

“The Bear Is Our Protector”

Metaphor and Mediation in the Northern Ute (Nuche) Bear Dance

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BASED ON YEARS OF FIELDWORK WITH THE UTES AND ATTENDANCE at numerous annual Bear Dances, this study focuses on the symbolism and mediated meanings of the twenty-first-century Northern Ute Bear Dance. A uniquely Native American spring social dance, the Bear Dance has largely retained its parameters and functions through the ages. Arising from a mythical encounter between a she-bear and a male hunter, the Bear Dance includes music, dance, storytelling, joking, and courting. The Utes say they have been Bear Dancing for millennia, and the dance may indeed be well over 1,000 years old. Gradual developments in language, religious connection, and gender roles can be traced, and strategic accommodations have been made to the twenty-first century—the use of cell phones and Facebook to advertise the dance, for instance, loudspeakers, passing on the tradition through Head Start, alluding to contemporary consumer products; these developments and accommodations have mediated and significantly modified but not erased the original meanings of this traditional dance.

I combine the authority of Ute tribal members through interviews, testimonies delivered at the Bear Dance, and banter by the master of ceremonies (MC) with the theoretical underpinnings of anthropologists who investigate the importance of symbol and metaphor in ritual.¹ From this material, at least four levels of mediation emerge: the deep negotiation between binaries in ritual; the symbolic participation of the bear in Ute lifeways; the mediation in performance as in the MC dialogue; and the effect on the dance of its propagation through “mass” and “viral” media.

The liminality and ambiguity of the most profound point of negotiation in ritual, the intersection between two realms, permit the mediating between ritualistic binaries such as sacred/secular, natural/supernatural, male/female, traditional/modern, and nature/culture, and thus make a variety of understandings and social applications possible.² For example, as I demonstrate, the slippage between the sacred and the secular, which was present as early as in the ur-myth establishing the Bear Dance ritual, has developed in various directions, especially since the Christianization of the Utes.

Today the three Ute tribes (who collectively call themselves Nuche, “the people”) live on three reservations, two in the four-corners area of Colorado and one in north-eastern Utah; the Northern Ute bands (now officially called the Uintah and Ouray Ute Indian Tribe) were divested of their Colorado homelands and forcibly removed to Utah in 1881. In the past, the Utes practiced a flexible subsistence system sometimes called the seasonal round. Extended family groups (from twenty to one hundred people) moved through known hunting and gathering grounds (several hundred square miles) on a seasonal basis, taking advantage of the plant and animal species available. The image of a group of Indians randomly and endlessly searching for foodstuffs in a semidesert clime is far from the truth. Rather, the seasonal round is a regular circuit in which the group moves from eco-zone to eco-zone, harvesting and hunting the periodic abundance of flora and fauna.³

This elegant adaptation required a profound and systematic knowledge of the territory, the plant and animal life, seasonal and annual fluctuations, as well as preservation and storage techniques. Cooperation and communication among and between bands was also indispensable. The speakers of the Ute language did not necessarily think of themselves as a tribe. Folks from different bands intermarried, recognized each other, and traded, but did not otherwise maintain a larger tribal organization. Bands seasonally congregated for communal rabbit or antelope hunts or pine nut harvests, and for the annual spring Bear Dance.

For the Nuche, dance is rooted in communal celebration and is believed to have survival power and cosmic significance critical for the continuation of their culture. The Bear Dance is a socially integrating force that connects Utes with their traditions, their land, their past, and their heritage. It is a celebration of survival and as such is a mnemonic of tradition, history, and cosmology. The twenty-first-century Bear Dance looms large in contemporary Ute practices and traditions, as well as moral instruction, since tribal members are participants rather than passive spectators.

