

PAAHU (WATER) AND HOPI TRADITIONS:  
A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

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Paahu (Water) and Hopi Traditions: A Study of Contemporary Religious Discourse

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Greg B. Johnson

Vernon Masayesva grew up watching the Hopi's land and water disappear due to unnatural occurrences. His early career as an educator, tribal representative and grassroots activist has catapulted Masayesva as a prominent spokesperson against coal mining on Black Mesa. He now engages religious discourse through public forums to far reaching audiences in order to express his concern over the future of Black Mesa.

For Jacob.

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## Introduction

This is a thesis about the use of water and religious language in the context of contemporary challenges to Hopi culture. While analyzing the significance of water to Hopi religion and its role in both cultural and political forums, I will focus upon the language of Vernon Masayesva, a prominent Hopi leader of the Coyote Clan from the village of Hotevilla on Third Mesa who has shared his expertise on water and Hopi religion to a wide range of audiences. I will argue that Masayesva invokes religious language about water in markedly different ways in order to accomplish the same task: gaining support for the preservation of water on Hopi territory. The two rhetorical strategies that Masayesva invokes are (1) depicting the Hopi struggle in universal terms so as to gain sympathy from the broadest possible audience, and (2) the use of culturally specific language that details the problem in credible and authoritative ways.

For example, Masayesva addresses the problem as universal in order to cut through cultural barriers. Legal scholar Charles Wilkinson quotes Masayesva as saying, “The mining of our water violates our beliefs. When you sell something sacred, it doesn’t sit right, it bothers you, it sits in your conscience” (Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle* 307). Yet, on the other hand, when he addresses the problem using the second strategy, Masayesva invokes culturally relevant symbols and allusions during his speech: “Hopi see the water underneath us as a living, breathing world we call Patuwaqatsi or ‘water life.’ Plants breathe moisture from the sky, and the Cloud People reciprocate by pulling the moisture to the plant’s roots. Hopi believe that when we die, we join the Cloud People” (LaDuke 35). Combined, the power of these two modes of rhetoric allow for religious discourse to take place in a public setting and cross into the mainstream.

We must also, however, (re)consider how Masayesva's language is part of a greater tradition within Hopi culture. Language takes on new meaning and can be easily lost through facile translations. For example, the History Channel produced a special documentary entitled *2012, End of Days* in 2006. The Hopi section of the documentary focuses primarily on two interviews with Daniel Pinchbeck, a doomsday writer, and Maggi Banner, —a Hopi filmmaker who is labeled the “Native American Filmmaker”—and attempts to demonstrate the role of prophecy in the Hopi culture. During the film, the narrator repeatedly points to overwhelmingly worldly disasters, while Banner discusses the Hopi's longevity in the Southwest, relying on generic prophecies. Banner compares Hopi prophecies to Christian prophecies, thereby forcing an incomparable pair to share one meaning. The references demonstrate versions of Hopi tradition in such a way that it is an unhelpful way of looking at cultural depth. More importantly, it helps us to understand why researchers such as Armin Geertz—who studies the Hopi's use of traditional language as a tool for communication—allow us to reconsider the depth of language while taking into account how Hopi tradition is expressed and re-articulated when confronted with urgent situations. Therefore, attending to the range of ways Masayesva speaks about water in religious terms provides a concrete and detailed view to some aspects of Hopi religious life in the present.

In this thesis, I will discuss the purposes and politics that influence Masayesva's modes of rhetoric by analyzing various media sources that Masayesva has utilized, including video, interviews, and ethnographic accounts. I will compare Masayesva's argument strategies to those made earlier in the late nineteenth century and to those documented by recent scholars of Hopi culture. In doing so, I hope to show the importance of studying Masayesva's argument regarding Hopi water in the study of religious discourse. I will support this theory by drawing upon Armin

Geertz's analysis of Hopi prophecy in which he argues that Hopi elders use political arenas to further their specific causes while articulating these through traditional Hopi world views. Geertz's research, as well as the works of other prominent area experts, will buttress the overall theme of Masayesva's arguments reflecting the flexibility of religious language traditionally found in Hopi dialogue. The research of Geertz, a specialist on Hopi culture, will help demonstrate how these Hopi dialogues represent water as an integral part of their religion, culture, and society, and how Hopi leaders like Masayesva are using specific language strategies related to water to relay this significance to the greater problem.

I will begin by giving a brief history of the Hopi from a mythological and historical standpoint. Here, I will demonstrate how United States policies continue to mold the Hopi way of life. From this section, I will go on to reference several early ethnographers of Hopi culture and contemporary Hopi scholars with a focus on Hopi water in order to build a foundation for my theoretical argument. Next, I will focus on Masayesva and his career as a public figure. After describing how Masayesva utilizes universal language to move into a culturally specific focus on water, I will engage the theoretical portion of my thesis. Here, I will utilize Geertz's theory of prophecy and briefly touch on Thomas Tweed's notion of homemaking. I will then conclude by arguing for the importance of this study, and how it affects the study of religion.

### The History of Hopi Land and Water

Water has remained a pillar of Hopi society and religion since the tribe's ancestral origins, dating back to their primeval roots. Hopi mythology, for example, points to a time that predates the Hopi's existence in this world, in which water was a main element that helped initiate human existence. In general, the Hopi's emergence myth tells how the Hopi people emerged from the sipapuni, the hole in the sky through which they traveled from a preexisting

world in order to establish themselves in the current world. According to Armin Geertz, no homogeneous telling of the emergence myth exists amongst clans, but researchers (including Geertz) have concluded that the main themes among these differing stories overlap, and continue in today's retelling of the emergence myth ("A Reed" 216). Geertz has focused on the various versions of the emergence myth primarily found in Old Oraibi and refugees from Old Oraibi who now live in Hotevilla ("A Reed" 216). The consensus among the various versions of the emergence myth revolves around the story of three previous worlds. Each world starts as a peaceful paradise where people are responsible for their actions. Eventually, human immorality leads to the destruction of each of these worlds, and deities guide the faithful into a new fourth world by way of a cane reed. Prior to their entry into the fourth world, the Hopi ask a bird to pierce into the new world and ask the deity, Maasaw, for permission to enter. Maasaw agrees, and soon thereafter the third world is left to flood by water. Upon entering the fourth world, the moon and sun are created. The Hopi soon realize that the entry point into the fourth world then connects to a newly converted third world that has become a paradise for the dead (known as the Cloud People).

Today, inhabitation can be traced to Old Oraibi to about 900 AD. The villages are slightly south of Black Mesa. They use dry farming to grow their crops by sowing their seeds in gullies and dry washes that flood during the previous rainy season. They receive, on average, about 10 inches of rain per year and rely on springs for potable water (Folger). The Hopi's land—including their terrain, weather, and natural resources—has over time become an inseparable part of their cultural identity. The Southwest is the very foundation of the Hopi's religious beliefs and rituals, and has remained the longstanding theme of their emergence myth stories. Even though the Hopi have occupied and identified with this region for many centuries, they have had to

continually defend their land—and therefore their inherent cultural identity—from generations of colonization, industrialization, and occupation which threaten their existence.

