THE FLOWER WORLD OF OLD UTO-AZTECAN

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A ritual system of reference to flowers is reconstructed for an early phase of development of the Uto-Aztec speech community. The complex is attested also in Tzotzil, a Mayan language of Chiapas, and limited evidence occurs for other speech communities in contact with Uto-Aztec. The system includes the association of flower with song and the flower as a symbol of the spirit world. Flowers stand for spiritual power and for its manifestation in the heart, blood, and eyes. Flowers are associated with fire and are deployed symbolically in gender differentiation. Alternative explanations for the significance and distribution of this complex are evaluated.

In this paper I propose that a complex system of spirituality centered on metaphors of flowers is part of the cultural repertoire of many of the prehistoric and historic peoples of the Southwest and Mesoamerica, especially speakers of Uto-Aztec languages (Table 1). Metaphors of the Flower World occur with special frequency in songs about beautiful landscapes. The songs portray the Spirit Land with symbols that Lévi-Strauss (1969) has called “chromatic.” While chromaticism probably occurs throughout the Americas, songs about landscape and the specialized chromatic metaphor that constitutes the Flower World are found only in Mesoamerica and the Southwest. Specific Flower World metaphors are found as far south as Chiapas and as far north as Arizona. This metaphoric system probably originated in Uto-Aztec speech communities at an early stage of their ramification, but its distribution indicates a wide zone of contact.

I will first review the system of “chromaticism” and the evocation of the Spirit Land in songs about the beauty of landscape. I will then enumerate the major Flower World metaphors and conclude with a brief assessment of the historical significance of their geographical distribution.

CHROMATICISM

Colored flowers and other brightly colored and iridescent natural phenomena, including dawn and sunset, rainbows, hummingbirds, butterflies and other colorful and iridescent insects, shells, crystals, and colored lights and flames, are chromatic symbols. In Amazonian South America, Lévi-Strauss (1969) found that chromaticism stands for a variety of mediations, including the passage from life to death. Experiences of the chromatic system are widely used in the Americas to validate spiritual states used in curing and other ritual. Chromatic visions are sought through the use of hallucinogenic drugs that cause
TABLE 1
Uto-Aztecan Languages and Their Neighbors

I. The Uto-Aztecan Family
   A. Northern Uto-Aztecan
      Tubatulabal (South-Central California)
      Numic (Great Basin)
      Takic (Southern California)
      Hopi (Northeastern Arizona)
   B. Southern Uto-Aztecan
      Tepiman (Arizona, Sonora, Durango)
      Opatan (Chihuahua, Sonora)
      Taracahitan (Sonora, Chihuahua, Sinaloa)
      Tubar (Sonora)
      Corachol (Nayarit, Jalisco)
      Aztecan (Central Mexico)

II. Neighboring Language Groups in the Southwest
   A. Yuman (Southern California, Colorado River Basin)
   B. Zuni (Western New Mexico)
   C. Keresan (Western New Mexico, Rio Grande)
   D. Tanoan (Rio Grande)

the user to experience flashes of bright light, halos around ordinary objects, or enhancement of ordinary colors. They can be obtained in dreams, but also through waking experience of the beauty of chromatic phenomena in nature. The use of chromaticism in the construction of spirituality is so widespread that it must represent a very ancient level of religious thought. Among Uto-Aztecan groups in the Southwest and Mesoamerica, chromatic symbolism appears with special frequency in song, where the glitter of iridescence in the wings of hummingbirds, butterflies, and dragonflies and in precious stones and shells is a significant theme. Special qualities of light, such as blue or crimson, are also often sung. Sapir (1910) published a Southern Paiute song that opens recitatives when Lizard Woman speaks in myths:

(1) While lying in the sun, like gravel [lizard] changes color as sunbeams wave over [her].
   While lying in the sun, like gravel [lizard] changes color as sunbeams wave over [her].

John Wesley Powell collected a Shoshone song in which the foam on the Colorado River is said to be like drifting feathers (Fowler and Fowler 1971). Chromaticism appears clearly in Hopi ritual and song, where the brilliance of flowers, butterflies, bright feathers, and precious stones and shells is an important theme. In Pima and Tohono O’odham, the sunset is a favored chromatic symbol, especially because of its most evocative color, wepegiomi, which Ruth Underhill (1951) translated as ‘crimson’. The seya ania, the Flower World of
the Yaqui, is a world of brilliant colors, where "the light glitters and shines through the water" (Evers and Molina 1987:60), especially in the color tolo 'light blue', the light of the early dawn. In Huichol, Wirikuta, the world of the peyote journey, is represented with elaborate chromatic symbolism and is said to be full of spiritual light. The Aztecs sang of chromatic afterworlds: Tamoanchan, where flower trees stand filled with glorious birds; Tlalocan, a paradise of gardens; and the Sun's Heaven, with painted waters, waters like quetzal feathers, at the House of Dawn (Bierhorst 1985).

Many non-Uto-Aztecan groups seem to have shared the complex. Among the Zuni, Barbara Tedlock (1980, 1983) identified a chromatic aesthetic system called co'ya, contrasted with an aesthetic of mud colors and blacks and whites. Kroeber (1976[1925]:757) described the dream songs of the Mohave as "a style of literature . . . as frankly decorative as a patterned textile, . . . [with] color and intricacy, . . . fineness or splendor, . . . gorgeously pleasing." Eva Hunt (1977), starting with the symbol of the hummingbird, explored the chromatic system throughout Mesoamerica. In Dennis Tedlock's translation of the Quiché Popol Vuh, a false creator, Seven Macaw, attempts to elevate his status through chromatic rhetoric:

I am their sun and I am their light, and I am also their months. So be it: my light is great. I am the walkway and I am the foothold of the people, because my eyes are of metal. My teeth just glitter with jewels, and turquoise as well; they stand out blue with stones like the face of the sky. And this nose of mine shines white into the distance like the moon. Since my nest is metal, it lights up the face of the earth. (D. Tedlock 1985:86)

**SONG AND THE SPIRIT LAND**

Among the Uto-Aztecan peoples, song is the domain par excellence of chromatic symbolism. In song, chromatic symbols are often deployed in detailed representation of landscape, both of waking experiences of beauty, which permit ordinary people to glimpse the Spirit Land, and of dreams and visions of the beauty of the Spirit Land. Such landscape representations seem to be associated with the supreme place of song in a hierarchy of "power" among the genres of verbal art. In an essay on verbal art among Piman-speaking peoples, Bahr (1975) distinguished song, oratory, and narrative, with song being the most powerful and spiritual of the three genres. These genres are distinguished not only by their spiritual force, but also by formal criteria, by the subject matter appropriate to each, by mechanisms of representation, and by the ways in which authorship is acquired.

I have examined published texts for many of the Uto-Aztecan languages, including especially the great creation stories and parts of the coyote cycle, also associated with creation. These great narrative texts (admittedly often
recorded in impoverished versions) attend hardly at all to landscape or "scenery" in any aspect. Sapir (1910) discovered that "narrative" was, in its indigenous contexts, a mixed genre. In the winter, as the storytellers and their audiences performed the creation of the world, figures in the myths could sing or speak as orators, and the narrative sequence was elaborated with "recitative," songs such as that of Lizard Woman in example (1). But in the narrative sentences themselves, the land virtually disappears, and the focus is on events, the deeds of the creation-time beings, not on the beauty of the landscape in which these occur.2

The situation is entirely different with song. Not only are songs performed during the winter recitations of the creation stories, they are also parts of collective ritual, shamanistic practice, and individual spiritual quest. Songs are valued for their beauty; they are "flowers for the ears" (Ofelia Zepeda, personal communication). In all these contexts, right across the Uto-Aztecan family of languages, landscape becomes visible in exquisite sung descriptions of flowers, grass in the wind, feathers on the water, drifting snowflakes, blue mist in the valley, butterflies over the pond, or the young deer against the dawn. The world that is sung is not precisely the world before us, although it may be glimpsed in this world: it is the timeless Spirit Land.