The Bear Dance banter by the mc clearly shows the integration of traditional beliefs with instructive and modernizing tactics, encoded in entertaining humor. The mc (always male in my observations and a member of the all-male singing group) carries on an ongoing monologue or dialogue with the participants in between the songs and dances. This banter draws on ritualistic themes such as the bear as protector, spring and rejuvenation, healing, but not without joking about relationships or dance etiquette with allusions to contemporary consumer products. The repartee—in English rather than Ute—regularly includes elements of freedom and frivolity, which are pervasive in the Bear Dance: “Dance like you’re not scared.” “Dance like you’re single.” “Get ready for tomorrow with Bengay and Icy Hot, can’t forget the Icy Hot.” This diversity, from the sacred (rejuvenation, healing) to the secular (joking), is an important component of the resiliency of the dance. The ritual thus constantly produces social meanings within the mediative performance in correlation with the more serious considerations of the Utes’ relationship with the bear who protects them and thus their tribal identity.

There are many versions of how the Bear Dance came to the Utes. In abbreviated format, it is based on an encounter between a she-bear and two male hunters. The hunters, frequently brothers, were hunting in the fall in the mountains and came across a she-bear growling and clawing on a tree, preparing for winter hibernation. Neal Buck Cloud, a Southern Ute tribal elder, tells the story this way:

There were two brothers who had a habit of going to the mountains; the mountains are high places where you can connect, peacefully, with the spiritual. These brothers were drawn to the high points, the highest mountains they could find. While they sat there for some time, looking down, they could see a bear den located just below where they sat and the bears were basking in the sun.

One day, the younger brother said, “You know, one day I’m going to be down there with them bears. I have fallen in love with the she-bear down there.” The older brother thought he was kidding, the bear is a wild animal, but finally one day the younger brother said he would stay, after all, stating, “We are really all the same, we are all created by the maker. But know that our people will accuse you of abandoning me; they will accuse you even of killing me. But wait three days and do not return until the fourth day.” So the younger brother stayed, and entered the den, and the older brother returned home. Indeed, he was interrogated and accused of killing his brother. They guarded him in a tipi, and finally after three days, he told the village that he would take them to his brother.

He came up to the den from the south and called his brother's name as he had been directed. The brother emerged from the den, and he had hair all over his body and he told his people that the she-bear had given the tribe a dance. She told them to build a corral in the spring of the year that would be anchored to the east, since that is the direction that the sun rises. Cut notches in a stick and when you draw another piece of wood over it, it will growl like the bear. The dance also imitates the movements of a bear, moving back and forth and scratching on a tree, after hibernation. This is the Bear Dance. Maybe the younger brother was craving for love, but in return he was given a specific knowledge.⁴

Oral histories such as the above provide common identity, promulgate ethics, reinforce values, and pass from generation to generation. Since the she-bear is a mediating agent, she contributes to the production and reproduction of meaning in Ute society; the performance of the dance is a ritual choreography that passes on not only the dance tradition but also ancient connections between the animal world, the spirit world, and the world of humans. It is both a sacred and secular event maintaining balance in the world of humans and mediating between the natural (human) and spiritual worlds. Throughout Native North America, bears are highly respected and linked with supernatural powers; they are viewed as healers and patron of shamans and herbalists because of the many human-like characteristics they possess. They rummage for roots and plants, are highly intelligent, and are members of a hierarchical and structured group.⁵ To the Utes, the bear is one of many "animal people," an anthropomorphic category unfamiliar to most Euro-Americans. In the oral rendition above, the man who fell in love with the she-bear says, "We are really all the same, we are all created by the maker."

Protocol requires that the dance not be undertaken until after the first thunderstorm, which is after bears come out of hibernation. The dance corral varies in size according to the location. A small dance corral is about eighty feet in circumference and is surrounded by a woven brush enclosure with no roof or floor; attendees bring folding chairs to set around the perimeter of the circle. Cedar trees are cut and set up on the two sides of the entrance, which is on the east. While not all do so, one is supposed to bless himself or herself upon entering the dance grounds by touching the cedar and saying a prayer (tobacco, cedar, sage, and sweet grass are believed by many Native peoples to be the four sacred herbs). The dance is open to the public, but generally advertised only locally. Men who want to dance typically sit on the north side; women, children, and families sit on the



Figure 1. Bear Dance corral with brush enclosure; men holding hands, facing east. (Photo by Sally McBeth)

south, although this arrangement is flexible, and visitors can sit in a variety of locations. The dance mediates between the male/female binary, bringing both together in a symbolic circular corral.