Overt time, the Hopi developed viable technology from their land's natural resources, technologies that have aided in the longstanding sustainability of their tribe. Yet many modern instances of disruption to Hopi lifestyle have threatened the preservation of these resources, Hopi religious practices that depend on them, and the Hopi's overall way of life. Since the arrival of Western exploration to Hopi territory in the 1500s, there has been a constant search for new resources by all kinds of populations. For example, the Spanish came in search of silver and gold, while later generations of colonizers came in search of cheap natural resources.

Additionally, the Hopi were well aware of their land's prominent natural resource—coal—and extensively mined it. Evidence shows that Hopi used coal as often as wood to create heat sources for homes and ceremonial structures called kivas (Thompson and Joseph I, 67). Since fuel has ritualistic connotations, certain artifacts were created using wood ash rather than coal in order to preserve this resource. In addition, availability of surplus heating resources allowed for the creation of crafts such as cloth and pottery, thereby lending to the development of extensive trading throughout the Southwest (Thompson and Joseph I, 67). Despite coal's significance to Hopi technology, researcher J. O. Brew argues that the Hopi abandoned coal because of possible inconveniences caused by the arrival of the Spanish (517). The Spanish built their colonies around the mines, and the fumes from the coal mines may have created a conflict between the Hopi and the Spanish. In addition, the introduction of mules and horses allowed Hopi to return to wooded areas and retrieve more wood (Brew I, 15–16).

Overall, conflict between the Hopi and the Spanish, which was mostly regarding control over territory, is but a page in Hopi history. The factions which resulted from involvement with

the United States government during the 1930s, on the other hand, helped shape the dominant narrative regarding conflicts over Hopi territory that survives today. The source of these tribulations between the Hopi and the U.S. is actually rooted in the formation and implementation of the Indian Reorganization Act:

The Indian Reorganization Act or Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934 provided for the establishment of a Hopi constitution and Tribal Council and was the culmination of the efforts of several reform movements. This Act was an attempt to return self-government to the native tribes and to prevent their further exploitation by Anglo-Americans. Its proponents could not have anticipated the dissension their good intentions would cause. The act was implemented by John Collier, who assumed the post of Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933. Collier was one of the new breed of reformers...but unfortunately had a limited understanding of how the Hopi functioned as a people. (Wyckoff 55)

Contrary to the Commissioner's assumptions, the Hopi have always functioned as independent clans each with their own history, mythology, and rules of engagement (Wyckoff 56). The product of the Indian Reorganization Act caused some Hopi elders to dismiss the United States as an intruder, while others in the tribe remained skeptical of a U.S. presence. Richard Clemmer argues that elders split further between the Traditionalists and the Progressives. Traditionalists argued that they must keep the ancient ways of life, including religion, as their primary focus in order to fulfill their promise with Maasaw. However, Clemmer argues that the Traditionalists were less complex and disorganized. He argues that the Traditional Movement handled each problem with Western society on an issue-by-issue basis. He also argues that the movement lacked an official leader and could not decide on a particular issue to

uphold or reject. In addition, many ‘Traditionalists’ were actually Christian leaders who rode the political coattails of Hopi religious leaders in order to gain greater influence (*Roads in the Sky* 181). The Progressives, instead, believed that a proper relationship with the United States, along with a cash economy, would help benefit the Hopi regarding their goals that spanned everything from recognition to protection. In addition, Progressives believed that in order to be recognized, the Hopi needed to elect officials and create a tribal council. Yet the creation of this Tribal Council is greatly faulted, according to Clemmer’s research, because of its lack of proper representation. During the first course of the Tribal Council’s existence in the 1960s, many Traditionalists vehemently opposed it and vowed not to take part in any commoditization of their culture. As a result, Progressives made up the majority of the Council, a composition which would later prove to be disastrous when dealing with coal mining companies (Clemmer 182).

The Progressives-led Tribal Council soon voted to validate Collier’s Hopi constitution:

In all, though John Collier never so intended when he put the Indian Reorganization Act through Congress and pressed the Hopi to adopt the constitution, by the 1960s the constitutional election of 1936 had moved the Hopi into the middle of the rapid industrialization of the American Southwest. The catalytic force was John Boyden, a leading Salt Lake City lawyer who would narrowly lose two Democratic primary races for governor and would, over the course of thirty years, have a great deal to say about the future of Black Mesa and the Hopi tribe. (Wilkinson, “Home Dance, the Hopi, and Black Mesa Coal” 482)

Boyden’s attempts at becoming the primary council for Hopi succeeded after failed attempts at establishing the same with the Navajo. He utilized the Claims Commission in order to gain trust with the Hopi by arguing that their land could be returned to them upon adoption of the

constitution. Yet in his article, “Home Dance, the Hopi, and Black Mesa Coal,” Charles Wilkinson points to the fact that the Claims Commission never promised or stated any return of land, but rather, merely suggested that any tribe who laid claim to stolen land would be financially compensated (460). Wilkinson argues that Boyden himself, while in closed conference with the Hopi, was the catalyst who convinced the Hopi that they could regain their land. All the while, Boyden constructed the Hopi-Navajo Relocation Act, “calling for a division of the so-called joint use area between the Hopi and Navajo and the subsequent relocation of 10,000 Navajo and approximately 1,000 Hopi who happened to live on the wrong side of the fence” (LaDuke 37). Boyden’s success in achieving the relocation of the Navajo and regaining a small portion of land for the Hopi, which was not associated with the Claims Commission, became the basis for his proposed attorney fees of \$1 million to the Hopi tribe. His fees could be paid off, he urged, if the Hopi reconsidered leasing some of their land to small coal mining companies. In effect, this deception would radically change the Hopi mindset regarding outside influence.

Boyden, in fact, secretly represented the Peabody Coal Mining Company and was more than prepared to challenge any opposition in order to have the Tribal Council approve the presented contract (Wilkinson 460). Wilkinson’s research shows that Boyden had longstanding correspondence with Peabody officials, and details Peabody’s intended use of water and minerals on Black Mesa. In addition, he represented Peabody in meetings with the Governor of Utah and the State Engineer in 1964 (Wilkinson, “Home Dance, the Hopi, and Black Mesa Coal” 482). Nonetheless, the Tribal Council approved the contract in 1966. In the midst of this situation, then Secretary of the Interior Steward Udall stipulated that the presiding Secretary of the Interior could halt all Peabody production if evidence proved that the mining was endangering

underground water due to Peabody's production (Dougherty). In the contract, Peabody was enabled to transport coal using water from one of two aquifers found on Black Mesa. The water was used to transport crushed coal as slurry and was taken through 273 miles of pipeline into Nevada. As a result, 3,800 acres-feet of water were pumped yearly from this already arid environment. The company promised to pay \$1.67 per acre-foot to the Hopi, in light of the going rate of \$30 to \$40 acre-foot everywhere else in 1966 (Folger). In addition, the contract would also give the Hopi, along with some Navajo, 3.335% of the gross profits from the mining production. The contract also lacked a re-opener clause which would have allowed for renegotiations every ten years.

