

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

"The Father Says NO?"

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0s93t6jg>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 33(1)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Hoffman, Michael

Publication Date

2009

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

COMMENTARY

“The Father Says NO?”

MICHAEL HITTMAN

In order to account for several puzzling, if not inexplicable, things that happened to me while researching the life and times of Wovoka, also known as Jack Wilson, 1890 Ghost Dance prophet, I propose the neologism *extraordinary personal experience* (EPE). An EPE, simply put, references events and circumstances that occur during and beyond focused ethnographic field investigations and seem to defy scientific explanation.¹

Mine began fifteen years after completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of New Mexico about opiate addiction that destroyed the lives of Northern Paiute (Numu) members belonging to the birth cohort who succeeded the 1890 Ghost Dance religion’s generation—the prophet’s daughter included.² Intent on calling attention to the centennial of Wovoka’s Great Revelation, I approached the Yerington Paiute tribe’s council in 1988 to pitch the Wovoka Centennial Project (1889–1989), a proposed collaboration that would include my writing a tribally authorized biography of their most famous son.³ They, happily, approved. No sooner did I return “to the field,” however, than I experienced the first EPE.

Having asked my adopted *bia* (mother), Ida Mae Valdez, in whose home I’ve lived off and on since 1968, to escort me to Pine Grove, Nevada, formerly a thriving gold-mining community in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and where the 1890 Ghost Dance religion effectively was born, she in turn suggested we bring along her *wanga-a*, or “younger brother.” Who better than Russell Dick, after all, to serve as our guide? “Hooks” had worked his entire lifetime as an

Michael Hittman is a professor of anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Long Island University. The author of *Corbett Mack: The Life of a Northern Paiute* (1996) and *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance* (1997), Hittman also hosts and produces *In the Pocket*, a National Public Radio weekly jazz talk-radio interview series.

irrigator and a cowboy at the Flying M Ranch, which was located in this same East Walker River country and was owned by hotel magnate Baron Hilton, who had purchased it from another financial tycoon, Max Fleischman, the margarine manufacturer.

In any event we would be retracing the pilgrimage undertaken by James Mooney in late December 1891 or after he interrupted other ethnological works-in-progress because of a determination to interview the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet, whose religion had wrongly been blamed for the Wounded Knee Massacre.⁴ Unlike the “Indian Man,” who would spend one winter week on the Walker River Reservation interviewing relatives of this Northern Paiute before continuing west, our trio traveled along that same twenty-three-mile mostly unpaved road south by southwest from Yerington (pop. 2,400) by car (rather than by horse and wagon) on a hot day in early summer (25 June 1988).⁵ Even so, what Mooney had written about this landscape (“hard to imagine anything more monotonously unattractive”) seemed unchanged.⁶

Although we, too, necessarily traversed southern Mason Valley’s “Missouri Flats,” no evidence whatsoever seemed to remain of the “cleared 1890 Ghost Dance ceremonial grounds” that Mooney had also reported.⁷ Nor was I able to identify the (sacred) site where “The Cutter” reportedly got frightened, either by thunderclap and/or solar eclipse, “dropped his axe” while chopping wood as a day laborer for the Wilsons, and then was famously transported “up to the other world . . . [where] he saw God, with all the people who had died long ago engaged in their old time sport and occupation.”⁸ Ida Mae seemed more preoccupied with surveying those same Sierra Nevada Mountains also formerly owned by her people, which today are a part of our National (Toiyabe) Forest System, for pine nuts (*tuba*), which the Numu used to harvest in abundance during the fall and store in the valleys below as their quintessential winter survival food.⁹ As for her brother, Hooks seemed less interested in upcoming pine-nut harvesting destinations than the site of buried gold treasure belonging to a stagecoach robbery that their father (Andy Dick), who was my oldest consultant, used to ask me to take him to visit in hopes of recovering. In any event, my camera clicked away, as I photographed that memorable vista in anticipation of a prestigious lecture series about the 1890 Ghost Dance scheduled in the coming fall at the American Museum of Natural History.¹⁰