The dance is a four-day affair. The steps are simple and imitate a bear walking on its hind legs. The basic step is left foot step forward, right front together; left back, right back together; in Ute it is called *mamakwanika*, the back-and-forth dance. Partners dance across from each other, but not touching each other for the first two days, and then when the Cat Man, the dance leader, approves, they can couple up for the last two days. The couples then move east and west across the dance grounds with a liting step. When dancers fall (this does not occur at every dance), they are supposed to lie where they have fallen until an elder comes and blesses them. An alternate tradition is that the Bear Dance simply ends when someone falls. Children are warned to be on good behavior and not run around inside the corral as they might trip someone up. These caveats are practical but also remind the adults and children of the mythological origins of the sacred and secular dance, which was gifted to the tribe by the (super)natural bear.

No one seems to know (or will share) the origin of the label "Cat Man."



Figure 2. Bear Dance corral entrance with cedar trees and couples dancing. (Photo by Sally McBeth)

He is present on the third and fourth days of the celebration. It is he who touches a couple, or sometimes a row of couples, with a willow stick, and gives them permission to partner up and dance east and west across the Bear Dance grounds. MC banter includes: "Do what the Cat Man says." "Meow-meow man comes tomorrow. Don't forget to bring some *Meow Mix* for the Cat Man tomorrow." Although the inception of the Cat Man is unclear, the mediation is apparent when the Cat Man enters the dance grounds, allowing males and females to move out of their separate realms into what is clearly a heterosexual domain, at least inside the perimeter of the corral.

The four days of the dance are all female choice. On the first day girls or women select a member of the opposite sex to whom they are not related, walk over to where he is sitting in the dance corral, flick their shawl in his direction, and walk out to the center of the dance ground, facing west. I have been told that in the past, this example of female agency was unusual; today, however, it is seen as a quaint and attractive tradition. Women cannot dance without a shawl. So ubiquitous is the shawl that instead of asking if one intends to dance, the question posed is, "Did you bring your shawl?" The females' partners join them, standing across from them, facing east.



Figure 3. Singers at resonator with wood rasp and bone instrument. (Photo by Sally McBeth)

The females form one line, the men another, with the two lines facing each other. Males hold hands with males, females with females. It does not seem to be a competitive dance. In my years of attending Bear Dances, I have never heard a comment on how well (or poorly) a couple danced. Members of my interview sample have told me the dance is in imitation of the bear as it steps forward and backward at a standing tree, sharpening its claws for the coming hunt. Altogether, they say, this dance creates a rhythm that quickens the flow of blood in the body and renews a zest for life.

The music is made when a bone drawn down across a wooden rasp resonates on a hollow (now corrugated tin) box. The music, accompanied by a group of all-male singers, is supposed to sound like the growling of a bear and a bear clawing on a tree. Most Bear Dance music does not have words (vocables are substituted), but at least one Bear Dance song has words. Translated into English the song says: "The Bear is making a noise. The noise sounds like the lightning. The Bear is traveling a path. And the path is shaped like lightning." The vocables/words of the music are harsh, aggressive, and rhythmic and reflect the dance's vernal significance.

For its participants, the Bear Dance holds many memories of past

occurrences of the ritual. One woman in my interview sample echoed many others' views on the significance of the annual repetition of the event:

When we were little, our parents would go out and buy us new outfits; it is important to look your best, be neat, be traditional. We kids would be all washed and scrubbed. We would pack a picnic lunch and go together as a family. As a young child, I am not sure that I totally understood exactly what the Bear Dance meant, but for us it was a special occasion for dressing up, looking good, getting new clothes.

Many preeminent anthropologists have examined the power and use of symbol and metaphor in ritual including but not limited to Franz Boas, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Claude Levi-Strauss, Clifford Geertz, and Victor Turner. Combining the theoretical frameworks of Geertz and Turner, I examine the symbol of the bear in the Bear Dance in terms of the emic (insider) and etic (outsider) approach and the dance's effect on social patterns. Clifford Geertz, the "principal architect of symbolic anthropology,"⁶ asserts that culture is embodied in public symbols, and is not a cognitive model that resides only in individuals' heads. Members of and outsiders to the culture can discern these outward symbols and better understand the subtleties of the culture's worldview through observing ritual and the like.⁷ Victor Turner presents how symbols, particularly symbolic metaphors in ritual and the establishment of antistructures, maintain societal processes.