As a result of these 1960s dealings, today's Black Mesa is still suffering from the ecological damages imposed by Peabody. In 2000, The Natural Resources Defense Council investigated and determined that six of the eleven water wells, which have always produced water for the Hopi, have fallen well below the NRDC standard ("Drawdown: An Update on Groundwater Mining on Black Mesa" 19). In addition, the fallen water table has allowed the transfer of dangerous chemicals into this waterway. Amounts of chloride and sulfate, which had never been found in the water table prior to Peabody's involvement, are now compromising the safety of drinking water for the Hopi.

The Hopi's wells not only serve as the main modes of transport for Peabody Company's slurry, but also provide the necessary water for springs, wells, and overall subsistence for the Hopi. By the twenty-first century, the Edison Mohave power plant was a primary consumer of Peabody coal. In 2001, "Peabody again was forced to apply for the mine's permanent permit because of terms in its renewal of its coal supply agreement with Edison's Mohave stations...in fact, the company asked permission to mine more coal, using even more water" (Reily). In July

of 2003—against the wishes of the Navajo Tribal Council President Joe Shirley Jr.—the Navajo Tribal Council and the Hopi Tribal Council voted to stop new contract negotiations with Peabody and end water extraction by December of 2005 (Reily). Peabody’s contract expired at the end of 2005, coinciding with Edison’s demand on Peabody to retrofit Black Mesa processing plants with pollution control equipment. However, highly publicized reports of the lowered water tables forced the Navajo and Hopi Tribal Councils to demand an immediate stop to water extraction. In addition, the councils demanded that any further transportation of coal using water must use water from an outside source that does not involve the aquifer on Hopi and Navajo reservations. Peabody operations ended on December 31, 2005. In 2006, researchers from the Natural Resources Defense Council conducted an additional study on the Hopi reservation’s springs in order to analyze the effects caused by Peabody’s involvement. As stated in their findings, published in the NRDC’s Annual Report, the researchers concluded on immediate structural damage to the aquifer as well as toxic discharges in washes and springs (19). The researchers found that Peabody had directly affected the geography, allowing toxic and inorganic materials to shift into once potable water. The study also demonstrated that the Office of Surface Mining had continuously neglected to address the issue of water contamination despite constant suggestions for water monitoring by Hopi, the NRDC, and Hopi sympathizers (Grabiell). However, in December of 2008, the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) granted Peabody permission to operate once again without hearing the Navajo’s and Hopi’s opinions, and without presenting alternative solutions for coal transportation (Parish). In early 2009 when the Hopi and supporting environmentalists appealed the OSM decision, the federal courts found that the newly proposed permit to expand and maintain the same form of water extractions did not consider Hopi/Navajo input or include environmentally safe alternatives, and ended up invalidating the

permit. Peabody could not continue, and therefore the mines have remained dormant (Black Mesa Trust). Yet, the Hopi's focus upon water involves more than just conflicts over aquifers, and has certainly been identified by scholars of early Hopi traditions and insisted upon by the Hopi through their traditions and ritual activities.

#### History of Cultural Representations of Water in Hopi Tradition

Several sources, including prominent early ethnographers, have identified common themes relating to water within a number of Hopi historical accounts, even though these sources may not have actually recognized the grave importance of water to the Hopi people and other areas of Hopi culture. For example, in 1898, researcher J. Walter Fewkes began documenting ethnographical accounts of Hopi rituals and included small references to water. He states that feathers are highly coveted to fill the Hopi's ceremonial water vases, as their spiritual value is unmatched. The feathers are gifts to the Kachinas and Cloud People in return for water. Fewkes describes how these water vases connect the Hopi altars to Kachinas. Fewkes writes, "In modern Hopi ceremonials the priests use a small gourd receptacle for sacred water" (Fewkes 6). Here, water is represented as necessary to Hopi ceremonial tradition, in tune with historical Hopi world views.

In his 1929 article "Hopi Tales," early ethnographer Alexander Stephen reports that a particular Hopi interpretation of the world involves great bodies of water: "There are four great waters separated by sand, and on the land, on this side of the fourth great water, and close beside it, is the place of the sipapu; there the water is always in commotion" (Stephen 17). Stephen emphasizes the presence of water as the main element that defines the regions of the world. Here, he clearly connects the commotion of water as a central role in the creation of man, similar to the joining of man and active water described in the Hopi emergence myth.

Later in his report, Stephen details another Hopi myth which tells how water is a sacred gift to the Hopi, and how important it is that they preserve it. Stephen writes that twin deities told the Hopi, “When the people should become thirsty or should want water to use in quantity, they should pull grass and in place of the roots water would come up. When they had used what water they needed, the grass should be put back in its place so that it would continue to grow and preserve the water from drying up” (Stephen 51). This early interpretation of water conservation later helps lay the foundation for future arguments made by Hopi members in their efforts to preserve their water. One ethnographical account was written by Leo Simmons in his biography of Don Talayesva in *Sun Chief*. In the chapter entitled “Subsistence in the Desert,” Talayesva attempts to return to the traditional ways of Hopi life after being absent from the reservation since attending the mandated boarding schools. Talayesva begins his understanding of life in the desert by referring to corn, stating, “Corn is our mother—the main support of our lives—and only the Cloud People can send rain to make it grow. Put your trust in them... Rain is what we need most, and when the gods see fit they can pour it on us” (Simmons 224). Here, Talayesva gives a direct link between religiosity and water by demonstrating the arrival of water as a godly favor to the Hopi, defining water as a divine source of life.

The language found in the previously mentioned sources illustrates a repeated theme of water as being part of a greater whole in Hopi religious history, in that it connects to other dimensions of Hopi life and world views. A common theme is the reference to water as a sacred subject, rather than an earthly object. In addition to these few but significant references to water, many authors also include references to the role of the Cloud People. For example, Peter Whiteley states: “When people die, in part, they become clouds; songs call to the clouds as ascendant relatives. Arriving clouds are returning ancestors, their rain both communion with, and

blessing of the living. The waters of the earth are, then, transubstantiated human life” (Whiteley 193). The Cloud People are significant in all Hopi religious rituals, and should also be emphasized for the purpose of understanding the connection of water and Cloud People as returning ancestors. Armin Geertz’s translation of Hopi oral traditions makes mention of the ceremonial activities at the kiva where participants begin sowing and must search for water. Each participant goes to the house of water and asks for the designated Hopi women for water, who then pour water over the participant and give the participant water to drink. Soon thereafter, the participant declares, “At this instant, I am a cloud,” thus transforming himself as he returns to the kiva (Geertz and Lomatuway'ma). These historical accounts serve as a foundation for understanding Masayesva’s discourse concerning water and religion.