Because the voice of a singer is especially powerful, song can affect spiritual beings and landscapes. Tohono O'odham curers sing of the beauty of spirit animals in order to make them contented and withdraw disease from human beings (Bahr et al. 1974). Fowler and Fowler (1971:124) cite a Shoshone song collected by Powell that illustrates this notion:

(2) Our song will enter
    that distant land
    that gleaming land
    that gleaming land
    and roll the lake in waves.

The singer can explore the beauty of the Spirit Land from every possible perspective. In narrative, landscape elements are deployed exclusively in a trope that I call "path," i.e., the inventory of useful landscape items that lie along the ways travelled by beings of the creation time, and landforms on which they left their mark. But, in song, the trope of the "view" appears: large-scale images of landscape celebrated for their beauty are made visible. Rob Franklin and Pam Bunte (1988) recorded a San Juan Paiute Round Dance song from Anna Whiskers that incorporates such a view, a vision necessarily constituted from a distance:

(3) Ya hai yaheya yaheyaheya
    Streams should begin running
    Streams will begin running
Down from the mountain
Streams will begin running
Ya hai yaheya yaheyaheya

Roscinda Nolasquez, a speaker of Cupeño, a Uto-Aztecan language of the Southern California Takic branch, sang of a moving view on a hot day in the San Diego Mountains (Hill and Nolasquez 1973):

(4) Tewam, tewam³ Look, look
    Tanpenay pepu waxinuk How dancing there the land’s face divides
Na itewam Now look
Lameesə̃ax tukval pete Upon Tukval Pete from La Mesa
Tewam, tewam Look, look
Tanpenay pepu waxinuk How dancing there the land’s face divides
Na itewam Now look.

Images of landscape appear occasionally in oratory, as in the Tohono O’odham and Pima oratory discussed by Bahr (1975) and Underhill et al. (1979). In such speeches the voice of the orator is said to be powerful. One subgenre of orations is called “Mockingbird Speeches,” in reference to the power of their voice: a mockingbird orates in a spirit Rain House to release the rain. In shamanistic oration the voice is Elder Brother Shaman, journeying in the creation of the world along the path of the sun, the “flowery road,” a Flower World image to which I will return. The shaman’s eyes and hair and face are often covered with tanhadag, the dust and leaves driven on the wind before the summer thunderstorm, so he speaks in a moment of imminent rainfall. The shaman is transformed by the beauty of the Spirit Land, as in an oration by the Pima orator Thin Leather, collected by Frank Russell and published by Bahr (1975):

(5) Our opposite-standing mountains they reddened and stood up,
    that was the kind of thing he wished to see,
    and softly inside himself he laughed

Songs of landscape are found in some other Southwestern groups. For instance, Navajo songs include a subgenre of songs that celebrate the first view of Mount Taylor as exiled Navajos returned to their homeland from Fort Sumner. Landscape songs are extremely rare among Yuman groups. In Hinton’s (1988) recent collection of Havasupai songs, the only texts that contain nature imagery are from “circle dance” songs, though elsewhere she gives a single “medicine song” about the red rocks at Supai (Hinton 1980). These are very recent borrowings, most of which originate with a single singer who went to
Utah to learn the Ghost Dance religion and who apparently learned the songs from Paiute people there. In confirmation of the claim that song is the most powerful genre for Southwestern Uto-Aztecan peoples, this man considered the circle dance songs to be dangerous and thought that they had made him sick (Hinton 1988:17).

THE FLOWER WORLD

Chromatic symbolism is most developed among speakers of Uto-Aztecan languages in songs about landscape. The Flower World, the central concern of this paper, is a system of metaphors that has emerged as a further specialization of this genre. In this specialized rhetorical system, the flower is a dominant symbol in the sense of Turner (1967); evocation of the flower opens a multitude of meanings, uniting biological and ethical poles. Fully developed Flower World rhetoric exhibits all of the following properties:

1. Song is the appropriate verbal genre for invoking the symbol of the flower, but oratory occasionally refers to aspects of the Flower World.

2. The flower stands for the Spirit Land in general and for the spiritual aspect of human beings. The Spirit Land is a flowery region with flowery houses, paths, and patios; these are the spiritual aspects of houses, paths, and patios in this world. To sing or to speak of something as a "flower" or "flowery" evokes its spiritual aspect.

3. At the biological pole, the flowers stand for literal flowers, for human hearts, and for other aspects of vital force, such as blood, and organs of perception. Rarely, the flower may stand for the vagina. In this aspect, the flower symbol exhibits that unity of spiritual-ethical and biological poles that Turner (1967) has called "condensation."

4. The flower is symbolically associated with fire: fire "blossoms," and flowers "burst into flame."

5. The flower is associated with gender identity. Flowers can stand for female beauty and fecundity, but the flower symbol is even more frequently associated with male strength and spirituality.

The Flower World is most elaborated in the southern Uto-Aztecan languages, with closely similar poetic systems involved in its evocation in both Aztec and Yaqui. It is also found in an elaborated form among Piman groups and among the Hopi (a northern Uto-Aztecan group). It was only partially developed among Numic-speaking peoples such as the Paiute and Shoshone. Songs of landscape are found among Takic-speaking Uto-Aztecan groups in Southern California, where the association between burning and blooming also appears, together with a small set of metaphoric flower names that are also attested in Tohono O'odham.

Some aspects of the Flower World complex can be found among non-Uto-Aztecan Pueblo groups, such as Taos, and among the Navajo. Bunzel's (1932a, 1932b) work on Zuni ceremonialism includes extensive texts of prayers and
chants, although these might better be compared with oratory than with song. Flower World imagery is not attested in Bunzel’s translations, although the “chromatic” imagery reported by B. Tedlock (1983) is clearly present, as is attention to sacred landscapes. Songs of landscapes and metaphors of the Flower World are apparently absent among Yuman speakers. The Flower World is very well attested among the Tzotzil of Chiapas, and there is some evidence that it is ancient among Mayan-speaking peoples. This pattern of distribution suggests some development of Flower World elements in a zone of contact between the Southwest and Mesoamerica during the prehistoric period.

FLOWER AND SONG

The first property of the flower complex is the association of the flower symbol with song, the most powerful genre of verbal art and the one that is most appropriate for representation of landscape and for evoking and influencing the Spirit Land.

Among the Aztec, song was a privileged and powerful genre. To be a poet, according to León-Portilla (1982), was one of the three honored ways (the others being that of the calendrical expert or diviner and that of the warrior). Aztec “poetry” was almost certainly sung; manuscripts surviving from the early Colonial period include marginal notations that set drumming rhythms, and the written lines include not only ordinary words, but vocables, sequences of meaningless syllables that must have filled out rhythmic lines in the sung performance. In the Nahuatl language the association of flower and song not only can be deduced by the frequent mention of flowers in song and the absence of such mention in other genres, but also is made explicit in the well-known ceremonial couplet in cuicatl in xōchitl ‘the song, the flower’, meaning “poetry, song.” Poets were often called “singers of flowers.” In example (6) below, the use of xōchitl ‘flower’ has at least a double meaning. It stands for the song, the “weavings” of the poet, and for the warriors with their short and glorious lives. The poet says that he is merely a “humble weaver of grass,” since all the flowers that he might sing are fallen in battle.

