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| HIS 502 |
| American Indian Activism |
| Taking A Look at Discourse in Sociopolitical Conflict |

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Title: American Indian Activism: An Analysis of Sociopolitical Discourse

## Research Objectives: According to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, language serves not simply to describe the world, but to build and change it as well.[[1]](#footnote-1) Discourse is a stretch of language perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive. Language can also be viewed as social practice determined by social structures. Researcher James Paul Gee claims that “a discourse is a sort of identity kit which comes complete with the appropriate costumes and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

 Discourse comes in many lenses, including political, media language, institutional discourse, and ideological discourse. The ultimate goal of analyzing any kind of discourse, however, is to link the language being used and the resulting symbolism and meaning to a broader context, such as social, cultural, or political. Discourse reveals a writer’s or speaker’s orientation towards a broad social context. In it, a historian may uncover hidden relations of power that are influencing the nature of the discourse being exchanged, how different individuals, societies, or cultures are characterized, and how the discourse is being used to convey or refute a particular message. The way we use language is a choice that can have both beneficial significance and grave consequences on the social, cultural, and political realms of humanity.

 In this research I will attempt to analyze how discourse between American Indian activists and the American government during the Red Power Movement of the late 20th century can give historians context clues which can be used as examples for improving diplomatic relations between domestic and federal entities. Specifically, I will look at language used during activist movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as the Occupation of Alcatraz Island, the invasion of the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters, and the 1973 Siege at Wounded Knee.[[3]](#footnote-3) Upon conclusion, I intend to discuss how discourse analysis is an essential element of historical research and why this linguistic focus on past sociopolitical conflicts can help create better sociopolitical relations and problem solving in the future.

## Background: Between 1960 and 1990 the United States census reported that the number of individuals identifying as American Indian increased threefold. The reason for this immense growth in population was not due to a baby boom or decreased mortality rate, but because of individual ethnic renewal. Joane Nagel purports ethnic renewal as “the reconstruction of one’s ethnic identity by reclaiming a discarded identity, replacing or amending an identity in an existing ethnic identity repertoire, or filling a personal ethnic void.”[[4]](#footnote-4) In respect to the American Indians during the late twentieth century, three elements contributed most to their cultural resurgence: federal Indian policy, American ethnic politics, and perhaps the most influential, an increase in American Indian political activism.[[5]](#footnote-5) It is important to take note that for many, reclaiming their Native identity was an individual choice. Ethnicity of any kind is a social construction. The Native Americans comprise over 300 linguistic, cultural, and religious groups. All of these are individually recognized by either the federal government or a state government.[[6]](#footnote-6)

 Researchers agree that the most growth in the American Indian population occurred between 1970 and 1980. Upon reviewing primary and secondary literature regarding the ethnic resurgence, it is likely that this growth was the result of several activist movements that took place between 1969 and 1973. These would be the 19th month Occupation at Alcatraz Island, the storming and takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ headquarters, and a drawn out armed standoff between the Indians and government officials at Wounded Knee in 1973. These four years consisted of thick social and political tension between both sides.[[7]](#footnote-7)

 One major contributor to these conflicts seems to be reluctance to compromise. Both the Indians and the federal government had long lists of demands and desires. The Indians wanted what they believed was owed to them: land, civil rights, federal aid and recognition. The government wanted to avoid another spectacle like the Kent State shootings. While both parties made several attempts at peaceful negotiation, the tense atmosphere and emotional exchanges of discourse proved futile. It is worth noting, however, that all three of these aforementioned activist movements were resolved with little to no physical harm or federal force. Concessions were made and some wishes were granted in order to appease all tempers. Despite this, it still seems that an endeavor to put a new linguistic focus on the history of these events may prove worthwhile and beneficial.