Early ethnographer Mischa Titiev dedicates a small section of his 1944 book *Old Oraibi* to questioning the purpose of Hopi religion, and adds an interesting dynamic to how the Cloud People function from the time of their earthly existence to their spiritual existence. He cites Fewkes’ earlier work as he describes each clan’s ceremonial work related to the Cloud People as unique from all other clans and continually in practice. He states, “Each earthly clan has its corresponding clan in the underworld...each secret society stands ever-ready to drive out a particular ailment which it ‘alone can cure.’ Is an essential religious ceremony about to lapse? There is nothing to fear, for in the Below ‘the different religious sodalities perform...much the same rite as in the upper world...’ Is there a threat of devastating drought? The spirits of the dead stand prepared to answer the prayers (desires) of the living by sending ‘rain and crops’” (Titiev 178). Titiev goes on to correlate prayers of survival with hostile environment as a characteristic of all “primitive” cultures; but his prime example is pivotal to understanding water as a central theme in Hopi religious world views. Titiev suggests that prayers and duties of the clans (both

alive and not), contribute to the growth and prosperity of the people based on the clans' need of water. Furthermore, Titev touches on one of the first documented references to Cloud People as an essential force that connects water and Hopi religious world views. In this perspective, the prayers to the Cloud People are requests for favorable outcomes.

Besides references to the Cloud People, the Hopi also celebrate other representations of forms of water in their religious traditions. In Henry R. Voth's account of Hopi mythology, a water serpent named Balolookong (also called Paaloloqangw) that dwells in bodies of water is associated with sickness or and death:

In general, springs and groundwater serve as homes for the deity Paaloloqangw, "Plumed Water Snake," who is a powerful patron of the water sources of the earth and the heavens. Paaloloqangw is appealed to in the Snake and Flute ceremonies, and portrayed in religious puppetry during winter night dances. Springs and their immediate surroundings are places of particular religious worship in some instances, like the flute ceremony...the flute ceremony is specifically devoted to the consecration and regeneration of major springs, and Lanmongwi, head of the Flute society, dives, in an archetypal gesture, to the bottom of a particularly sacred spring to plant prayer sticks for Paaloloqangw. (Voth 93)

This portrayal of water's sacredness to Hopi ritual is reminiscent of early Hopi mythology that traces the interactions of people with water sources. Voth collected such early Hopi myths in *The Traditions of Hopi* that demonstrate the role water—along with the water serpent—represented in early Hopi religious rituals and oral traditions. According to the Flute tradition, for example, one instance involves the interaction of the water serpent with a young girl gathering water.

In Voth's retelling of the story, "The po'okongs and the Balolookong," a mother sends her young girl to gather water from the Toriva stream. As the young girl begins collecting water from the stream, the water serpent emerges from the stream and draws her into the water. The mother questions the whereabouts of her daughter and follows her footsteps into the stream. Learning of the daughter's tragedy, her father then inquires about the proper steps to retrieve her daughter from the water serpent from Spider Woman. Spider Woman is believed to have been one of the earliest Hopi deities who had involvement in the creation of humans. Spider Woman tells the father to dress his son in proper ceremonial attire and to dance in front of the stream until the water serpent appears. The son attempts twice and on the second time, he pulls his sister towards him and then hits the water serpent on its head. It is believed that the water serpent consequentially remained in the water and now causes illness to those who see him (Voth 125–128). In this instance, the serpent changes water into an entity which is still sacred, but nonetheless a force that needs precaution. Unlike the previous accounts of water as being a benign source, the water serpent transforms water into a force that can separate and destroy the Hopi's daily activities; this force would apply to times of drought and compromise the overall Hopi subsistence. This opposing account of water is also found in destruction myths, in which the water serpent "is believed to be the bringer of floods as well as the producer of earthquakes and landslides" (Malotki 6).

Ekkehart Malotki translated various Hopi destruction tales, one which is directly related to the water serpent and water serpent people. Malotki recounts the destruction of the Shungopavi village. According to the tale, the village leaders began getting frustrated with the lack of water and proper fields for farming. They slowly began to forge alliances with several other leaders in the area in order to request the water serpent people to create proper water flows

and flat fields. Ignoring advice against it, the leaders gather gifts and persuade the water serpent people to begin the process. However, the deities instead end up destroying the land with floods and earthquakes. The leaders of the village then decide to approach a shaman for advice, who scolds the leaders for their selfish request, and questions the deities for their participation despite knowing the consequences. As a result, the floods and earthquakes eventually kill all the leaders as punishment, and the water serpent leader is taken in order to ensure proper water flow for the remaining villagers who had to endure such heartache during the destruction (Malotki 15–23).

The myth surrounding the destruction of this particular village is important to the greater discourse on Hopi water because it provides evidence of water as a living entity which is deserving of great respect. When ignored, as the leaders of Shungopavi did, water can expand or eliminate itself due to the selfish acts of others. As a result, the disrespectful acts by some can directly affect an entire group of people unrelated to the former's ill-sighted requests or prayers. Much of this destruction myth can now reflect the traditional language found on water and add more context to the arguments made by Hopi leader Vernon Masayesva.

#### Vernon Masayesva

The lowered water table on the Hopi's land is preventing growth of vegetation, specifically corn, a crop which is central to Hopi world views and even the Hopi's emergence myth. Hopi elders such as Vernon Masayesva have argued that Hopi understanding of water is the central focus of Hopi religiosity in order to retain a sense of cultural identity. But the road of discourse that Masayesva has traveled started long before negotiations with Peabody had taken place. In an interview with Sean Patrick Reily for the *Los Angeles Times* on June 6, 2004, Masayesva states:

I had a lot of anger simmering in me since high school, since '59 or '60, when I'd listen to Hopi elders talk about this rumor that a coal mine was coming.”

Masayesva says. “They were concerned. The men talked and talked about whether coal mining fit with Hopi prophecy about how our land should be used.

In the end, they decided that development had to be done ‘in the right way, at the right time, for the right purpose’ and came out against permitting the mine...thank you, Peabody, for waking me up! (Reily)

The seed was planted and Masayesva was politically driven to stand up against social injustices. He received his Bachelor's degree in political science from Arizona State University and attained a Masters from Central Michigan State. “In the 1970s, after he became principal of his alma mater, Hotevilla Day School, he proceeded to dust off government regulations and use them to transfer control of the school from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which he felt was underserving the students, to the students' parents” (Snell). “Acting in conjunction with the Advisory Board, Masayesva began making changes that would reflect priorities developed by Hopis rather than by the BIA. An emphasis on ‘things Hopi’ replaced deference to ‘things Euro-American’” (Clemmer 280). Masayesva began as a representative of the Hopi tribe during the mid-1980s. “Masayesva joined the Hopi Tribal Council as a representative to get a closer look at the mine” (Reily). He rose to chairman of the Hopi Tribal Council in 1990, but soon became frustrated. As president of the Tribal Council, his role was similar to that of the president's role in the United States; however conflicts arose from his desire to break down previous barriers where Councils were politically motivated to side with outside forces. He states, “The only thing we accomplished during my time on the council was to persuade the Secretary of the Interior to withhold Black Mesa's permanent [mining] permit” (Reily). In 1994, he chose not to run for

reelection and instead formed the Black Mesa Coalition in 1998 in order to concentrate on the lowering water tables on Hopi land (Snell). He states, "I decided instead I needed to work with the grass-roots people who had not been represented, ever...I decided to pull all my energy to fighting the fight from outside the government" (Reily). Since that time, Masayesva also founded the Arizona Native Scholastic Enrichment Resource which gives scholarships to Native Americans students so they can attend colleges (Gardens for Humanity).