(6) Cuicatl anyolque', “You all lived as songs,” a song of Tochihuitzin Coyol-chiuhqui (León-Portilla 1978:130):

As songs you lived,
As flowers you bloomed,
You princes over the people,
I, Tochihuitzin, am a humble weaver of grass,
For they have already fallen,
Flower garlands.

The association of flower and song is also very clear for Yaqui. Evers and Molina (1987) published an extensive treatment of the Yaqui deer songs, and
they note the similarity of these to Aztec poetry. Yaqui deer songs represent the Flower World at a level of detail that closely corresponds to that found in Nahuatl poetry. The Yaqui Flower World, the seya ania, is sung by deer singers who animate a dancer who becomes the magical deer, the “flower person” of the Flower World. (Seya includes the root for “flower”; ania refers to one of a system of parallel “worlds.”)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yaqui Deer</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayaman ne seyewailo</td>
<td>Over there, I, in the center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huyatanaisukuni</td>
<td>of the flower-covered wilderness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>machiau kuaktekai</td>
<td>I turned toward dawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea mochala awaka</td>
<td>With a cluster of flowers in my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>antlers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weyekai</td>
<td>But I am washed by the flower,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tane seata valumai</td>
<td>with a cluster of flowers in my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>antlers,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I walk.</td>
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<td>sea mochala awaka</td>
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In Tohono O’odham and Pima, flowers are mentioned in all types of songs, including songs in narrative, songs in curing, and private “singing for power.” Russell (1975[1904]) gives a curing song in which the “spirit way” of Gopher is evoked by the mention of flowers:

(8) In the crimson evening, I go following na-a;
This road made of my many crimson flowers na-a
Speaking, to my burrow, to my land I go na

This song is sung to cure Gopher Sickness, one of the Piman “staying sicknesses.” Juan Gregorio explained to Donald Bahr and David Lopez that, hearing songs which are pronounced truly and tell truly of their spirit ways, the spirit animals are pleasantly stimulated and withdraw the sickness (Bahr et al. 1974).

Example (9) is a “recitative” from the story of the creation of corn and is sung by Corn Man to make his garden fertile.

(9) Corn’s Song from the Tohono O’dhham story of “Where People Got Corn” (Saxton and Saxton 1973):

Over there beneath the sunrise,
the corner of the earth is my garden,
In it flower songs go forth in every direction. . . .

The evocation of the Flower World is also found in a Pima oration first
published by Russell (1975[1904]); the translation here is from Bahr (1975:41).
The orator, who speaks as Elder Brother Shaman, follows the flowery path, the “sun’s center-lying road”:

(10) Its south-lying road, all beaded, all earringed, wing feather bowstring sided, down feather bowstring sided, cut wood flowered sided . . .
     Its north-lying road, all beaded, all earringed, wing feather bowstring sided, down feather bowstring sided, cut wood flowered sided. . . .

The image of the flowery road, with its prototype in the path of the sun across the heavens, is one of the most widely diffused Flower World metaphors. Flowers, along with shells, precious stones, birds, and other chromatic elements, line the ways of the Holy People in Navajo song. No metaphors of the Flower World, except that associating flowers and fire, are attested for contemporary California Uto-Aztecan verbal art. However, Wallace (1978:643) gives a dream song text from the Wintu of north-central California, collected by Dorothy Demetracopoulou (Lee), which mentions the flowery road combining it with a mention of the Milky Way, a composite image that is also attested among Southern California Uto-Aztecans:

(11) It is above that you and I shall go;
     Along the Milky Way you and I shall go . . .
     It is above you and I shall go;
     Along the flower trail you and I shall go . . .
     Picking flowers on our way you and I shall go.

The presence of these images in Wintu reminds us of Nichols’ (1981) proposal that Uto-Aztecan languages were part of a multilingual system in “Old California.”

The association between flower and song is also found among the Hopi, where songs commonly invoke flower images, as in (12).

(12) First verse of Twelfth Song from the Oraibi Hopi Powamuyu Ceremony (Voth 1901; orthography and translation by Emory Sekaquaptewa):

Ha’o! ingu’u                  Hark! my mother
Ha’o! ingu’u                  Hark! my mother
sukwiningya takuri ingu’u    Directly northwest, yellow corn, my mother
sùutatkya haahaatsiw         Directly southeast, the Desert Lily is blooming
   si’yta                     Our faces are of beautiful
tamuyu’ pitsangwatoya’a      countenance
itamuyu’ sineevelatoya’a   Our faces, give us the moisture of flowers
put'a vinur
pitsangwa’ykyango
put’a vinor
sineevela’ykyango
tuuhiyongwani’yta,
tuuhiyongwani’yta
ha’o! ingu’u.

With that may it be that I, while
having that beautiful countenance
With that may it be that I while
having that moisture of the flower
Will keep everyone
delighted, will keep everyone
delighted.
Hark! my mother.

Numic peoples like the Paiute and Shoshone do not appear to have the full Flower World complex, but flowers are an appropriate subject for Round Dance songs, as in the example in (13).

(13) A Northern Shoshone Round Dance song (Liljeblad 1986:648):
The large sunflower, the fully yellow flower
spreading out
From the water-clear root
Heena!

Among the Numic peoples, there is much evidence that songs are a powerful genre. Nonetheless, there is a long-standing controversy about the meaning of Numic Round Dance songs, a genre which most authorities agree is the oldest Great Basin song genre, and one which is confined to the Basin peoples (except for diffusion into the Plains with the 1889–1890 Ghost Dance). Sapir, Steward, and most recently Liljeblad have held that these songs seem to be “entertaining,” rather than “sacred,” and that “the Round Dance and the related songs remained secular” (Liljeblad 1986:647) even during the Ghost Dance. Sapir (1910) felt that recitatives of the type illustrated in (1) above were “meaningless” embellishments of narratives. Liljeblad proposes that the mood of Round Dance songs (such as example 13) is “intuitive rather than contemplative, involving no conscious symbolism or personification” (Liljeblad 1986:647).

A position contrary to that of Sapir, Steward, and Liljeblad is represented by Park (1941), who emphasized that Round Dances were held when people needed to pray and that their significance was sacred. Crum (1980), a native speaker of Shoshone, has also argued for recognition of the deeper meaning of Round Dance songs. In discussing a small collection of four such songs chosen to be accessible to white children, she observes that these songs are usually “composed in an elevated and figurative form of language . . . with several levels of meaning” (Crum 1980:5). Vander (1988) found that Wind River Shoshone singers believed the Round Dance and related genres to be spiritually powerful.

The present demonstration of the spiritual purpose of the flower song complex supports the position taken by Park, Crum, and Vander. Thus the “meaningless” attention to the beautiful iridescence of the basking lizard in (1) draws
attention to the system of chromaticism and thus evokes the spiritual aspect of Lizard Woman. In the Uto-Aztecan parallel worlds—the Flower World, the land of the dead, the Sun’s heaven—frivolity and dance, beautiful loose women with their hair decorated in flowers, dizzy spinning and flashing colors, all appear. Thus the “frivolity” of the Round Dance may be deeply serious, and the “concreteness” of Round Dance songs may constitute a complex realm of metaphor which is ultimately highly “abstract.” Indeed, Round Dance songs may have been particularly appropriate for the vision of the new world portrayed in the Ghost Dance.