Several weeks later, when I called my home-away-from-home to provide the date and time of my August return flight, Ida Mae startled me by saying: “Gee, Mike, you sure must have plenty strong *booha!*” Although “supernatural power” had disappeared as the core of Numu culture, because Wovoka was believed to have the ability to control the weather, I nevertheless wondered hard and long about what she possibly could have meant about my implied role in those unusually heavy rainstorms in East Walker River country that followed our day visit to Pine Grove.¹¹ I finally returned to Yerington and settled on what proved to be a prescient dream I had in 1976 that I shared with Ida Mae and got to reprise that banter; however, my adopted *bia* seemed serious about blaming those road washouts and unprecedented area flooding on my photo shoot.¹²

A second EPE occurred several days later. Thrilled about the prospect of obtaining supplemental data regarding the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet's family, I stood at the kitchen window one day during the week of the 23rd to 30th of August 1988, admiring the verdant back lawn planted by my adopted father, Rafael Wenscelado Valdez, in what had been a desolate tract of alkali land surrounding his Northern Paiute family's brand new HUD house on the Campbell Ranch Reservation. During my reverie, I thought about how I might further enhance the aforementioned public-lecture series with a display of plumage from *weedagoe* (magpie), whose iridescent feathers Wovoka mailed to followers as thaumaturgies, along with *weeya* (eagle feathers); red and white mineral pigments; and Western-style shirts and ten-gallon Stetsons.¹³ Consequently, I asked my fourteen-year-old nephew to shoot a magpie for me. “Duke” (Christopher Howard) consented, so in the meanwhile I drove off to Smith Valley, Nevada, in a borrowed tribal vehicle for what sadly proved to be my last interview with Irene Thompson, beloved consultant and friend.

Located twenty or so miles southwest of Mason Valley, Smith Valley also belonged to the *Taboosidokado* (Taboosi-eaters), which is a food-related name for those Northern Paiute who resided in this part of western Nevada that was derived from *chufa* (earth almond), which formerly grew in abundance along both forks of the Walker River.¹⁴ Not only were there 1890 Ghost Dance ceremonies held in Smith Valley, but also Arthur “Ad” Chapman conducted a two-day interview with the Ghost Dance prophet on December 4 and 5 of that same year, some thirteen months prior to Mooney's interview in East Walker country.¹⁵

Following yet another of these seemingly annual tearful “Irene, goodbye! Goodbye, Irene!” farewells with this intelligent woman, who, incidentally, had greatly helped my efforts to reconstruct the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet's family tree, I headed north back toward Mason Valley on Alternate 95. This single-lane highway takes you through scenic Wilson Canyon, a state park today, the locus of the controversial prophecy/miracle associated with Wovoka's new religion at the turn of the nineteenth century—the block of ice he prophesied would either tumble from the sky on a hot summer day or float down the West Walker River.¹⁶

After resuming the appropriate speed limit north of the town of Mason, I was forced again to slow down because of a familiar sight on the highway: a dead jackrabbit being feasted on by magpies. As a pigeon-wary New York driver, I recall muttering, “Watch out!” This proved unnecessary, insofar as those intelligent carrion-feeders merely waited until the last possible nano-second before quitting their highway meal and flying off. Convinced that I'd successfully angled the car tires so as to avoid crushing *kamu* (jackrabbit), yet another quintessential traditional Northern Paiute food, I continued on my drive toward tribal headquarters, anxious to return a borrowed vehicle before closing time.

No sooner, however, did I arrive at Campbell's Ranch and park the car, than Duke, who was waiting for me outside that brand new building began pointing animatedly at the front of the tribal vehicle.¹⁷ He exclaimed, “Uncle Mike—look!” I hurried outside, and what I saw was a dead magpie on its

oversized bumper. “Mr. Magpie,” as Uncle Hooks used to call these scavengers, lay in perfect repose, a perfect-looking specimen with no sign whatsoever of injury, and whose tail feathers seemed to await plucking.¹⁸