As a prominent spokesperson for the Hopi culture, Masayesva's career has seemed to place him as a public figure who not only challenges certain movements that threaten to deteriorate Hopi tradition, but also attempts to champion a modern mode of progression that does not conflict with or compromise traditional Hopi culture. However, there exists a question pertaining to why so many modern forms of media gravitate to Masayesva. This question can be answered by his presence in the public sphere. His ambitious goal to change the politics on the Hopi reservation has enabled him to become a main voice for Hopi concerns, regardless of the topic. His accessibility to various media also contributes to his spokesperson status in the public eye, while his participation in the Tribal Council enabled him to rise as an elder among his own community. On various occasions, such as in interviews with Peter Whiteley of the Smithsonian (Whiteley), or John Dougherty of the *Phoenix News Times* (Dougherty), Masayesva has been placed at the forefront of Hopi concerns. In addition, his creation of various outreach programs to bring awareness to non-locals has also contributed to his status as a person of great public interest.

Since the start of water extraction on Hopi land, Peabody officials have claimed that Hopi and Navajo are the ones responsible for their own lack of water; on the contrary, Hopi members claim that Peabody has illegally and uncaringly taken water at the expense of Hopi subsistence.

In the context of these ongoing disputes, Masayesva describes the rise of localized power among the Hopi as an effort to fight against an international corporation. Here, Masayesva's claims are political and intended to engage in scientific discourse, yet are at the same time saturated with religious significance.

In his arguments, Masayesva makes references to historical accounts that contain images of water and religious language. However, considering this traditional outlook in his public addresses, the contextualization taking place in his speeches, as well as to whom these forms of speech are addressed must be further examined. Applied to this context, Howard Giles' research on language accommodation suggests that Masayesva's speeches or language use are presented in various forms that change under certain settings in order to gain specific results, and at times may be influenced by intercultural settings which may present some historical backdrop. In this sense, Masayesva is utilizing past encounters with Western society, such as with the federal government or audiences with no prior knowledge of Hopi world views, in order to address concerns regarding the Hopi reservation.

Giles calls this general mode of speech the "Communication Accommodation Theory" in his book *Contexts of Accommodation*, yet this complex theory can be addressed in a specific study that focuses just on Giles' theory as it pertains to Masayesva's speeches. Considering his discussions about water, one example can be seen when Masayesva spoke to an audience about the importance of water to the Hopi and the contemporary political powers that threaten Hopi culture. He stated, "The reason why Navajo aquifer water is so important is not only because, according to the Hopis, it's what sucks in the rain but it also feeds the springs where ceremonies are occurring. It also sits in a bowl; it's the only source of potable water available to the Hopi people" (Donahue and Johnston 23). Here, Masayesva is speaking to a general audience that is

concerned about a global reduction of water and refers to his tribe's specific case as an example of this reduction. This type of rhetoric is also found in an anthology of articles pertaining to water and local power struggles found all over the globe. In Masayesva's case however, the Hopi water trials are portrayed as one part of a greater struggle found worldwide, but also attempt to demonstrate that indigenous peoples suffer more heavily from extraction of their water sources than Western cultures.

In an interview with the Natural Resources Defense Council, an organization which closely works with the Hopi, Masayesva continues this discourse on water by referring to Hopi creationism where "only water existed at the dawn of time; from water came land; from land and water all forms of life were created including man" (National Resources Defense Council). Here, he connects the creation of water, along with the creation of man, to the Hopi's cultural gathering site, but is also aware of his audience's direct concern with Hopi water tables. In this statement, Masayesva's language describes the interdependent relationship between water and man at the beginning of the world, showing what might be seen as anthropomorphic qualities within the water. Humans become models for spirits. However, in order to reach a broader audience, he refrains from using specific Hopi deities involved in the creation of humans such as the Cloud People or the help of Maasaw. Masayesva is reaching out to a scientific community that may not associate with a culture that is dependent on natural resources, therefore the language must be general enough so that the problem becomes universal and the audience can still grasp the greater theme of Masayesva's argument.

Speaking on a panel about water ethics and freshwater conservation, Masayesva stated, "Water is a great teacher, as you all know to some extent... Water is your soul, it is spirit, and it has memory. Water sings its own song, as the Hopis say" (Masayesva 29). Here, Masayesva

asserts his authority as a Hopi elder, by making specific references to religious language in front of a general audience. When making his arguments in the public forum, Masayesva strongly relies upon his culture's historical accounts as the impetus of his discourse. By describing the location of the water in this context, Masayesva is also showing how the lowered water tables are compromising the Hopi's entire existence. While these examples continually relate back to the importance of water, spirits, and land, it also reveals the political agenda behind his cause.

In 2005, Masayesva introduced Dr. Masaru Emoto from the Culture Collective, an organization that promotes environmental sustainability in correlation with indigenous world views, during a recorded lecture by the doctor held on the Hopi reservation. In his introduction, Masayesva describes water as spirits that take human form in order to preserve water on Hopi land, and how Hopi should challenge Peabody Energy's continual extraction of water since the extraction prevents water from rising back to the atmosphere. Masayesva states that the water said to "Bring the fight to our territory. Talk about water, as I have, to your ancestors. It works like a body" ("Hopi Water Wisdom"). In this context, Masayesva is referring to the Cloud People who bring rain to the Hopi people and are essentially the ancestors who control water. Here, Masayesva addresses an audience on the Hopi reservation, thereby leaving out any analogical language and instead directly speaks to his fellow Hopi, regardless of clan affiliation and asserting his authority.