Many Utes whom I have interviewed have told me that the bear is the Utes' protector, supporting the conclusion that this is a foundational metaphor for Ute identity. Turner reminds us (acknowledging Max Black) that "a metaphorical statement has two distinct subjects—a principal subject [here: bear] and a 'subsidiary' one [here: protector]."⁸ The figurative assertion that the bear is the tribal protector is performed publicly in the Bear Dance, showing respect for the bear as "principal subject." The dancers also draw strength from her spirit, an outgrowth of the "protective" function of the "subsidiary" subject.

A 2012 advertisement in the Ute tribal newspaper for the reopening of a grocery store and bowling alley provides a Ute lens on the bear as symbolic metaphor:

What does the bear mean to the Utes? The Meaning of the Bear Logo: The bear has always had special significance to the Ute Indian People. The Utes originated the "bear dance," an annual dance ceremony signifying the beginning of spring and a new year. The bear is strong, protective, family-oriented,

and solidly connected and grounded to the land. As with the bear, the Utes are mountain people. The mountains have always been our home, our haven, and our sanctuary. We proudly share this home with the bear and all the other creatures and living things. We are one with them.⁹

In one respect the advertisement equates the bear with the future ideal customers of the grocery store addressed by the entrepreneurs. However, the advertising text's instrumentalization of the Bear Dance and further traditional lore, sense of place, and declaration of difference from non-Native counterparts moves far beyond mere commercial purposes, demonstrating the mediational identity functions of such symbolic rituals as the dance.

As is evident, the bear means many things to the Utes, including the coming of spring and the season of courting and fertility. One of the most common statements made in the Bear Dance grounds by the MC and participants is that the Bear Dance is a celebration of the end of winter. This ritualistic function is linked to social behavior; frequently called the beginning of a new year, many Ute friends have told me that it is a time when old clothing is repaired or new clothing purchased. Extra food is purchased for guests. Advice and instruction are given as to whom not to dance with, what the proper behavior for children in the dance corral is, which side of the corral to sit on, and how to demonstrate the proper demeanor to the Cat Man.

As the protector of the Utes, the spirit of the bear who gifted the dance to the tribe is obligated to support the sustainability of the tribe. For example, she keeps the tribe safe and healthy, helps maintain tribal identity and tribal land, and is responsible for maintaining prescribed social relations and proscribed behaviors. Northern Ute Leah told me that her band members—communicating via text messaging!—combine the ritualistic with health advice in "stretching children":

When you hear the first thunder and lightning of the season, the first thing that you should think about is the Bear Dance. This spring, when I heard the first audible thunder and lightning here on the reservation, I got a text message from my friend who texted, "Did you stretch your children?" What this means is that it is our tradition that during the spring, the season of fertility and growth, thunder and lightning, the Bear Dance season, you are supposed to take your children outside and stretch their limbs so that they will grow strong and tall and be healthy in their body, their soul, and their spirit.

Tribal members associate the bear with well-being. She comes out of hibernation and as the protector and main symbol of the Utes, is responsible for

a vigorous and healthy tribe. Ute language instructor and tribal member Venita describes the healing powers of the Bear Dance and, perhaps surprisingly, how female hormonal processes can hinder this healing:

I understand that this dance is about healing. This is what I see. There is a healing in this dance that was given to the Ute by the Creator or God or the bear or maybe all of those things combined—whoever or whatever you believe in. Many traditions are included and combined in the Bear Dance.

Women on their menstrual period or women who are pregnant are not even supposed to come to the dance, they are especially not supposed to be inside the arbor. When a woman is on her moon, her blood is very very powerful and a symbol of her fertility. She is so powerful, that her moon time can block the healing.

Here we see that the metaphor of the bear as protector takes on a new mediative meaning. As protector, she is responsible for health and healing, and as a female bear, she is also concerned about the power associated with women's menstruations and pregnancies.