A third EPE occurred during a different public lecture about the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet. Following a (chance?) meeting with Linda Reynolds, a sculptress living at the time in Manhattan who attended the other series at the American Museum of Natural History, she introduced my work to the Gros Ventre, George P. Horse Capture, who in turn telephoned to invite me to deliver the keynote address at the Plains Indian Annual Seminar in Linda’s hometown of Cody, Wyoming in the fall of 1990: “Lest We Forget,” a show George was curating at the Buffalo Bill Museum that not only would display relics of “bulletproof” Ghost Dance shirts tragically worn by Plains Indians but also to which members of the Wounded Knee Survivors’ Association had been invited.¹⁹

On 28 September 1990, just as I’d finished laying bare the nature, or Social Science understanding of altered states of consciousness (ASC) and near-death experiences (NDEs) such as those apparently experienced by the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet, this happened in Coe Auditorium: A middle-aged, non-Indian male seated in the top row suddenly stood and had a seizure.²⁰ Whether or not what subsequently was reported to me as a *gran mal* seizure was identical with trance-states associated both with the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet’s demonstration of his power and those of his followers, I am calling this another EPE.²¹

One year later, the fourth of these seeming inexplicable occurrences took place. At that moment in contemporary art history, when a conceptual artist with the gifts of Cindy Sherman was photographing herself in the dress of Dutch Masters, I received an invitation from a colleague to participate in a Chautauqua-type project jointly sponsored by our university’s Media Arts Department and Honors Program. “Encountering Art,” as the videographer Stuart Fishelson explained it to me, involved his taping Long Island University professors, whose careers were linked with famous historic personages: Wally Glickman, for example, portraying Einstein, the subject of his and Fishelson’s prize-winning animated film. After initially demurring, I finally consented to participate. My rationalization being that if an Italian-American actor could pass for a Cherokee during his entire career, I, who had at least studied Wovoka for many years and imagined I “knew” him as well, if not better, than most or any, could portray the Ghost Dance prophet.²²

As for props, my only request was a chair. Hadn’t the Northern Paiute prophet been photographed seated on one in the morning following his all-night interview with Mooney on New Year’s Day in 1892?²³ I thought to insert the eagle feather presented to me by Sakim (aka Charles Daniels), a Pine Arbor (Tallahassee, Florida) Creek leader, as prophylaxis during my wife’s traumatic delivery of our firstborn daughter in 1976 on my arm (though inside a rubber band, not a lady’s garter)—much as Wovoka had done while preparing for his famous photograph with Mooney—and borrow a topcoat like the one worn by the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet in which he consciously or unconsciously emulated traveling Protestant evangelists or because of those divine instructions

that made him "Co-President of the West"; in the end, I came dressed for my videotaping wearing a leather vest, cowboy boots, and my Stetson hat.²⁴ Although the color—brown not black or white—and size (with considerably fewer "gallons" than those "Planter Hats" Wovoka typically got photographed wearing) of the Stetson were incorrect, my haberdashery nonetheless bore redolent meaning for me, as it was a gift from my late uncle, Bernard Bader, who hosted me over the years in his Lafayette *cum* Walnut Creek, California homes during interludes from fieldwork in the adjoining state of Nevada.

Mindful as well of the Northern Arapahoe Black Coyote's claim about having seen "the whole world" while he stared down into the lining of Wovoka's ten-gallon hat, and over which the prophet had waved a feather during this visiting Plains Indian's audience with the Northern Paiute, I, too, placed my Stetson on my knees with its insides exposed to the videocamera before fielding questions scripted entirely by me with the intent of outlining the 1890 Ghost Dance religion's syncretic theology. Questions that were drawn from Mooney's and Chapman's separate, though replicable accounts regarding this prophet's fascinating melding of the Judeo-Christian and Northern Paiute "High God": especially those instructions from G-d/Grandfather received by Wovoka that involved the obligation of Native Americans to perform the Northern Paiute traditional Round or Circle Dance for four nights, which was followed by bathing (baptism?) in the river on the fifth day. Also involved was the 1890 Ghost Dance religion's Mosaic-like derived commandments (for example, Thou shalt not kill), which interestingly ended up coupled with the prophet's own Protestant-type work ethic.²⁵

Needless to say, the longer the videotaping, the more I "got into" my part. Although (happily) nothing remotely even similar to what happens to "Daniel Columbe," the unemployed French-Canadian actor (Lothaire Blumeau) hired to portray the Christian Messiah in Denys Arcand's remarkable film "Jesus of Montreal" happened to me either during or after my impersonation of the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet, a telephone call from Fishelson after our videotaping nonetheless brought news of what I call the fifth EPE.