To add to this culturally specific understanding between water and the body, Masayesva has stated in John Donahue and Barbara Johnston's book *Water, Culture, and Power*, "The land is a living organ, it breathes...the Hopis say that it is the underground water that sucks in, that breathes the rain" (16). This culturally relevant understanding of Hopi water is common in his speeches and interviews, and was also used in his presentation at the Water Ethics and

Commodification of Freshwater Resource Panel in which he gave another representation of water as a body with an individual soul rather than a collective body of ancestral spirits. Masayesva stated to the Panel, “Water is not a commodity. Water is your soul, it is spirit, and it has memory. Water sings its own song, as the Hopis say...our irrigation comes in the form of a blessing from the spirits, from the ancestors, and from the cosmic world” (Masayesva 29). An especially interesting situation occurs in the 2002 documentary *In the Light of Reverence*, directed by Christopher McLeod and Malinda Maynor. The documentary is meant for educational purposes and therefore must engage the audience with culturally specific examples. The documentary seeks to answer why such matters are important to indigenous communities and how they affect everyone. In the documentary, the editors start with general observations (possibly to present a universal problem) and slowly move towards specific examples (intended to demonstrate an authoritative understanding of the problem). Although outside Masayesva’s control, his role is transformative because he brings a greater problem into a locally specific mode so that they can also be initiated into the dialogue. In the beginning of the chapter related to the Hopi environment, he states, “We are not allowed to tell the outside world everything and a lot has to do with land” (“In the Light of Reverence”). Here, the editors present Masayesva as an elder who is willing to share some facts about the Hopi, but only enough to present the basic argument so as not to disclose too much information regarding sacred Hopi information. By doing so, the editors are also intent on separating the world’s water shortage from the Hopi’s water shortage. The purpose of this separation is based on religious secrecy, and is an effort to prevent a non-local audience from regarding him as a religious zealot. He purposefully gives general examples that are direct and fact-based, as demonstrated during his second major appearance in the documentary. In this second appearance, Masayesva details how the outside

world influences the Hopi Council to lease Black Mesa and how “underneath is a huge ocean of water, that the mining company would take a cup from this [ocean]” (“In the Light of Reverence”). Masayesva presents the problem in an analogical format so that all audiences can understand the lease. The lease functions as a deceptive tool against the Hopi for the purpose of using their natural resource. Masayesva is warning about the dangers of excessive use to his audience and perhaps to teach the value of limited resources.

While these two examples clearly address the problem of Black Mesa, Masayesva then begins a lengthy speech which criticizes Western society or the “outside world,” as he calls it, by formatting it into an explanation of the Cloud People. He goes into depth about the water’s connection to the Cloud People, and the lack of understanding of that connection by Peabody and its supporters. Here, Masayesva is not personally responsible for the series of edited excerpts of his interview, but the editors intentionally help draw Masayesva’s general audience into becoming aware of the locally specific problem. It is the only example of such and is highly important to note because of its context: By switching back and forth from the non-specific to the specific, Masayesva’s language is intended to anticipate the audience to understand that everyone is affected regardless of their cultural standing. By utilizing specific language choices during the interview, Masayesva achieves the task of establishing the documentary’s overall theme.

In these specialized speeches, Masayesva’s language is quite different from that of his interviews and speeches given to highly circulated newspapers or universities. For example, in an interview on April 24, 1997 with John Dougherty for the *Phoenix New Times*, Masayesva states, “There are lessons to be learned that I would like to share with the outside world—never doubt the power and wisdom of our ancestors” (“Wisdom of the Ancestors”). Here, Masayesva

clearly wants to share his argument with outside audiences who might be able to understand his culturally specific argument through the use of analogical examples. When speaking to students at Northern Arizona University, on the other hand, he states that “The key to our survival as Indian people is not just preserving our cultural ways, but in devising ways to effectively interact with the dominant society and other cultures with which we exist” (Loftin 123). These two examples demonstrate a toned-down version of the Hopi world view, in which Masayesva only slightly mentions cultural viability but instead emphasizes an understanding between Western and Native perspectives regarding water. Assuming that his audience has little knowledge of the water problem on Black Mesa, they are probably more open to hearing his argument.

The first version, the culturally specific account, is intended to demonstrate specificity of the cultural significance of water to the audiences and of the problem that the lowered water tables pose; the second version attempts to represent a general and universal problem. For example, in a June 2004 interview with Sean Patrick Reily of the *Los Angeles Times*, Masayesva made the statement that “In Western science they will tell you everything is disconnected in neat little compartments... In our science, we know everything is interconnected. When we turn something sacred, our water, into a commodity that you sell, this is where our problems began.” Here, Masayesva points to distinctions between Western and Hopi cultures without giving many culturally specific references and keeping his argument solely about water.

In the attempt to be inclusive, he excludes references of water and its connection to culturally relevant topics such as those pertaining to the Cloud People, Hopi ceremonies, and Hopi mythology. He even separates himself from Hopi Traditionalists in an attempt to appeal to a greater audience. In his September 23, 2000 interview with the Natural Resources Defense Council—a non-partisan and non-profit organization promoting environmental justice—

Masayesva stated, “I never considered myself a traditionalist, but rather a student of Hopi culture and traditions. I am always trying to understand and interpret for myself the meaning of Hopi teachings and traditions and their usefulness in today’s highly technological society.” He clearly wants to separate himself from Traditionalists—who, according to Armin Geertz and Peter Whiteley, refuse to partake in Western discourse over their culture—in order to show resistance while still retaining fundamental elements to Hopi culture (Geertz 324 and Whiteley).

In addition, Masayesva relies on scientific findings by federal agencies to address the water problem. In these two instances, Masayesva refers to scientific findings that suggest that lowered water tables are the direct result from Peabody’s over-pumping of water on Hopi land. In an interview with the Natural Resources Defense Council on October 23, 2000, Masayesva stated, “Prior to 1969 the average water withdrawal from the confined part of the aquifer was about 300 acre-feet per year. Two years later it surged to 4,200 acre-feet!” (“Water Life”). This information is further supported by documents and charts found in the United States Geological Survey of 2006. In his presentation at the Second World Water Forum on March 20, 2000, he went beyond just merely suggesting his scientific source—he actually referred to scientific studies from the USGS (United States Geological Survey) and contractual Peabody Energy payments to the Hopi, as found in Charles Wilkinson’s essay *Home Dance, the Hopi and Black Mesa Coal*, in order to illustrate the injustice that occurs on Third Mesa.

### Theorizing the Problem

As a discourse strategy, Masayesva sets the scene of his arguments according to political platforms that favor his views regarding water in Black Mesa. In order to understand his stance as a Hopi elder and spokesperson for Black Mesa water conservation, let us observe sources that directly address the Hopi and water outside of Black Mesa. For example, the San Francisco

Peaks have become a site for legal and religious discourse since Snowbowl ski resort was granted permission to use treated sewer water to make additional snow for skiers. “In 2006, the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, the Yabapai-Apache Nation, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, the Havasupai Tribe, and the Hualapai Tribe filed suit to stop the project which, they asserted, amounted to federally approved and sanctioned desecration of one of the best documented Native American sacred sites on record” (Benally). The courts initially sided with the tribes, yet the decision was eventually reversed on appeal. John Dougherty, reporter for the *Phoenix New Times* who regularly covers stories related to Black Mesa and the San Francisco Peaks, also signifies the importance of water to both sites by interweaving their spokespeople and importance to religious traditions into his journalistic dialogue. Then-President of the Navajo Nation, Joe Shirley, stated that “When you build on it [San Francisco Peaks], when you talk about putting wastewater on it, you are desecrating our life. You are chipping away at our way of life and committing genocide” (Dougherty, “Sacred Hypocrisy”). Shirley demonstrates an almost exact statement made by Masayesva about Black Mesa. There is just one noticeable difference in the discourse taking place about the San Francisco Peaks: The notable absence of Masayesva.