Leo, another tribal member, gave a fairly long speech in Ute. All that I understood were the phrases "high blood pressure" and "depression," which were in English. Afterward we were talking, and he said: "We don't worship no God but the one Jesus Christ. He gave us this dance for our healing. My mom was sick and she danced, and she was miraculously healed. She was entered by the Holy Spirit. That's why I went up there and spoke." This quote not only demonstrates the healing power of the dance but also the variety of religious (and language) traditions that are included in this twenty-first-century celebration. The Bear Dance becomes a platform for the mediation between the Indigenous sacred and the Christian sacred, as many Utes have converted to a variety of Christian sects, yet combine traditional and modern practices and rituals.

Traditional Utes believe that their primal ancestors were bears and that bears are cognizant of this connection.¹⁰ A woman in my interview sample emphasized that the bear and its dance are a powerful source of identity for the Utes: "The Bear Dance started a long time ago, we don't know how far back; its origins are with the Ute people. We didn't borrow it from any other tribe; it is an original dance of the Ute people." Pride in this original Ute dance is clear. It is very different from the more common intertribal powwow that most Native and non-Native people are familiar with. Metaphorically, the Bear Dance and bear as central figure of the dance are believed to be alive, while moving across reservation and community boundaries.

Nuche cosmology, story, and performance are etched across the landscape of Ute homelands, expressing tribal identity. Tribal member Eva explained it to me this way:

This Bear Dance travels, it moves! It starts here in April in Randlett [Utah], and then moves in May up to Ft. Duchesne [Utah], then over to Colorado, to Ignacio [Southern Ute Reservation] and then Towaoc [Ute Mountain Ute Reservation] in July, and finally ends in Blanden, Utah, at White Mesa [a small Ute community in Utah] in September where we prepare the Bear to go back into hibernation, or at least, that is what I think.

The Utes' strong association with land was noted empathetically by John Wesley Powell well over a century ago. Writing between 1868 and 1880, he observed:

An Indian will never ask to what nation or tribe or body of people another Indian belongs but to "what land do you belong and how are you land-named?" Thus the very name of the Indian is his title deed to his home and thus it is that these Indians have contended so fiercely for the possession of the soil.¹¹

Land and attachment to land require a custodian, a guardian. The Utes and their protector the bear are these stewards.

Petroglyphs (a type of rock art pecked into rock) believed to depict the Bear Dance offer another example of Ute identity through inscribing the dance onto the Ute landscape. For example, near Montrose, Colorado (Ute ancestral territory), at the undated Shavano site, there are bear prints "etched" into the rock, emerging from a natural crack in the stone. They lead to an image of a bear crawling up a tree; a free-standing bear with enlarged paws is also present, in addition to other graphics. Utes and rock art specialists who have visited this site believe not only that these petroglyphs depict the Bear Dance but also that this site may have been a traditional Bear Dance grounds. The dance becomes a part of the landscape, tribal identity, and Ute cosmology as Natives inscribe the memory of the dance on Ute ancestral homelands—the symbol is concretely detailed on stone. This reassertion of the bear's power to reconcile the natural and supernatural worlds as well as ancestral and reservation boundaries is yet another strong indicator of her mediating abilities.

One might think that the Ute Bear Dance offers evidence of female power. After all, it was bestowed on the Utes by a she-bear, and it is a woman's choice dance; men cannot refuse, or they must pay (but they do not sit