Sheepishly, but then with amounting incredulity, this colleague reported that my interview was the only one in the series of nineteen taped interviews to have come out blank. As I recall, my bravado-type response was "not surprised at all." I did agree to retape it; however, I still haven't viewed my performance, which was successfully realized. How do I know that? Because of the ensuing brouhaha my taped interview caused. As to whether or not I should have expected something of that sort either on the basis of what happened to Wovoka following his vision or because of the sort of politics notorious in academia, the aforementioned brouhaha that followed a screening of the collage of those twenty interviews containing my segment satisfies the criterion as an EPE.²⁶

This is what happened: Having scripted my (off-screen) interrogator (Fishelson/Mooney) to pay me (Hittman/Wovoka) at the end of our interview, I thereby attempted to re-create the real-life Northern Paiute's demand for five dollars for his photograph, which the late-nineteenth-century anthropologist refused to pay, before finally settling on one dollar, a sum James

Mooney not only wrote was his “regular price per day for his services as informant,” but also that it came with the pledge to the prophet to “send him a copy of the picture when finished.”²⁷ When another close colleague viewed my haggling *cum* Wovoka with unseen voice in that collage, the protest letter he circulated among the faculty created a tempest. Although Joseph Dorinson, an American historian and civil rights activist during the 1950s, who portrayed his hero, Benjamin Franklin, in that videotaped series, claimed to be venting anger at this representation of the exploitation of oppressed-enough Native Americans, wounded egos caused by his letter during those pre-politically correct years nonetheless took quite some time before finally healing.²⁸

As for the next EPE, with fewer faculty publications in our teaching-oriented, inner-city campus than today, Joseph Filanowicz’s task of collecting books for display in 1993 wasn’t really difficult at all. Yet after this moral philosopher—and self-ordained “Faculty Display Case Czar-For-Life”—had demonstrated the good sense to relocate that display case from our library into a glass cabinet adjoining what had been the lobby of the Brooklyn Paramount, the world’s first movie theater built exclusively for “talkies” (1928), and which Long Island University purchased in 1950, Joe called one day two years later to report to me that something “weird” had happened. My book alone, which I had to purchase from the Yerington Paiute tribe (for \$20, full price, no less!), was missing. “And the screwy thing is that the cabinet is still locked!” stammered my colleague, who, though trained to teach “logic,” seemed confounded while reporting that he still possessed the showcase’s “only damned key!”²⁹

Curiously, this next EPE was prompted by yet another telephone call from another academician and close friend today—Arnold Krupat of Sarah Lawrence College, professor of Native American Literatures, a field of academic studies he helped to found.³⁰ Arnold had recommended me to Scribner’s project editor, who, in turn, requested an article about Wovoka for its forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Violence in the United States*. Ignoring the thorny matter of how to write one thousand words about the inventor of a religion whose teachings promised a reward in the next world in exchange for nonviolence, I began with the selection of a penny picture post card of the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet for the lone image permitted in my text.³¹

Shot on Main Street in Yerington, Nevada, we see Wovoka dressed in a long, black top coat and wearing his tall Stetson; he is standing in front of a two-story building that for many years housed the *Mason Valley News* (“The Only Newspaper In The World That Gives A Damn About Yerington!”) but that in 1910 housed the Mason Valley Bank, which was owned by J. I. Wilson, David and Abigail’s oldest son.³² Its caption reads, “Jack Wilson, Big Paiute Chief and Medicine Man”; however, I prefer my own for the post card: “Betrayed and Abandoned Former 1890 Ghost Dance Prophet Denied Admission on the Basis of Race to the Very Bank Founded on His Discovery of Gold in Pine Grove!”

Having borrowed it from my adopted mother, I carried the relic to a local photography store in my neighborhood in Flatbush, Brooklyn, for reproduction as a print. Why? Because, curiously enough, the photograph of that post card was the only one in my collection of twenty-five of Wovoka that failed

to have been copied by the photography storeowner, in Yerington, Nevada, where I'd originally attempted to duplicate that entire set for a scheduled exhibition in Carson City.³³ When I arrived on the scheduled pick-up date in Brooklyn, it was only to learn that "my" borrowed penny picture postcard was "missing."