In a study of the song repertoires of five Wind River Shoshone women, Vander (1988) published seventy-five Shoshone songs. These include songs that came to the Wind River Shoshone with the Ghost Dance religion and are clearly related to the Western Shoshone Round Dance songs. They are called *naraya* songs and are said to come to singers in dreams. According to Vander these songs constitute a sort of relic; only the oldest Shoshone sing them and remember performances of them. One consultant felt that naraya songs had been abandoned when winter performances of them seemed to bring on sickness. Younger singers use a genre that they call Round Dance songs and think of them as being very “Shoshone.” However, like most of the songs in the Wind River Shoshone repertoires, which are clearly derived from Plains culture or from the modern Powwow complex, these are sung entirely in vocables.

Naraya songs are in Shoshone, not in vocables. They contain rich images of nature, especially water-related images such as fog, snow, and running water, but also light sources such as the sun and stars, and many references to color. One song published by Vander (1986:45) develops a theme of a “pine tree butterfly,” flickering in darkness underneath the shade of pines, a chromatic image strongly reminiscent of Piman songs about butterflies (Bahr 1983). Plants can also be sung in naraya songs; one song includes a reference to a medicinal root, and another celebrates the pine tree. The songs also describe the release of the soul after death. Vander distinguishes the “nature” complex and the “soul” complex, but these two complexes must be related; the “nature” complex almost certainly evokes the Spirit Land. Indeed, Vander (1986) concludes that naraya songs are closely related to Ghost Dance songs, with their pre-occupation with the Spirit World. However, none of the naraya songs published by Vander include references to flowers. This may be due to a split in a pair of images, flowers and feathers, that are both part of the chromatic system; the usual image of the soul for the Shoshone is a feather, a point that will be discussed in more detail below.

**THE FLOWER WORLD AS THE SPIRIT LAND**

The Flower World is the place where the spiritual aspects of living things are found. This is a timeless world, parallel to our own. It is often called the
Spirit Land, or "paradise," and is often thought of as a land of the dead. Among the various Uto-Aztecan peoples, the Spirit Land often splits into a number of specialized subworlds with their own unique properties, as in the several Aztec heavens or the several Yaqui worlds. But among groups which exhibit the full development of the Flower World complex, the spiritual aspect of anything that has vital force or spiritual importance can be captured by referring to it as a flower or flowery. The Flower World is the realm of heroes in their creative aspect, and the spirit ways along which they travel are "flowery roads." Among the Aztec, flowers embellish several paradises: e.g., Tamoanchan, the garden world of incarnation and the tree of flowers and life, which lies in the west, and Tlalocan, the earthly paradise, where those who die by drowning wander among flowers. Flowers, birds, and butterflies are also found in the Sun's heaven, where the spirits of men who die in battle and of women who die in childbirth escort the sun on his flowery path. In Huichol, the Flower World is the Wirikuta of the peyote hunt, the land of ultimate beauty, where the spirits of deer and corn are immanent and which is entered by human beings through a peyote journey. This pilgrimage involves a language of "reversals," in which the moon becomes the cold sun, dusk becomes dawn, sleep becomes waking, and the sacred peyote is called "flower" (Meyerhoff 1974:159).

Among the Yaqui the seya ania is the land of the dead, and the deer dancer helps spirits to reach it. The metaphorical associations of flowers in Yaqui are diverse. When Christ was crucified, his blood, striking the ground, turned to flowers, and many other objects in Yaqui can be given the spiritual aspect which is dominant in seya ania by being referred to as "the flower." For instance, the red ribbons tied through the antlers of the deer dancer's headdress represent the spiritual vitality of the deer and are called "flower"; the instruments used by musicians who accompany the deer singer and dancer are referred to in their spiritual aspect as "flower rasper," "flower drum," and the like (Evers and Molina 1987).

Continuing northward, the Flower World is found among the Pimans. This is seen in songs (8) and (9) and the oration fragment (10), above. In Piman, as in Yaqui, the mere mention of flowers can transform the world evoked by the singer or orator into the immanent realm of the spirit and of creation. Ofelia Zepeda (personal communication) states that today a favorite song of O'odham women sings of 'aupta heosis 'cottonwood flowers'. This song evokes the cottony down drifting dizzily in the sun and breeze and "transforms" the scene from the mundane to the spiritual. (In O'odham, spinning, drifting, shining objects evoke the Flower World and the "dizziness" of shamans, warriors, and those who drink the saguaro wine to bring the rain. The dead are said to enjoy forever the pleasures of spinning in the dance.) The "transformative" use of flower symbols in oration can be seen when the O'odham war leader opens the path to war by speaking of the "flowery cigarettes" that he will smoke (Russell 1975 [1904]:337). The cigarettes in the house of a spirit who will guide a war leader burn in the corners of piles of Apache hair, "smoking in
many flower colors, white flowers, black flowers, glittering flowers, dirty flowers, yellow flowers” (Russell 1975[1904]:359).

The Flower World is also found as a way of speaking of an afterworld paradise among the Hopi. For the forthcoming Dictionary of Hopi, Kenneth Hill and Emory Sekaquaptewa have collected the term siitälpu ‘flowery land’. The root sii- ‘flower’ and the root tal- ‘shining forth’ are combined, with the element -pu permitting the stem to accept locative suffixes, as in the following illustrative sentence in the dictionary: Pas pa nu’ mookye’ suyan siitälpumini, “Just think, when I die, I will surely go to the flowery land.” The Flower World is clearly invoked in rituals such as the Powamuyu at Oraibi, reported by Voth (1901). I have given a Powamuyu song at (12) above.

The flower symbol is deployed visually in several sand paintings in the Powamuyu ceremony. These depict sacred spaces, such as the Sun’s house, which is decorated with many symbols for blossoms, as can be seen in a Powamuyu sand painting of Sun’s house reproduced by Voth (1901:76). These Hopi dry paintings are reminiscent of representations of the sun’s flowery paradise in Aztec frescos. (Living flowers can be used in dry paintings in Nahuatl-speaking regions today, as in some of the large dry paintings made of flower petals at Huamantla, Tlaxcala, for the August festival of the Assumption of the Virgin.)

Flowers are also used as decorative elements in dance costumes among the Hopi, where the dancers are spirit beings. In other Pueblo groups, flowers are usually attached to masks and are worn on the head, close to the face. They are also used as altar decorations. These uses of flower symbolism are ancient. At Sunflower Cave in northern Arizona, in deposits subsequently dated as Pueblo III (A.D. 1250–1300), Kidder and Guernsey (1919) found a cache of twenty-six painted “sunflowers” carved from wood and two additional yellow flowers made of cut and painted tanned skin.² Twenty-one of the wooden flowers were painted yellow, and five were painted white. The artificial flowers, along with a carved and painted wooden bird and twenty-five “varnished cone-shaped wooden objects,” were carefully stored in a large olla. The cache objects were most likely materials for ritual costumes. A similar cache, including five multipetalled flowers made of agave wood and cotton string (two of the flowers were painted, one blue and one green), was found in a cave at Bonita Creek, Arizona, slightly northeast of Safford (Wasley 1962). The cache also included wooden cones, a simple bird carving, and tablas, terraced wooden shapes (perhaps representing clouds) used in dance costumes and altar decorations. Wasley suggests that the Bonita Creek cave site is associated with a group of people who migrated to the area in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. Pointing out the similarity between the Sunflower Cave and Bonita Creek materials, he argues that they were “probably used in essentially the same way in virtually identical ceremonies performed by closely related groups of people sharing the same ceremonial beliefs” (Wasley 1962:393).