 A lot of history focuses on the actions of those present during the time of these events, but not enough focuses on how the discourse influenced those actions to be made in the first place. Language sits at the root of the rise in American Indian activism because it was through failed communication and legislature that these confrontations with the federal government occurred in the first place. Therefore, it seems logical to think that studying both written and spoken words, as well as body language, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities may lie at the root of historical conflicts that are sociopolitical in nature.[[8]](#footnote-8)

 In a world that is perpetually advancing in technology, studying discourse in the historical record is more important than ever. The human race is cognizant of how a single tweet, Facebook post, newspaper article, or political speech can start both domestic and international conflicts. This means that looking back on discourse in history, such as during the American Indian Red Power Movement, can provide both historians and the public with strategies and examples of how discourse can both aid and cause domestic and international sociopolitical disputes. Analyzing the discourse of the Red Power Movement will therefore add to the historical record by helping historians better understand discourse itself and the way in which it is used by human nations and cultures throughout the world and throughout history.

## Primary Source Review:

Much of my data comes from a group of three primary source documents. The first is an autobiography of Dennis Banks, a leader of the American Indian Movement. The Second is a collection of documents put together by Daniel M. Cobb. These are original manifestos from both the Occupation at Alcatraz and the Longest Walk of 1978. Both of these documents are reproduced in an anthology of Native documents which have been used in political protests since the late 19th century. They have not been altered or rewritten, simply reprinted. The last is a narrative of the Red Power Movement by research Robert Allen Warrior and activist Paul Chaat Smith. They recount the turbulent years of 1969 through 1973, whence three significant activist movements occurred and thus changed the way American Indians were viewed by the public and the government.

 Looking at the history of discourse and communication provides a unique layer to studying historical events and people, such as during the Red Power Movement. By utilizing sources such as interviews, biographies, manifestos, and articles, historians can gain palpable firsthand context from the ways in which the American Indians expressed themselves socioculturally to the American government, and vice versa. They allow a closer look to be taken at the social attitudes and desires that spurned the written and spoken discourse between 1969 and 1973. Social history can be highly subjective since it can be hard to grasp and understand different cultural viewpoints while being so highly immersed in the daily aspects of one’s own society. Discourse analysis of primary documents can therefore help breakdown these ethnocentric barriers by offering insight into the “foreign” sociocultural values being put in the spotlight.

 A sound primary source base is a necessity for any historical research project. In researching American Indian activism during the late 20th century, however, limitations exist in the sense that compared to more volatile or violent sociopolitical conflicts such as wars, there just are not as many firsthand written accounts from the Red Power Movement. This could be just as likely a result of an inherently oral Native American culture or because of a reluctance to tell about personal experiences during this period of activism due to fear, anger, or reticence. Journal articles and books written as secondary sources have also become so high in volume that when looking in databases like JSTOR or libraries, historians are more likely to find secondary sources more easily during their initial gathering of sources. One strategy that can be used to overcome this kind of limitation, however, is to use the bibliographies of the primary sources that are available, because it is highly likely that those writers and speakers referenced other firsthand accounts in their work.

 One more limitation that may more problematic depending on the scope of the research may be the greater potential for bias. For this project, however, it may not be as much of an issue when analyzing the sources for discourse clues. In this case, any bias may help to determine the underlying cultural attitudes of the language and what hidden emotions may be expressed about the experiences with the activism and the reactions of the federal government.

Similar to the way Hollywood romanticized stories about cowboys and Indians during the “Wild Wild West” of the 1870s, some recollections of Indian activism from the Red Power Movement of 1969 to 1973 take on similar tones. There are those which capture the angst, hope, and despair of this period of sociopolitical shift in a way that is both real and sharp. Some writers, such as Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, use their writings to show how the Red Power Movement was not just one thing, but many at once. One statement they used to capture the essence of the movement is both beautifully written and powerfully symbolic of the natural ways of the Native Americans. They stated that the Red Power Movement was less a political stunt for attention rather than a “…force of nature. It had become a kind of prairie hurricane, wreaking havoc on one place until seemingly defeated and spent, only to inexplicably reappear weeks later somewhere else.”[[9]](#footnote-9) This no doubt was a reference to the transitions from the 10 month Alcatraz Occupation, to Washington DC. and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Headquarters a year later, and then back to Wounded Knee for a final standoff in 1973.

