the spirit bearer or *yijomal spixan*, which is a Mesoamerican concept of the alter ego, or the animal companion of an individual. This is a spiritual animal that shares its destiny with the individual and is explained here as a proposed theory for the Maya self. Chapter 10 focuses on the “cargo system” or communal service to the community, and God. The service is like a burden to be carried out by an individual for the purpose of maintaining a healthy world and in harmony with nature and the Creator.

Chapter 11 describes the interactionist model. This model explains the relationship between humans and nature, which is always connected to the spiritual world, and makes Mayalogue a cosmo-centric paradigm. Chapter 12 focuses on the cyclical concept of life and existence on earth, and the need for maintaining that world and keeping it alive (Berger 1977). Earth and civilizations have passed through major cataclysmic changes and processes of world building, world maintenance, world dismantling, and world renewal. Finally, chapter 13 returns to the cyclical concept of time and discusses the 13 *B'ak'tun* as the ending of a major time-cycle. For the Mayas, time is cyclical and there were prophetic times embedded within the Maya calendar, such as the recently ended 13 *B'ak'tun* (12/21/12).

The basis for Mayalogue comes from an empiricist contribution as well as from the ideological understanding of the world and life (*q'inal*) taking fundamental lessons from the *Popol Vuh: Sacred Book of the Mayas*. The Maya calendar is used as a unifying element of universal categories, which includes in its twenty day names the days for the ancestors, plants, animals, rivers, mountains, wind, sun, moon, earth, universe, and so on. Once again, we insist that Indigenous People do not separate nature from humans, body from mind, religion from human activities, and so forth. “Instead there is an understanding of the holistic connectedness of all that exists. For a people holding such a holistic view of the world, everything would be sacred and imbued with spirit, a part of a greater whole inseparably interwoven” (Kaiser 1991:116).

This is the Native or Indigenous contribution to the study of humanity, which is not human centered, but as an integral part of a universal system

known as *q'inal*, or the expression of *Wakan* in Lakota philosophy. This is an effort to document Indigenous wisdom and synthesize it in a body of knowledge that can be useful for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and scholars. It is then, a response to what Vine Deloria always proposed in terms of developing Native theories and methodologies. "If tribal wisdom is to be seen as a valid intellectual discipline, it will be because it can be articulated in a wide variety of expository forms and not simply in the language and concepts that tribal elders have always used to express themselves" (Deloria 1999:66).

From this juncture, I have developed this Native interpretation and affirmation of Native worldviews within the context of the *Oxlanh B'ak'tun*, or ending of the great Maya cycle 13 *B'ak'tun* or the fifth Maya millennia. The Maya calendar marked the date December 21, 2012 as the ending of this great Maya cycle, which also marked the beginning of a world dismantling, as some elders believe.

Mayalogue is the presentation of some ideas for telling the world that Indigenous cultures create knowledge, as do any other cultures on earth. To this effort, I propose the development of an interactionist theory of culture from the trialogical relationships (human-nature-supernatural), which pervades Indigenous worldviews.

We need the development of social and humanistic theories of cultures that will be useful in this process of world renewal. In this context, Native ideas and worldviews are basic to the construction of this holistic and cosmocentric paradigm.