Although flowers are part of sung representations of the Spirit Land among
some Numic peoples, I have not found any Numic expression equivalent to Flower World or “flowery land,” nor have I found Numic songs where objects that are not flowers are referred to as “flowers” or “flowery.” No mention of flowers occurs in Takic songs of the Spirit Land, and these groups seem largely to lack Flower World symbolism. Takic communities emphasized ritual practice centering around the use of toloache, the hallucinogenic plant *Datura meteloides*. In relatively recent times they adopted the cult of Chinigchinich. Chinigchinich cult practice includes whirling dances and a fire dance and incorporates from the toloache cult the search for sacred visions obtained by drinking infusions made from datura leaves and flowers. I have been unable to find any flower motifs in Chinigchinich ritual, except for datura itself (it has a very conspicuous flower); I consider the use of hallucinogens like datura to be part of the system of spirituality through chromaticism, but not to be necessarily part of the Flower World system, even when the hallucinogens are flowering plants. Instead, in Chinigchinich thought, astronomical symbolism is the most important source of chromatic glitter. The *wanawut*, the anthropomorphized Milky Way, stands for the soul. When Chinigchinich died, he rose into the sky and became a star. Among the Luiseño, dead “nobles” turned into stars, not into flowers, birds, and butterflies, while ordinary people went to the paradise of the dead, *telmok* (Harrington 1978[1933]). The glitter of the stars may be a reflex of the system of chromaticism, but Chinigchinich ritual fails to emphasize color. Kroeber (1976 [1925]:666) notes that the relative drabness of Luiseño ritual contrasts with the bright colors used in Kuksu ritual in Central California.

FLOWERS, SOULS, AND HEARTS

In addition to standing for the “flowery world,” a spiritual realm, flowers represent certain biological and spiritual aspects of human beings. It is in this aspect that the flower symbol exhibits what Turner called “condensation,” a fundamental property of dominant symbols which gives them power by uniting an ethical with a biological pole. Among the Aztec, the male divinity of flowers was the “Lord of Souls,” *Xóchipilli* ‘Flower Prince’, who is personified (with literal-minded Aztec excess) in the naked, flayed captive warrior who stands for the freed soul, released from its earthly skin (Sejourné 1960). Warriors fall in battle as flowers, an image seen in (6) above. The souls of warriors meet the new Sun in the dawn and escort it to the zenith as flowers, bright-feathered birds, and butterflies. Aztec religion had as its goal to cause the “flower of the body [the heart] to bloom” in a death which yielded a new light in the world. (Sejourné 1960:144). *Teyolló*, that aspect of life that continues in death, can be represented by a flower symbol, and flowers stand for blood shed in war and sacrifice (Ortiz de Montellano 1989).

The most famous discussion of the metaphor associating human hearts with the germinative power of plants is that of Whorf, for Hopi:
The subjective or manifesting comprises all that we would call future, but not merely this; it includes equally and indistinguishably all that we call mental—everything that appears or exists in the mind, or, as the Hopi would prefer to say, in the heart, not only the heart of man, but the heart of animals, plants, and things, and behind and within all the forms and appearances of nature in the heart of nature, and by an implication and extension which has been felt by more than one anthropologist, yet would hardly ever be spoken of by a Hopi himself, so charged is the idea with religious and magical awesomeness, in the very heart of the Cosmos, itself. (Whorf 1956:59–60; emphasis in original)

While Whorf’s statement suggests that the Hopi associate the heart and the germinative power of plants, and while the Hopi clearly associate flowers with the Spirit Land and with song, Emory Sekaquaptewa (personal communication) states that for the Hopi, the “soul,” the spiritual element of human beings, is like a feather. Feathers carry messages in Hopi prayer as well. Images of feathers appear in the chromatic system in Nahuatl poetry. Sometimes these are closely associated with the flower epithet, as in the Cantares Mexicanos where both precious feathers and beautiful flowers stand for the singer’s composition (Bierhorst 1985). And of course both flowers and feathers have further associations: flowers with the precious water, and feathers with lightness, motility, and the high flight of birds, who can carry prayers to divinities. (See also Laughlin 1962 and Hultenkrantz 1951.)

FLOWERS AND FIRE

The metaphoric association of flowers and flames is very widespread in Uto-Aztecan languages. The metaphor of the blooming flower as “bursting into flame” can be reconstructed as a lexical item meaning ‘blossom, bloom’ for proto-southern Uto-Aztecan. Attestations include Nahuatl xo-ťla, Yaqui sew-ta, and O’odham hio-ta, where the first element is the root meaning ‘flower, bloom’, and the second is the root for ‘fire, flame’. The metaphoric association of flowers and flames is very clear in Aztec. Karttunen (1983:331) notes that not only did the verb xoṭla mean both ‘to catch fire’ and ‘to bloom’, but that the verb cuepōmi ‘to bloom’ could also mean ‘to explode, give off a glow’. The heart, seat of teyōllō, the eternal ‘soul-light’, is associated with the flower-flame imagery among the Aztec. Hearts are represented in Aztec art as blooming or as in flames. The codices are often ambiguous in their representation; probably both bloom and flame are implied simultaneously. The association of the heart with flame is seen in the Aztec idea that humans who were especially “distinguished for their brilliance in the fields of divination, art, or imagination” were said to have the same “divine fire” as burned in the hearts of the gods (Lopez Austin 1980:256).
The northern Uto-Aztecan languages do not have the flower-flame lexical item for 'bloom'. Instead, they have a verb which is derived from the word for 'flower' (or, more probably, vice versa). However, while the flower-flame metaphor is not lexicalized as in the southern Uto-Aztecan languages, the association is attested for the Takic languages, which otherwise do not have the Flower World complex. This is seen in a single example shown below, a Cupeño song (14) where, in the second and fourth lines, the heart of Mukat, burning in cremation, is said to "bloom," sewenina. The verb sewenina 'blooming' (in a sung variant) is the same as the word used for the blooming of flowers and contains the root sewe-'flower'. The song tells of a moment in the Cupeño creation story. Coyote hovers outside the circle of mourners, ready to steal the Creator's heart from his funeral pyre. Thus Cupeño clearly associate blooming with burning in the prototypical spiritual fire, the blazing heart of Mukat. Here we also see the association of blooming, a flower metaphor, with the freeing of vital force through cremation.

(14) Cupeño "Death Song" (Hill and Nolasquez 1973):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angax kut hásipeyax</th>
<th>From there, fire went on its journey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angax kut sewenina</td>
<td>From there, fire blooming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isilya áyxat ángax</td>
<td>Old Coyote from there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penáqmacin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isilya áyxat ángax</td>
<td>Old Coyote from there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesewenina</td>
<td>it was blooming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angax kut hásipeyax</td>
<td>From there, fire went on its journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angax kut sewenina</td>
<td>From there, fire blooming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isilya áyxat péte</td>
<td>Old Coyote in that place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penáqmacin</td>
<td>listened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Péte pesewenina</td>
<td>In that place it was blooming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The metaphor of the "blooming" fire of Mukat's heart in its cremation pyre seems to me to attest to the presence of Flower World rhetoric in Cupeño. This is highly significant because it suggests that the flower-fire-heart-spirituality metaphor may have been part of the repertoire of song language in the proto-Uto-Aztecan speech community. However, the myth of the cremation of Mukat is not a Flower World story. Creation stories with an episode in which Coyote steals the creator's heart from his cremation pyre are found only among Southern California Uto-Aztecan and among the Colorado River Yuman groups (Morris 1977); the Flower World is not present among the Yumans. In all these groups the myth of the cremation of the creator licenses funerary practices.