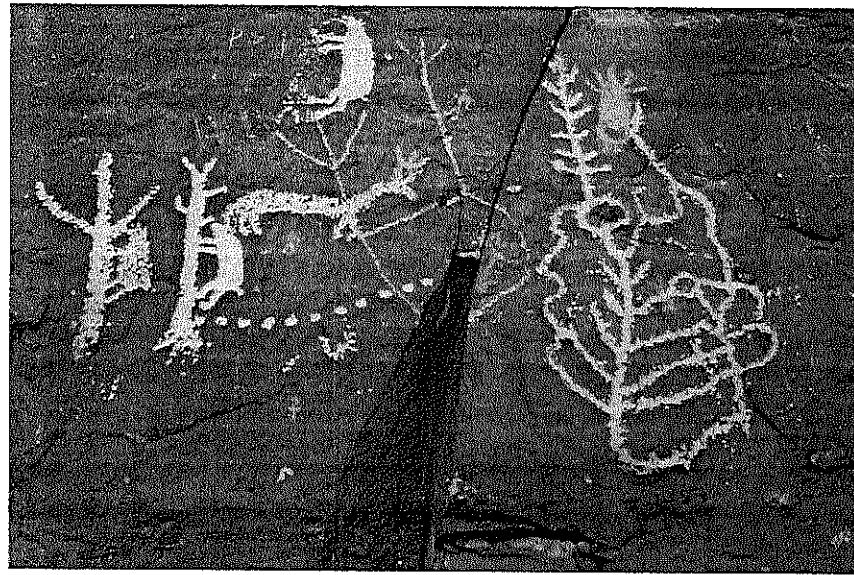


Figure 4. Ute Bear petroglyph, Montrose, Colorado. (Photo by Sally McBeth)

inside the dance ground arbor unless they want to dance). I have been told repeatedly that this dance honors women. A simple structural interpretation of the traditional story, however, demonstrates that males are clearly the central and active figures; much more is known about the two brothers than the mysterious she-bear. Additionally, the singers, the MC, and the dance leader (Cat Man) are all male. Males are, however, required to shrug off their masculinity—they must hold hands with each other, wait to be asked to dance, and otherwise take on a more passive role, an antistructural inversion of normative gender roles.

Women's roles are more active, but their dress and demeanor are dictated. Women must wear a shawl, are supposed to wear a skirt or dress, and moccasins. They shake hands with their respective partners at the end of the dance. They are not supposed to be in the dance grounds if they are menstruating or pregnant. Women, not men, are usually the objects of the male MC's banter. For example, "We need security over here—there are two ladies fighting over one guy, and the ugly one's winning." Or, "Lucinda here says that all of her boyfriends have left and married white ladies." Men are also teased, but for different reasons than women. An example of male-directed MC banter is as follows, "If you guys can hear me, honk your horns"—followed by much horn honking in the parking lot. "Why are you guys out there? You should be in here dancing. Tailgating is for football games."

Clearly the MC is trying to lure the males out of their pickup trucks and into the corral. I have regularly prowled the parking lot querying men, "Why are you out here instead of in the dance grounds?" A typical group response is this: "Oh no, all of our ex-wives, ex-girlfriends are in there waiting to pounce on us, and we're too scared of them! We have to pay them if we don't want to dance, and they've already taken all of our money." In this quip we see both male solidarity and the playfulness of this dance, and we might question to what degree the Bear Dance is a reconnection to an important primordial moment. The twenty-first-century humorous, playful, and decidedly postmodern aspects of this ritual serve to reinforce its vitality as an emic, identifying event.

In his book *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Victor Turner says that societies are rigorously structured and that people desire escape from this structure.¹² Rituals may provide this escape through antistructure—in the case of the Bear Dance, through a breaking down of gendered social roles. Following Turner, we might also interpret the dance in the light of *communitas* as achieved through antistructure.¹³ According to Turner, *communitas* appears where structure does not.¹⁴ Turner uses the term "*communitas*" to convey a stronger unifying human bond than the word "community" implies. In many ways, the Bear Dance provides this antistructure. It establishes a leveling and therefore mediating structure for young and old, male and female, traditional and Christian. Men hold hands; they are passive and must wait to be asked to dance. Women are active. A complex mediation between the powers of the feminine (menstruation and pregnancy) and the powers of the masculine (hunters, providers) is at play in this performance with its at least partial inversion of gender roles. We must also, however, recognize the structure within the antistructure.

A heterosexual norm exists, and the *Cat Man* is the leader of the dance. The singers are all males, and the very important MC (one of the singers) is male. The appropriate etiquette for males and females is equally important, but enforced by the *male* dance leaders. I have been told by men *and* women that "good women know not to gossip, not to be here if they are pregnant or on their moon time, they must dress appropriately; our young people need to learn this." Prescribed Bear Dance etiquette appears to focus more on women than men.