Doubly angered to learn that without my knowledge the work had been sent out rather than being done on premise, I could do no more than accede to the store owner's suggestion that I wait while a search would hopefully locate it. On the last of several return visit dates, however, the storeowner delivered his apparent hammer: "Sorry, Kodak lost your work!" Along with my incredulity, I will admit to the temptation of wanting to dial up Sotheby's in order to assess "fair market value" for that presumed invaluable item—fantasized wealth, to be sure, for Mrs. Ida Mae Valdez, a retired, widowed pensioner at the time, additionally strapped with grandparental chores. Long story abbreviated, on the same day Kodak's official search was scheduled to end, I anxiously returned home from teaching to these glad tidings on my answering machine: "Mr. Hittman, your photo's been located!" Happily, a package containing the original and a negative, as well an 8" × 10" black-and-white print did arrive the following day as promised. But how's this for irony? Scribner's project editor chose *not* to use Kodak's reproduction because of its "poor quality."³⁴

Not only did KNOB/Channel 5-Reno, Nevada's public TV station, successfully interview me about the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet, but also the interview was aired as part of its "Best of the Nevada Experience III" incident-free. It's also true to state that WBAI-PACIFICA Radio in New York City taped an interview with me called "Wovoka, the 1890 Ghost Dance and the Wounded Knee Massacre," which they successfully aired on 1 May 1998 as part of the "Native Voices' Hour." If I report that for more than forty years I have been lecturing about this remarkable figure in classes about Native Americans at my university and elsewhere sans incidence, this is neither intended as an idle boast nor to tempt the fates.

Thinking that I was "done" with the Ghost Dance and these reported "funny businesses," I decided to write up this commentary for publication. As for the title, an article about Mooney written by his biographer inspired mine; his biographer derived it from an Arapaho's comment about the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet.³⁵ As originally reported by Mooney, he reported having witnessed a debate about the "Red Christ" during a council meeting in Darlington, Oklahoma, or when a Kiowa named Apiatan (Wooden Lance), who'd just returned from a two-day visit with Wovoka in Nevada, made known his utter disillusionment versus the expressed faith of an (Arapaho) named Sitting Bull. As Mooney recounts the heightened emotional state of the former, which no doubt was exacerbated by the Kiowa's frustration with the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet, who refused to help him reunite with his dead child: "Not seeing those scars [of Jesus], Apiatan expressed some doubt as to whether Wovoka was really the messiah he had come so far to see."³⁶ Imagining that I, too, might "quit the whole Ghost Dance [re: scholarly] business"—that is, Wovoka's apparent admonishment to Plains Indians

because they'd "twist[ed] things and [made] . . . trouble"—along came an invitation from Marta Collins of the Nevada Historical Association to deliver the plenary talk at a convocation scheduled to be held in Reno, Nevada, on 9 October 1999.³⁷

Needless to say, if only because eight of the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet's descendants were willing to share memories of him on a panel we called "Wovoka's Living Descendants," which was cosponsored by the Nevada Historical Society and the Yerington Paiute tribe, I jumped at the opportunity to serve as moderator and to lecture once again about his life. At the end of that long evening, while listening to one of the final questions asked by a non-Indian in our audience of nearly four hundred predominately Native Americans, I happened to notice out the corner of my left eye all the legs of the chairs on which the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet's descendants sat on the stage of Lawlor Center on the University of Nevada's Reno campus. "What if?" I immediately then worried about the fate of those (overweight) folks, were one of them to shove back while standing in acknowledgment of anticipated applause. . . . Wouldn't this precipitate their collective backward tumble? Sure enough, my worst imagined fear began to materialize in real time.