FLOWERS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

Association of flower symbolism with gender differentiation is found in several groups. In her biography, Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins reports that many
Paiute girls bore the names of flowers. In the Spring “Festival of Flowers” ceremonies, the girls who had these names would show their male admirers their namesake flowers, speaking of “seeing themselves in bloom” (Hopkins 1883:46–47). In the actual ceremony, flower-named girls would sing about their namesake flowers; they would be said to be “not a girl any more, she is a flower singing” (Hopkins 1883:47). Young unmarried Hopi women wore their hair twisted into what today are often called “squash blossoms.” Voth (1901:139) notes of the haatsi, “Calochortus aureus, Desert Lily,” that young Hopi girls would collect these beautiful blossoms, and the boys would try to take them away from them. Parsons (1936) lists a number of “flower names” appropriate for women at Taos Pueblo for their “delicacy”; these include names glossed with meanings such as ‘Flower Water Carry’, ‘Hummingbird Flower’, ‘Sun Flower’, and ‘Flower Dance’. At Taos the names of men were dominated by sky elements, such as star, sun, and eagle, and also by elements associated with hunting such as ‘arrow’. Both male and female names can include elements for water. (A list of personal names compiled by Parsons [1929] at Isleta Pueblo includes no female flower names, so such names are apparently not universal among the Pueblos.)

The association of flowers with women among the Paiute, Hopi, and at Taos may not be part of Flower World symbolism in the relatively narrow sense I have developed here; they have to do instead with a different link between femininity and flowers (Friedrich 1978). For instance, in Northern California, among groups for which Flower World rhetoric is not attested, public dances are held in celebration of a girl’s puberty; at such dances women wear flower crowns, and Driver (1941) reports that some tribes permit sexual license on the last night of the dance. Certainly the association of flowers with women is not universally attested among groups that use Flower World symbolism. Among the Aztec, flowers stand for the spiritual aspect of both genders. In Nahuatl poetry a particularly appropriate way to speak metaphorically of a warrior is as a “flower,” with a short and glorious life. While in Aztec names with the stem xochi- ‘flower’ were often women’s names, as in the name of the female deity Xochiquetzal ‘Flower Quetzal Bird’, male deities such as Mācuilxochitl ‘Five Flower’ and Xōchipilli ‘Flower Prince’ also had names with this element.

Among other southern Uto-Aztecan groups such as the Huichol, Yaqui, and Pimans, the flower symbol is also androgynous or even dominantly male, being associated with female fecundity and agriculture, but also with the hunt, a male domain. Meyerhoff (1974) has suggested that for Huichol the idea of Wirikuta, the flowery, light-filled Spirit World, is part of a syncretizing of the agricultural system (the spirits of corn dwell in Wirikuta) with the ancient world of the hunters (symbolized in the deer), accomplished through the third part of the triad, peyote. Huichol women can use peyote, but the Yaqui deer singing and dancing that evokes the Flower World is emphatically a male domain; women do neither, and they should not touch the various instruments and costume elements. Male pascola dancers, not female dancers, wear a flower on their
heads in Yaqui fiestas. The Piman song (9), in which Corn Man sings of his “flowery garden,” thereby promoting the growth of the corn, exemplifies the association with agriculture. But the Piman Flower World, like that of the Huichol and Yaqui, is also associated with hunt, and especially with the deer, the prototypical game animal. Hunters gain power by singing of blossoms; Underhill (1976[1938]) gives a hunter’s song:

(15) The red ocotillo flower—  
There I found the deer;  
They ran,  
They broke it down.  

The yellow chamiso flower—  
There I found the deer;  
They rushed forth,  
They broke it down.

Bahr, Giff, and Havier (1979) have published a series of Piman hunting songs which contain many references to flowers and butterflies and to colors. They suggest that these chromatic references may contextualize the songs as “daytime” or “nighttime” hunting songs, but it seems likely that the songs also evoke the flowery world of the spiritual deer that is seen more clearly in the Yaqui deer song complex.

A serious problem in untangling the indigenous association between femininity and flowers, especially in Mesoamerica, is the heavy contemporary influence of the cult of the Virgin Mary; the latter divinity probably inherits from Aphrodite her special association with roses and lilies, two of “the great trio of popular flowers” (Seaton 1989; the third was the violet) that are attested in Europe from the earliest period. Burkhart (1987, 1989) reports that early Christian missionaries in Mexico, especially the Franciscan Sahagún, wrote psalms and hymns in Nahuatl, using a metaphorical system borrowed from Nahuatl songs of the Flower World to locate the Virgin in a flowery garden. Friedrich (personal communication) reports a very active set of flower metaphors for erotic love in modern Tarascan song, but he admits to the probability of European influence on this tradition.

THE FLOWER WORLD IN CHIAPAS

I have concentrated primarily on the extensive attestations of the Flower World from the Southwest and northern Mesoamerica, especially among speakers of Uto-Aztecan languages. However, an extremely clear account of the Flower World from southern Mesoamerica, including every element reviewed above, comes from Laughlin’s (1962) account of flower symbolism among the Tzotzil Maya of Zinacantan, Chiapas. As elsewhere in Mesoamerica, for certain festivals the decoration of crosses, altars, and ritual objects with flowers is an
important task of the *mayordomos*, who must continually change the flowers so that they will be fresh. Seaton (1989:685) notes the use of flower offerings in early Christianity, where their pagan history made them controversial, so this practice may be partially Christian and does not by itself demonstrate the presence of the Flower World complex. However, the religious *cargo* itself is called “the flower of service” in the Tzotzil community of Chenalhó. This locution is not attested in European rhetoric, as far as I know, and is strongly reminiscent of the evocation of spirituality by the attribution “flower” among the Uto-Aztecan. Flowers are frequently mentioned in Tzotzil prayers, and the last line of any prayer is usually “May it pass under the flower above, may it pass under the flowery face” (Laughlin 1962:135). Laughlin reports that references to deities and sacred objects as “flowery” is a feature of many ritual songs and orations, suggesting the association of flowers with these genres that I have noted above.

Flowers are used in curing in Zinacantan. Indeed, any plant used in curing is ritually referred to as *nichim* ‘flower’. Flowers and plants are boiled in water to create a “holy water” that is used to wash sick people and is also used in the preparation of cadavers for burial and for “flowery baths” for images of the saints. (Among modern Nahua-speaking peoples in Tlaxcala, rubbing a person with flowers in front of an altar is referred to as a *lavada* ‘washing’.)

Flowers in Zinacantan also stand for the soul; the bed of a sick person is surrounded by thirteen bundles of plants (ritually called “flowers”) that are said to stand for the thirteen parts of the *ch’ulel* ‘soul’ (Laughlin 1962:128). Flowers and the heart are also associated; Laughlin reports a metaphor *nichimal* ‘o’one ‘the holy flower of the heart’. The association of flowers with the Spirit World can be identified in their association with shamanic vision. The term for the curer in Tzotzil is *j’ilol* ‘see-er’, referring to his gift of supernatural vision in dreams; divinities are called *nichimal sat* ‘flowery eyes’. Aguardiente, a powerful and mind-altering substance, can be referred to as “flower” when it is used ritually. Finally, flowers are associated with fire in Zinacantan: a spark can be called metaphorically “flower of the fire,” and a candle flame can be called “flower of the candle.” Other familiar images are found in Tzotzil-speaking groups; Laughlin cites, for instance, a finding that among the Tzotzil of Larrainzar, the sun is said to follow a “flowery road.”