In order to address this absence, Armin Geertz’s argument that political fields built on prophecy in which Hopi elders attempt to have influence on non-Hopi, while disguising their arguments in traditional Hopi world views, becomes useful in understanding Masayesva’s dialogue. In *The Invention of Prophecy*, Geertz states that prophecy is continually changing according to the author:

The documents at our disposal clearly show that the importance and meaning of Hopi prophecy is not to be found in its “prophetic” claims, but in its functions as mechanisms for incorporating contemporary affairs into the framework of

traditional religious values, for evaluating those affairs in terms of conceived tradition, and for interpreting and judging those affairs on the authority of conceived tradition. (324)

Applying Geertz's analysis to this context, Masayesva's language highlights his cause for water by referencing 'traditional religious values.' Masayesva is able to convey his language in this manner due to his high social position as a Hopi elder. This interpretation, or "judgment" as Geertz frames it, is divided into two forms of rhetoric.

The two types of rhetoric demonstrated in Masayesva's public speeches attempt to flag a general mode with the same end result in mind, and thus change the political climates by drawing on preconceived notions that may or may not be based on interaction with Hopi environmental troubles. The first type of rhetoric has familiarity with language and tradition within Hopi context, and any revelation or prophecy that is adopted to discuss Peabody in the contemporary context is without the long analogical or historical discourse of Hopi tradition. Therefore, the discourse is transformative since prophecy takes on a new dimension that is quite different from the most general understanding of prophecy predicting an outcome. Geertz states:

Prophecy is not prediction, even though it purports to be so. Prophecy is a thread in the total fabric of meaning, in the total world view. In this way it can be seen as a way of life and of being. It is discourse transmuted into social praxis. Prophecy is tradition that is spoken by someone to someone else for specific purpose whether for moral, ideological, or political reasons. Prophecy is not static; it is and always has been used in response to internal and external conditions. It is a way of articulating and defining contemporary events within the context and language of 'tradition.' (*The Invention of Prophecy* 324)

Masayesva's cultural specificity and authority does not hint at or directly address prophecy in the Euro-American sense per se as Geertz argues, but overlooks the term in lieu of its strategic use. Masayesva's language is thus part of a greater tradition, as Geertz asserts, in which prophecy is a form of rhetoric in order to address contemporary problems such as Peabody Energy, and therefore he does not need to provide a long explanation of what 'prophecy' means or is intended to mean. For example, rather than draw on long Hopi traditions that involve water, Masayesva continually refers back to tests conducted by the National Geological Survey or the Natural Resources Defense Council during his arguments in order to directly address the issue of lowered water tables. Masayesva's language represents a contextually adapted tradition, influenced greatly by contemporary times in order to constitute a political agenda to stop water extraction on Black Mesa. Furthermore, by openly avoiding the ideological use of "prophecy" and using it instead in a strategic sense—as found in Geertz's theorization of Hopi tradition—Masayesva avoids inciting any arguments and doubt over his authority as an elder. On the other hand, his position as an authority among the Hopi nation would be thrown into question should Masayesva ever begin referring to his traditional views in a prophetic sense and not in a strategic sense. Masayesva purposely avoids using terms like "prophecy" when addressing water shortage as a universal problem as described in Giles' notion of language accommodation. During his speech, Masayesva circumvents the use of certain terms or mentioning any relationships with clan traditions or federal government issues that can possibly tarnish the political aim of his language. For example, in his lecture to Northern Arizona University students, he contended that there must be an intercultural understanding when it comes to discussing Black Mesa water issues. This form of address is meant to draw results that do rely on the Hopi's traditional sense of "prophecy"; however, Masayesva uses the term in such a way when addressing this neutral

audience in an effort to gear them towards the main goal of supporting the shutdown of Peabody (Loftin 123).

In addition, I argue that Masayesva's proposals have characteristics of acculturation in part due to such media outlets as written works; however, this is dramatically altered with the advent of scholarly work on Peabody energy, Internet newspapers, and guest lecturing to universities and scientific panels within the last decade. Although Masayesva does not claim to be a Traditionalist, he still benefits from the Traditionalist Movement's acculturated opposition to Progressives.

For example, Thomas Banyacya, a member of the Coyote Clan, was the official Traditionalists spokesperson for the Kikmongwis clan and spoke in similar prophetic terms. During the beginning stages of the Traditionalist movement, Banyacya "chose the term 'traditional' for the group to indicate its defining character as embracing and validating everything from Hopi culture, history, and daily life that was a product of oral instruction," (Clemmer, *Roads in the Sky* 181). However, Clemmer argues that the movement by the Kikmongwis set the clan's goal of gaining secular influence by joining other Traditionalists in motion, on an issue-by-issue basis. In addition, Clemmer argues that Banyacya's experience as a Conscientious Objector with the Society of Friends helped him develop and articulate political language that would allow him to weave in and out of Hopi and Western society (185). Clemmer describes Banyacya's career as that of a public figure and spokesperson for Hopi issues who never devoted himself to one particular cause.

Much like Banyacya, Masayesva appears to structure his career as that of a Traditionalist. Banyacya's Traditional understanding points to Hopi culture, history, and daily life—but his adult life was spent as an orator to the outside world. In this context, Banyacya goes against the

Traditional ideal. Instead, he appears to have acculturated a Westernized lifestyle. One may argue that Masayesva, like Banyacya, is benefiting from the initial Traditionalist movement in his ability to acculturate without promoting Progressive ideals, and therefore is keeping in tradition with contextualizing language on an issue-by-issue basis. But for now I would like to address a second influential factor on Masayesva's public speaking: the written media.

Geertz states, "The use of the written media led to a greater degree of extramural dialogue. It brought about support, but it also made Hopi tradition more vulnerable to generative factors. The use of the mass media provided effective propaganda devices which by definition implies the manipulation of information for political ends" (*The Invention of Prophecy* 327). Under this theorization of selected information, Masayesva anticipates support by denying audiences specific connections to Hopi traditions, such as references to the Cloud People or Maasaw, and instead refers to the scientific findings regarding Black Mesa in order to connect to the Western world which may hold some hesitation or prejudice against Native Americans, and thus call for his appropriation of language accommodation. Following this strategy, Masayesva can set in motion cultural references with specificity to demonstrate his authority over the matter.