Ignoring *how* I might summon requisite strength to prevent this—surely a question of personal relevance, even if I hadn't recently undergone surgery to repair a hernia and worried about the possibility of reopening those stitches—I immediately dropped my right foot down from that stage, planted it solidly on the auditorium floor, thereby bracing myself with arms widely outstretched across the backs of two or more chairs, and with all my strength, prepared to staunch the combined weight of all those folks from toppling over backward onto their heads. As for how I even managed to hold up Evelyn Cook, Lillian Rogers, and Frieda Brown, if not the rest, the only "logical" explanation besides calling it an adrenaline-sparked "peak experience" was that Wesley Dick of Coleville, Nevada must also have anticipated the same; this fellow presenter simultaneously grabbed hold of the sweaters of the two women closest to him on stage, and thereby contributed toward my effort, if not really having saved that day!³⁸

"The Father Says 'NO?'" In light of the above, this certainly seems so.³⁹

Acknowledgments

An earlier version of this commentary was read in 1999 at an invited session of the American Ethnological Society of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago, Illinois. Along with my gratitude to Michael Harkin for asking me to participate in this session, I want to express my indebtedness to Raymond Fogelson, its discussionist, for penetrating and witty comments. A special acknowledgment belongs to Alexandra Swaney, Montana's Folklorist (retired)—for tweaking my skepticism regarding what used to be called "parapsychology" and for recommending related sources cited in this commentary.

NOTES

1. My neologism was inspired by a comment in *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience*, ed. David E. Young and Jean-Guy Goulet (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1994), 7–8: the possibility that in a culturally relativistic sense, the “extraordinary” experience of one person (read: culture) might be considered “ordinary” for another. Although I share these authors’ interpretation of (and seeming prejudice against) “New Age” phenomena as symptoms of technocratic America’s desperate “search for a new religion,” their excellent anthology documenting instances of “multiple realities” experienced by ethnographers studying the same should be recommended for those favoring scientific explanations. Another useful source is by the important American writer Paul Auster (*The Red Notebook* [New York: New Directions, 2006]).

2. Michael Hittman, *Ghost Dances, Disillusionment and Opiate Addiction: An Ethnohistory of Smith and Mason Valley Paiutes* (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 1973).

3. Michael Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance: A Sourcebook* (Carson City, NV: Grace Dangberg Foundation, 1990); republished as *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance: A Sourcebook* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

4. James Mooney, *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report 14, pt. 2 (1896).

5. L. C. Moses, *The Indian Man: A Biography of James Mooney* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Mooney, *Ghost Dance Religion*.

6. Ibid.

7. Cf. Chapman interview.

8. Mooney, *Ghost Dance Religion*, 771–72.

9. Cf. Omer Stewart, “The Northern Paiute Bands,” *University of California Anthropological Records*, vol. 2 (1939); Mooney, *Ghost Dance Religion*, 766.

10. The first of those three talks focused on the Prophet Dance (cf. Leslie A. Spier, *The Prophet Dance of the Northwest and Its Derivatives: The Sources of the Ghost Dance, General Series in Anthropology*, no. 1 [Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing, 1935]) as the backdrop for both the 1890 Ghost Dance as well its immediate predecessor (cf. Cora Du Bois, *The 1870 Ghost Dance*, University of California Anthropological Records, vol. 3 [1939]; Michael Hittman, “The 1870 Ghost Dance at the Walker River Reservation: A Reconstruction,” *Ethnohistory* 20 [1973]: 247–78).

11. On the theological concept of *booha* as a religious leitmotif among Great Basin indigenous peoples, cf. Jay Miller, “Basin Religion and Theology: A Comparative Study of Power (Puha),” *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 5 (1983): 66–86. As for the related significance of dreams, cf. Willard Z. Park, *Shamanism in Western North America: A Study in Cultural Relationships* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1938).

12. In a subsequent conversation about this subject he added, “Maybe Jack wanted to wipe away your footprints!”

13. Cf. Grace Dangberg, *Letters to Jack Wilson, the Paiute Prophet, Written between 1908–1911*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Anthropological Paper no. 55, Bulletin 164 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1957); “Wovoka,” *The Nevada Historical Society* 11 (1968): 1–53. Interested readers might also consult Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance*, 136–42.