Laughlin considered that the complex in Zinacantan represented a pre-Columbian survival and cites particularly the work of J. Eric Thompson, who suggested that representations of flowers at the tip of blood-letting instruments in a Maya vase painting stood for blood (Thompson 1961). Thompson (1932) observed that the usual Maya glyph standing for the day or the sun was a flower with flour petals, with a small hole in the center. Rands (1953) analyzed the symbolic associations in Maya art of flowers that he took to be water lilies; these were associated with death symbols, with several deities, with the face and eyes (reminiscent of the Zinacantan “flowery eyes” and “flowery faces”). It is possible, however, that these images are associated, not with the Flower
World, but with the more general chromatic system and chromatic experience through the use of hallucinogens. Dobkin de Rios (1984) suggested that the water lily, which contains known psychoactive alkaloids, might have been used among the ancient Maya to induce the dreamy, languid state appropriate to shamanic vision seeking; she notes that Rands found that representations of water lilies often included reclining human figures.

THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM

I have established that a complex metaphorical system centering on the symbol of the flower is very widespread in religious practice in western North America. At least some elements of it are found in every Uto-Aztecan group for which we have information, although on the extreme western and northern fringes of the Uto-Aztecan distribution, the complex seems to be weakly developed at best.

Because of the very general distribution of the complex in Uto-Aztecan groups, and because of the possibility of reconstructing quite specific metaphors, such as the association of "blooming" and "burning" for a very early stage in the ramification of the Uto-Aztecan language family, I believe that the Flower World first appeared in an "Old Uto-Aztecan" speech community—perhaps not the protocommunity itself, but certainly communities that date to a very early period, one in which the Hopi, and perhaps some Takic groups, were still associated in contact with a proto-southern Uto-Aztecan community. The fine-grained similarities of language between Aztec, Yaqui, and Piman poetry, the presence of the Flower World as a land of the dead in both Yaqui and Hopi, and the lexicalized bloom-burn metaphor, reconstructible for proto-southern Uto-Aztecan and traced among the Cupeño as a nonlexical metaphor, strongly suggest such a history.

While our reconstruction of the complex for proto-southern Uto-Aztecan argues that it diffused north and south from this community, the wider distribution of Flower World metaphors invites speculation about other possibilities. For instance, the complex might have originated in southern Mesoamerica, diffusing into the Old Uto-Aztecan community along with agriculture at an early date. An intermediate explanation is also possible: a foundational complex involving the basic association of flowers with fire, spiritual power, and the land of the dead may have developed among Old Uto-Aztecans. This was later elaborated into the full Flower World complex in Mesoamerica, spreading south as far as the Mayans and north in the elaborated form as far as the Hopi and other Pueblo people, perhaps in association with the appearance of other apparently Mesoamerican elements in Southwestern culture in the thirteenth century. It is even possible, although unlikely, that the Flower World complex was spread both north and south in extremely recent times by Christian missionaries who used the Aztec version of the Flower World to advance their evangelical purposes.
The main evidence for the origin of the Flower World among the Uto-Aztecan peoples at a very ancient period, possibly even at the proto-Uto-Aztecan level, is linguistic: at least some elements of it are found in song texts for every language group for which we have information. However, the archaeological evidence, principally the caches of artificial flowers at Sunflower Cave and Bonita Creek, attests only to a relatively late date which does not permit us to rule out a Mesoamerican origin. Sunflower Cave is a Pueblo III site, dated at about A.D. 1250–1300 (Jeffrey Dean, personal communication). This is at least one hundred years after evidence for Mesoamerican influence begins to appear in the Southwest.

The Flower World complex is only partially attested on the margins of the Uto-Aztecan world in Takic and Numic languages. This distribution might suggest the marginality of these groups to the contexts—perhaps those of Mesoamerican influence—in which the Flower World appeared and spread. However, such a distribution might be due also to loss of the complex, perhaps at a very late period, because of replacement of the celebration of the Flower World by new kinds of religious observance. In the case of the Takic peoples, where we have the fortunate attestation of a burn-bloom metaphor in the Cupeño song in (14), the replacing cult might be the Chinigchinich religion or the cult of cremation. Cremation, although general among recent Yuman peoples, appeared among the Northern Diegueño (neighbors of Takic groups) only in the sixteenth century (McGuire 1982), associated with the spread of a Patayan archaeological culture. The relatively recent spread of this practice and perhaps of its licensing myths suggests that cremation might be part of a new cult that replaced Flower World religious practice among the Southern California Uto-Aztecan (if it was ever present there).

Cremation was the exclusive funerary practice identified for the Hohokam, so its spread in the region could date ultimately to a period of Patayan-Hohokam contact. A high-water mark of the Yuman expansion occurred between A.D. 1200 and 1300. At this period so-called Patayan ceramics, with a core distribution on the lower Colorado River, are found eastward along the Gila River as far east as the Phoenix basin, in the area inhabited today by Piman-speaking people, and westward around the edges of what is currently the Salton Sea, well into the range of the modern Cahuilla (Waters 1982). Paul Fish (personal communication) notes that ceramics considered to be “Yuman” are found in Hohokam contexts in the Phoenix area. Since Mesoamerican influence, in the form of such traits as ball courts and copper bells, is obvious for the Hohokam, Hohokam materials should be examined to determine whether there is any evidence for the Flower World complex. Such evidence would bear on the question of a possible Mesoamerican provenance for Flower World symbolism.8

It might be argued that the single word, “blooming,” in the Cupeño song in (14) is insufficient evidence for the presence of a Flower World complex antecedently among speakers of languages of the Takic branch of Uto-Aztecan. However, there is an additional fragment of linguistic evidence. This consists
of three sets of names for conspicuous spring flowers (the springtime display of annuals and of flowering trees is especially associated with the Flower World in the Southwest\textsuperscript{9}) that exhibit metaphorical content among the Tohono O'odham, a Piman group located in south-central Arizona for which the Flower World complex is clearly attested, and the Cahuilla and Cupeño, Takic-speaking groups located in the Southern California mountains and deserts.\textsuperscript{10} The three sets of names together suggest something more than coincidence, namely a shared understanding of how to think about the most conspicuous spring flowers.\textsuperscript{11}

We must consider whether the Flower World complex could have been spread at a very late date by Christian missionaries familiar with Nahuatl symbolism. Burkhart (1987) has discussed the extensive use of Flower World metaphors in a Nahuatl-language hymnal, the \textit{Psalmodia Cristiana}, composed by the Franciscan missionary Bernardino Sahagún. Nahuatl-speaking soldiery accompanied missionaries in the early period of expeditions into Sonora and the Rio Grande and could also have been sources of the system among groups in those regions. The evidence seems to weigh against such a proposal. Not only does the artificial-flower cache at Sunflower Cave apparently date from about A.D. 1250, but Evers and Molina (1987) consider the Yaqui deer song genre, where the images of the Flower World appear, to be part of the aboriginal system of Yaqui religion and not due to Christian influence. I am not aware of evidence of Flower World materials in use by Jesuit missionaries in Sonora, and Spicer (1967) has pointed out that by the time Franciscan missions were established along the Rio Grande, they were enjoined by the Inquisition against using heavily syncretic materials like those developed by Sahagún in his \textit{Psalmodia}.