In her seminal essay "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" Sherry Ortner sheds light on the bear as mediator between female and male and nature and culture.¹⁵ Since bears are often referred to as "animal people" (I have heard this frequently from Ute elders) and since they possess many human-like characteristics such as high intelligence and the ability to walk



Figure 5. Northern Ute Bear Dance. (Photo by Sally McBeth)

on hind legs, are omnivores, and are very protective of their cubs, they mediate between the natural world of animals and the cultural world of humans. Ortner asserts that human females may be more closely associated with nature and males more closely with culture. Females menstruate, give birth, and lactate, whereas males are associated with culture, which is evidenced by creating tools for the hunt and participating in public political and artistic endeavors. In the contemporary Ute Bear Dance, men are musicians and the *Cat Man* enforces dance corral decorum. Women who are pregnant or menstruating are prohibited from entering the dance grounds, and yet these female procreative body functions are powerful and mysterious, so much so that it is said that women in their moon time may prevent the healing power of the dance if they enter the dance grounds. The female bear mediates between the nature-female/culture-male binary. She accorded a culturally constructed woman's choice dance to the Utes through a Ute *male* who befriended her, and, in the ritual choreography, men are in positions of authority in the public realm of the dance grounds. Women participate in the domestic sphere by fixing food for Bear Dance participants, purchasing and mending clothes, and other preparatory measures. Female agency in a variety of tasks from selecting dance partners to text messaging is certainly

present in the Bear Dance event, but as a complicated admixture of traditional, physical, and contemporary Western conventions.

Outside the Bear Dance grounds flirting, drinking, traditional gambling (hand game), and food and merchandise vendors are common. In Foucault's terminology,¹⁶ a counterdiscourse to the antistructured discourse emerges. But this creating of a complex cultural dialogue revalues rather than diminishes the "bear as protector" metaphor.

The Bear Dance includes socializing, courting, teasing, being playful, and not taking the MC banter too seriously. It is above all a sacred and secular dance event containing both ritual and social meanings that are realities of contemporary Ute life. The she-bear mediates between the realms of the natural and supernatural, sacred and secular, nature and culture, male and female as in the double-edged inherited and enacted gender roles. The mythological pasts and current sensibilities merge when old and young embrace the bear and her dance as preservation of Ute tribal identity. An intermediary agent, the bear possesses unique qualities of a liminal dimension and thus has become the ultimate tribal protector occupying a mediating and metaphorical role that might well endure into the next millennium.

NOTES

1. The work of established anthropologists is providing the basis for the emerging academic areas of ritual mediation as well as media and ritual; see, for example, Debrix and Weber, *Rituals of Mediation*; Liebes and Curran, *Media, Ritual, and Identity*; Ling, "Mediation of Ritual Interaction"; Wilmore, "Gatekeepers of Cultural Memory." Although these specific studies are not elaborated on in this essay, they provide unique perspectives relevant for the *Mediating Indianness* volume.
2. See Debrix, "Introduction: Rituals of Mediation" in *Rituals of Mediation*, ed. François Debrix and Cynthia Weber, xxiii. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
3. For a more detailed introduction to Ute subsistence patterns, see McBeth, "Talking About a Sacredness," 4–12, which cites Buckles, "The Uncompahgre Complex"; Callaway et al., "Ute"; Greubel, "A Closer Look at Eastern Ute Subsistence"; Jorgensen, "The Ethnohistory and Acculturation of the Northern Ute"; Steward, *Ute Indians*; and others.
4. McBeth, "Talking About a Sacredness," 12.

5. Hallowell, "Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere," 1-175; Miller, "People, Berdaches, and Left-Handed Bears," 274-287.
6. Lett, *The Human Enterprise*, 111.
7. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*; Geertz, "Making Experiences, Authoring Selves."
8. Turner, "Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors," 29.
9. "What Does the Bear Mean to the Utes?," 10.
10. Reed, "The Ute Bear Dance," 238.
11. Powell MS 798, as quoted in Fowler and Fowler, *Anthropology of the Numa*, 38.
12. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 96.
13. Turner, "Metaphors of Anti-Structure in Religious Culture."
14. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94-97, 125-130.
15. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?," 67-88.
16. See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.

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