14. Stewart, "Northern Paiutes Bands," 142–43.

15. Arthur I. Chapman, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1891*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1892), 191–94. Reprinted as Appendix A in Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance*. Regarding Chapman's account of a visit to the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet following the Great Revelation by Captain Josephus, who complained about the lack of rain and how their crops on the Walker River Reservation were drying up: "He said that Jack Wilson sat with his head bowed but never spoke a word during all this time, but he went off to bed and was up early in the morning. When he came in where Josephus was he said to him: 'You can go home and in the morning of the third day you and all the people will have plenty of rain,'" quoted in Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance*, 233.

16. Controversial, if only because of what the popular writer Western Paul Bailey wrote about the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet in this self-published author's purported biography (*Wovoka, the Indian Messiah* [Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1957]) and novel (*The Ghost Dance Messiah: The Jack Wilson Story* [Tuscon, AZ: Westernlore Press, 1970]). By virtue (vice!) of calling his subject a "fraud," and claiming that the ice miracle in the river was nothing more than a "hoax" perpetuated on the world by his white "blood brothers," whether with or without Wovoka's collusion, those books so embittered the prophet's third and youngest daughter that she refused to discuss her famous father with me in 1968. Although Alice Wilson Vidovich's bruised feelings can be gleaned in Appendix L in Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance*, her part-Shoshone husband was always more than willing to discuss his famous father-in-law. Tape recordings with Andy Vidovich made by Margaret "Peg" Wheat in the 1950s are available through Special Collections of the University of Nevada's Reno campus library.

17. Michael Hittman, *A Numu History: The Yerington Paiute Tribe* (Yerington, NV: Yerington Paiute Tribe, 1984).

18. Today my sister Linda says her son slipped the dead magpie he'd shot past me and onto the front bumper.

19. George P. Horse Capture, introduction to *Wounded Knee: Lest We Forget*, ed. Alvin M. Josephy Jr., Trudy Thomas, and Jeanne Eder (Cody, WY: The Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1993).

20. Edward A. Dyer's manuscript is entitled "Wizardry." It can be found in Special Collections of the University of Nevada Library, Reno, NV, and is reprinted as Appendix C in Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance*.

21. Cf. Herbert Ring, *Heading toward Omega: In Search of the Meaning of the Near-Death Experience* (New York: Quail/William Morrow, 1984). To cite another example of a seeming cultural conundrum that intrigues students of social movements, Plains Indians "rational" enough to forsake traditional weaponry in the face of the obvious technological superiority of rifles during their pursuit of buffalo and in warfare with whites as well as against Native American enemies, nonetheless turned around, as it were, and in seeming defiance of "logic" adorned themselves with those infamous painted muslin-cloth "ghost shirts," asserting that such garments would render them invulnerable even against Hotchkiss cannons.

22. My allusion is to "Iron Eyes" Cody, who died on 4 January 1999 at the over-ripe old age of ninety-four. Whether or not "part Cherokee" as he maintained until the end, or the (full-blood) son of Italian-American immigrants, Bernice Kanner (*The Ottawa Citizen*) wrote on 26 December 1999 how he became a cultural icon after

appearing in the “most famous public commercial of all times,” the antipollution TV commercial whose catch phrase was: “People start pollution, people can stop it!”

Once again I want to express my indebtedness to my long-time Ghost Dance buddy, Gunard Solberg, for telling me that “Iron Eyes” Cody not only began his long acting career as a cowboy in Westerns but also portrayed the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet in a live KTLA-TV show aired on 29 December 1951—a script written by none other than the equally redoubtable Hollywood cowboy, Tim McCoy, who interviewed—and photographed—the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet at the end of their respective lives (cf. Tim McCoy with Ronald McCoy, *Tim McCoy Remembers the West* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977]).

23. Mooney, *Ghost Dance Religion*, 764. According to Solberg (in press), Mooney borrowed that chair from the nearby Plummer Ranch, retiring there later that same day to write up interview notes following their historic all-night interview on the Plummer dining-room table.

24. *Ibid.*, 764 (fig. 69); cf. *ibid.*, 772: “Finally . . . God appointed him his deputy to take charge of affairs in the west, while ‘Governor Harrison’ would attend to matters in the east.”