In summary, evidence on the historical beginnings of the system of metaphors of the Flower World strongly suggests a zone of origin in an Old Uto-Aztecan speech community, certainly prior to the breakup of proto-southern Uto-Aztecan. While the distribution of the complex is also compatible with an episode of secondary elaboration in a zone of contact involving Mesoamerica and the Southwest as far north as the Great Basin and as far south as the Maya, perhaps in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the distribution does not suggest a one-way spread out of Mesoamerica but instead attests to the influence of the northern peoples as significant contributors to the repertoire of cultural elements found in this zone. The wide distribution of a detailed metaphorical system of this type implies multilingualism, at least among ritual adepts, and suggests relatively intense contact and sympathetic interest in one another's lives among the peoples who were involved. Research into the complex should thus constitute a particularly favorable site for deepening our understanding of intercultural relationships in western North America.

Research on the Flower World is sharply constrained by the paucity of information. Archaeologists studying ceramic decoration, paintings, petroglyphs, caches of ritual regalia, and other contexts where the complex might
be attested have not, as far as I know, noted it as a coherent system. The literature on Southwestern languages includes only the most minimal attention to flower names or to song language; early collections of songs were usually made by people who did not know the pertinent languages and include only the most cursory glosses where there is any linguistic information at all. More ethnohistorical research is needed, especially on the precise content and dates of use of material employed by early missionaries in Sonora, the Rio Grande region, and Chiapas. On the ethnographic side, investigations of ritual practice are of course notoriously difficult in the Southwest, but it seems likely that older sources contain information that will have new meaning in the light of the present proposal. Even at this preliminary stage of investigation, however, it is happily clear that important keys to a deeper understanding of the history of western North America can be gained from research into a realm of beauty and spiritual depth, a realm of both frivolity and power, that will deepen our understanding not only of specific historical problems, but more generally of the thought of the indigenous people of the Americas.

NOTES

1. This paper was originally prepared for a session of the 86th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association (Chicago, Ill.) in honor of Professor David French upon the occasion of his retirement from Reed College: "Language, Culture, and Ethnosemantics: A Mélangé Honoring David French," organized by Robert Brightman. Work on Tohono O'odham was supported by the National Science Foundation. I would like to thank Don Bahr, Ellen Basso, Louise Burkhart, Larry Evers, Dick Ford, Kay Fowler, Paul Friedrich, Kelley Hays, Leon Lorentzen, Wick Miller, Judith Vander, and Ofelia Zepeda for their comments on earlier versions of this manuscript.

2. This absence of attention to landscape is found also in life-history narrative by Native Americans in the Southwest. The brilliant evocations of landscape in the work of such contemporary authors as N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Silko represent a major genre innovation in Native American literature. Basso (1988) discusses the "potent shorthand" of mentioning place-names in moral discourses among the Western Apache; my impression is that Apache place-names are more elaborately descriptive than are most Uto-Aztecan place-names, but even in these stories we do not find rhetorical attention to the description of place beyond the mention of the names.

3. Miss Nolasquez did not feel that she could translate this song properly; she said that it was about how pretty the place was when you looked out on it. I had always assumed that tewam was the plural imperative of teva 'see, look'. However, Margaret Langdon (1990) has recently presented a Mesa Grande Diegueño text, "The Flute Player," which contains the expression tewam tewam tewam tewam tewam 'on and on and on and on'. There was considerable contact between Mesa Grande Diegueño and Cupeño, and other loan words occur, so it is possible that Miss Nolasquez's song is partly in Diegueño, or that tewam is "multivocal," meaningful for speakers of both languages, and especially effective for the many bilinguals.

4. I am indebted to Richard Ford for drawing my attention to this reference and to Jeff Dean, who also pointed out the Bonita Cave reference, for the dating.
5. Bierhorst himself believes that flowers always stand for ghost warriors, "revenants," and that flower symbols in this sense are part of the rhetoric of an early colonial revitalization movement. I concur with Ortiz de Montellano (1989) and many others that this is a most unlikely reading of the symbolism of the songs that Bierhorst has published. The songs make much more sense if their flower imagery is read as suggested here and in Ortiz de Montellano's rigorous review.

6. I have also seen this hairstyle called a "Butterfly Whorl." Leon Lorentzen (personal communication) has identified and photographed a rock painting from eastern Arizona which shows a female figure with such a hairstyle; there is no evidence of pottery in the rock shelter where the painting appears, and the male figures in the painting wield spear-throwers, not bows. This suggests that the painting may date to the Basketmaker III period, before A.D. 1000. However, the symbolism of the hairstyle at this remote date might have had nothing at all to do with flowers or butterflies.

7. I have largely neglected here the literature on flower symbolism in the Old World. Friedrich (1970, 1978) has discussed tree and flower symbolism among the Indo-Europeans. A valuable recent review by Beverly Seaton (1989) permits us to conclude that the flower is a dominant symbol in European thought, although Seaton proposes that at least one of the "biological" and "social" poles was often suppressed in any particular era. Seaton's review suggests that while a universal semiotic foundation clearly motivates a good deal of shared symbolic content in flower metaphors in the European and American cases, the Flower World complex as I have outlined it here is in its details a distinctly American phenomenon.

8. Note that the Pimas, held by some authorities to be Hohokam descendants, lack cremation and have the Flower World complex. In the case of the Wind River Shoshone, the new observances include the Plains Sun Dance, also a very late manifestation. Vander (1988) observes that the Ghost Dance religion, which used songs of the Round Dance tradition that included evocations of the Flower World, has been abandoned in favor of other types of ceremonialism within the lifetimes of living Wind River Shoshone singers.

9. While spring-flowering annuals like the lupines, penstemons, and the Desert Lily (Calochortus spp.) and flowering trees such as the Palo Verde (Cercidium spp.) are especially associated with the Flower World in the Southwest, Friedrich (personal communication) has pointed out that in Mesoamerica parasitic flowers that grow on trees may be of great importance; one parasitic tree orchid is called 'Soul-Flower' in Tarascan. Laughlin (1962) reports that in Zinacantan the most favored flower is the geranium. Among contemporary Nahuaal (and all over Mexico), the marigold, flor de muerto, a flower native to the Americas, is especially associated with the feast of All Souls' Day; since the Flower World is so often the Land of the Dead, this suggests a central place for this species.

10. The metaphors are: (1) Lupinus sp.: Tohono O'odham tas ma:ha'g 'Sun's Hand Outstretched'; Cahuilla tamit meh' a 'Sun Rays'; (2) Penstemon parryii: Tohono O'odham hewel e'es 'Wind's Crop'; Cahuilla ya'i he'ash 'Wind's Pet' (for Cirsium sp., also tall and pink); and (3) Escholtzia spp.: Tohono O'odham ho:hoi e'es 'Dove's Crop', Cüpeño maxáca'a 'Dove's Pet'.

11. See Bean and Saubel (1972). The only source for flower names in Yuman languages, Whiting's (1985) ethnobotanical study of the Havasupai, does not give comparable names. Thus, it is likely that the names come from an Old Uto-Aztecan cultural horizon and predate the Yuman expansion. However, the evidence does not preclude
another explanation, that these flower names are a residue of “Patayan” or Yuman influence, since they appear at the margins of the Patayan range, but nowhere else in Uto-Aztecan.

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