More interesting are the instances, as I have documented earlier, in which Masayesva makes connections, or appears to give connections, to Hopi deities through a chronological timeline that brings an audience to the present. In these instances, Masayesva gives general details about the Hopi emergence myth, ceremonial springs, and so forth, through such modern media outlets as online newspaper interviews, filmed documentaries, and websites that promote Indigenous ways of life. By doing so, Masayesva bypasses the precedents already created by Hopi historians regarding Hopi culture, and instead utilizes his personal authority within Hopi tradition, thereby constituting himself as a major spokesperson for the Hopi. Let us not forget

that he was president of the Hopi Tribal Council, a political entity with similar democratic rules that apply to the federal government elections. By presenting himself as a political figure attempting to tackle the most overwhelming challenge to Hopi life—Peabody Energy—Masayesva attempts to sway audiences behind his campaign by reworking influential factors. This strategy of utilizing dual factors while remaining in a moderate position is exemplified by Geertz's notion of "zones of increasing polyvalences," in which core Hopi narratives remained centered, while outside "buffer" zones continue to accommodate, transform, mutate, or discredit other Hopi (Geertz 332). Masayesva's references to traditional religious values appear to be modeled from Geertz's theory of "buffer zones" where, for example, the Hopi's connection to water remains centered. Masayesva's buffer zones are centered upon themes of water extraction, a need for urgency, and intercultural understanding. We have seen this unfold in the language used by Masayesva throughout the given examples in which Masayesva refers to Hopi creationism and water during his speeches, but quickly changes the narrative to fit his needs. Thus his use of Hopi prophecy is not only rooted in Geertz's notion of buffer zones, but is also geared toward perpetuating a long standing tradition within Hopi culture.

In addition, the problems brought upon Hopi culture by Peabody enable a second perspective related to the issue of territory. Thomas Tweed defines religion as "Confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and supra-human forces to make homes and cross boundaries" (Tweed 55). Masayesva's discourse about water and religion push us to reconsider a central element of Tweed's approach to religion through the spatial tropes of crossing and dwelling. For the Hopi, space and time have not changed, but rather the pivotal aspects of their space and time—including the sovereignty and integrity of the land—have undergone symbolic changes. The Hopi case helps us to see that

“crossing and dwelling” is as much circumstantial and symbolic as it is topographical. The Hopi only change their physical living space to a new place due to federal control. Tweed’s theoretical argument about geographical crossing is relevant to Hopi culture since new issues are being faced among the tribe. For Masayesva, he is attempting to situate himself as a Hopi elder who understands the trans-temporal relocation of the Hopi since he builds on Hopi religious belief structures while also coming to terms with Western desires to mine and extract water from their landscape.

The boundaries which are a result of reservation lines bind the Hopi to that land, but also take them away from their entire homeland that stretches far west and further south. The Hopi must recalculate their homeland to fit the needs of a new entity and culture. Since the interruption in time and the disruption to the Hopi world view of the 1960s, Masayesva’s language is clearly pointing to a centered religious homeland—that being Black Mesa—by reestablishing it through means of an imagined community, one that also reaches out to real communities through newspapers, documentaries, and so forth. As seen in the previous examples, public outreach often consists of contact with the surrounding regions of Arizona which were once an extension of the Hopi homeland and the rest of North America. Masayesva is essentially reaching out across his native homeland and attracting an audience to the original and authentic center. Only at this original center can a reestablishment of the periphery and a continuance of Hopi world views exist. In doing so, Masayesva crosses these borders in very untraditional ways.

Tweed states that “religions...are not only about being in place but also about moving across. They employ tropes, artifacts, rituals and codes, and institutions to mark boundaries, and they prescribe and proscribe different kinds of movements across those boundaries” (123).

Religious language constitutes similar effects in that it moves across boundaries, dependent on its formatting and presentation. As I have argued earlier, Masayesva changes his language to address two distinct types of rhetoric—the universal problem and locally specific problem—using tropes, authority, and institutions to explore and maintain boundaries according to these two forms of rhetoric. The language determines what movement occurs, and how it will cross boundaries. One noticeable crossing and dwelling is the actual institutional language: English. If Masayesva is true in maintaining Hopi tradition prior to interruption of coal mining on Hopi land, then he would have to give his speeches only in Hopi; however, because he speaks in English during all his speeches, he is demonstrating a new dwelling by virtue of institutional schooling and willingness to reach an English-speaking audience that is outside the boundaries of the reservation. This is quite interesting because it reflects back to Clemmer's research where Masayesva utilizes non-Native teaching strategies in order to teach Hopi culture during his tenure as principle at Hotevilla. By establishing himself as an authority figure and spokesperson both within his own community and to the outside communities, he is able to cross many boundaries that an average Hopi may not. For example, his willingness to speak with newspapers and documentaries spreads Hopi religious language to the English-speaking world and more appropriately, is easier than requiring translation by those who can translate Hopi. Here, the actual language is the primary method for crossing boundaries and bringing concern to Black Mesa.

It is evident throughout my research that oral traditions, ritual practice, and historical ethnography demonstrate that water has long been and continues to be central to Hopi religious life. In recent decades, an emphasis on the cultural centrality of water has taken on increased urgency due to the draining of aquifers on Hopi land by Peabody Energy. During this time of

crisis, Vernon Masayesva has emerged as the most prominent spokesperson against Peabody today, conveying the Hopis' concerns to a range of audiences by means of various forms of media. For example, in an interview with BBC in 1995, Masayesva explains the importance of water to the Hopi tribe and the threat that water depletion poses upon their way of life: "It's a tragic chapter in United States-Hopi relations. Very tragic. They put our culture at risk...the reason why Navajo aquifer water is so important is not only because, according to the Hopis, it's what sucks in the rain, but it also feeds the springs where ceremonies are occurring" (Whiteley 205). Here, Masayesva transitions from speaking about the universal problem of water shortage, to a very specific cause concerning the Hopi people's need for water.

In his speeches, Masayesva utilizes a specific rhetorical technique when addressing audiences to achieve his overall goal of winning support for the protection of Hopi water. I have argued that this technique is best understood by engaging Armin Geertz's theory on the invention of prophecy and buffer zones. By understanding prophecy as rhetorical language, the crisis at issue becomes contextualized within Hopi tradition for the purpose of asserting authority. Yet, the very act of prophesizing in the Hopi context is not without Masayesva's ability to reach and include audiences from outside the Hopi tradition. Masayesva demonstrates a clear ability to use (1) general modes of language which point to a worldly problem that can resonate with most anybody; and then (2) include cultural specificity to speak about his particular problem and cause as a way of bringing awareness to the urgent situation on Hopi land. This rhetorical technique is also evident in the previous example. By strategically weaving a universal problem (water shortage) with his specific cause (water shortage on the Hopi reservation) and authority during his arguments, Masayesva can both invoke religious language and cross borders of cultural sensitivity that otherwise would have been impassable. Masayesva's interwoven religious-

political discourse about water illuminates a specific instance of how long-held Hopi religious concerns become accentuated in moments of political, social, or cultural crisis—reminding us that religious claims emerge within the public realm for specific purposes. In order to fully understand the context of Masayesva's religious discourse, it is important to also consider the political and traditional influences upon the primary dialogue. Both politics and traditions continue to cross paths in religious discourse, yet what is most important to observe is the new language which births from this intercrossing, as seen in Masayesva's characteristic use of language. Paying close attention to this rhetoric reminds us that the study of religion should steer clear of simple essentialism if our goal is to understand religion and religious discourse in and through its manifold expressions, whether these are in a kiva or at a protest.

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