25. *Ibid.*, 775; on the importance of the Round Dance throughout the Great Basin, cf. Willard Z. Park, “Cultural Succession in the Great Basin,” in *Language, Culture and Personality: Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir*, ed. Leslie A. Spier et al. (Menasha, WI: Sapir Memorial Publication Fund, 1941), 180–203.

26. Including death threats allegedly made against the prophet’s life by Johnson Sides, a federally deputized Indian policeman from Reno called the “Northern Paiute Peacemaker,” an avowed enemy of the 1890 Ghost Dance religion (cf. Mooney, *Ghost Dance Religion*, 765).

27. *Ibid.*, 774–75.

28. Cf. Joe Dorinson and Joram Warmund, eds., *Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports and the American Dream* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1998). For another perspective on this, however: “The whites believe they are better than I am,” so the “Piute Princess” was reported in Gae Whitney Canfield, *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Pautes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 166, as having said. “They make money any way and every way they can. Why not I? I have not any. I will take it.”

29. Joseph Filanowicz, *Feeling Good and the Moral Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Just for the “record,” the replacement copy or second edition of my sourcebook about the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet can still be found in that display case.

30. Cf. Arnold Krupat, *For Those Who Come After: A Study of Native American Autobiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

31. On the question of violence in American history, and its relation to the possibility of “Plains bias” in our received understanding of Wovoka’s teachings, cf. Michael Hittman, “The 1890 Ghost Dance in Nevada,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 16, no. 4 (1992): 123–66. For an excellent discussion of distortion and cross-cultural misunderstandings, cf. Eric Chayfetz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

32. Reproduced in Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance*, 115.

33. These photographs were reproduced for an exhibition in 1990 at the Stewart Indian Museum in Carson City, NV that was curated by Edward Johnson, former

chairman of the Walker River Reservation and the Northern Paiute author of an important tribal history about his people (*Walker River Paiutes: A Tribal History* [Schurz, NV: Walker River Tribe, 1975]).

34. “Thanks for loaning us the photo of Wovoka,” wrote Jeff Chen, editor of the *Encyclopedia of Violence* (personal correspondence, 14 October 1999). “Unfortunately, the face is too dark to get a satisfactory scan, so we weren’t able to include it in the encyclopedia. The photograph is returned herein.” As for the three-penny postcard, I’m ashamed to report that it took a visit to our home by Linda Howard, who came to lecture at my university, and her discovery of this penny postcard on my desk to remind me that I had forgotten to return it to our mother, who had been distressed for several years thinking this treasured memorabilia was lost.

35. L. G. Moses, “The Father Tells So! Wovoka, the Ghost Dance Prophet,” *American Indian Quarterly* 9 (1985): 335–57.

36. Mooney, *Ghost Dance Religion*, 913.

37. *Ibid.*, 913.

38. These two additional Wovoka-inspired EPEs also were reported to me by Gunard Solberg: (1) While reviewing the daily rushes of a film about Wovoka and the 1890 Ghost Dance that he and a collaborator (Jim Soliday) shot many years ago, Gunard says either the overhead lights “spontaneously” went on and off, or the projector’s sound (“inexplicably,” his phrase) “kept breaking down,” and (2) how during one of those evenings back in the early 1960s, they’d stopped off for a beer in Yerington and a local, who had also stopped before leaving on vacation and must have eavesdropped on their discussion about this film project, not only offered them the use of her house but also insisted they read *her* article about the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet.

39. No sooner had I completed the revisions on an earlier draft of this commentary—26 October 2004—did the following invitation arrive in the mail from the reviews editor at the *Royal Anthropological Institute Journal*: Would I review a book edited by Michael E. Harking (*Reassessing Revitalization Movements: Perspectives from North America and the Pacific Islands* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003]), which grew out of the aforementioned panel, and for which I’d originally prepared this commentary? How does this bear on our subject? First, its editor insisted on what I felt didn’t belong in a work of that scholarly sort; but then finally wrote to say that with much regret he’d been forced to yield to the editor of this distinguished press, Gary Dunham, who had previously edited my sourcebook about the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet. Although I turned down opportunity for a publication, all the same I’m left speechless (though obviously not wordless) regarding yet another seeming EPE associated with my lifelong work on this subject.