 As the Red Power Movement continued, the subsequent rise of the American Indian Movement as an organization of power and influence represented the desperation and vigor through which American Indians throughout the country tried to regain both their sense of identity and their sense of security as individuals, and as a whole people.[[10]](#footnote-10) Through looking at the primary discourse about these turbulent years, a question raised by researcher Daniel M. Cobb rises to the forefront of historical inquiry. Do the documents and speeches from the Red Power Movement, such as the Manifesto written by Indians of All Tribes during the Occupation at Alcatraz, “suggest the continuation of a political tradition or the advent of a new one?”[[11]](#footnote-11)

 For most, the quick answer would probably be that of the former. At first glance, the speech, “These Are Inherent Rights” from the Longest Walk movement in 1978 and subsequent secondary literature about the Red Power Movement would say that all the discourse was just more proof of centuries’ old prejudice and oppression by the federal government that will always be the same. In retrospect, however, a historical linguist or postmodernist may be able to look at the evolution of the discourse from 1969 to 1973 and display how for the first time, largely because of the growing presence of the media in everyday life, the public were taking notice of the Indians’ fight for what they believed were fundamental rights.[[12]](#footnote-12) As a result, the Indians slowly received small concessions from the federal government in terms of the return of land, financial reimbursement, and the acknowledgement of Indian self-determination. By using primary sources to conduct discourse analysis, the basis of historical research shifts from a heavily factual and quantitative approach to a more qualitative one, where instead historians must search for the meanings behind the facts.

 In chapter 16 of his autobiography, for example, Dennis Banks, former co-leader of the American Indian Movement, states that: “Today, nothing is left of the buildings inside the perimeter of the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee. The government wanted no reminders the Indians once made their stand here.”[[13]](#footnote-13) The same thing happened after the conclusion of the occupation of Alcatraz. After the remaining occupiers were removed in June 1971, the government set to work immediately to remove any physical traces that Native Americans ever made a stand there. It took thirty years before the National Park service began to acknowledge the occupation as a cultural landmark, and the leftover graffiti as historical treasures.[[14]](#footnote-14)

 These were instances where the federal government knew that they would receive backlash from the general public for how they handled the activist movements of the Red Power Movement and, especially, how the Indians themselves were treated and slandered. The federal government was aware that they had probably made some wrong choices, especially considering how the Wounded Knee siege was handled.[[15]](#footnote-15) One thing the Indians always stressed heavily was their desire for peaceful negotiation and interaction. During both the 1973 siege and the invasion of BIA headquarters the previous year, it was the federal forces that made the first moves toward militant action. Now, looking back on hundreds of years of similar events, a historian analyzing the discourse can see the tendency of bureaucratic entities to hide their mistakes and cover them up while at the same time trying to make the other side look like they were the ones in the wrong. When looking at the discourse from the Native Americans, however, such as that from the Longest Walk or the Indians of All Tribes Manifesto, it is evident that Native American culture valued and promoted unity and the preservation of natural life above all else. The last thing they were looking for was any kind of war. The American Indians of the 1970s just wanted the rights they believed were owed to them.[[16]](#footnote-16)

##  Secondary Source Review: Sociopolitical conflict between the American Indians and federal government during the Red Power Movement indicate how vital a role discourse plays in both the study and playing out of history. During the last thirty years or so an increasing amount of secondary literature has manifested about the rise of American Indian political activism and its implications on past, present, and future sociopolitical relations between Indians and federal officials.

 Particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, American Indians began fighting for what is largely known as self-determination. This refers to the ways in which the tribes within the United States govern themselves and make decisions that affect their own people and handle their own affairs.[[17]](#footnote-17) American Indians of this period wanted the federal government to understand that they weren’t fighting for equality; they were fighting for their rights as human beings. They wanted recognition, not citizenship. They wanted “to make it clear to the American government and the people of the world that there is only one definition of who we are as a people.  That definition arises from our religions, governments, and the ways of life that we follow.”[[18]](#footnote-18)

Anger, frustration, and idealism were powerful influences in spawning the birth of the Red Power Movement through the Occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969. Many tribes cited evidential claims of government mistreatment in regards to treaty violations which had cost them the chance to regain millions of acres of land across the country. Richard DeLuca is quick point out in his article about the Alcatraz Occupation that despite the fact that the Native Americans had been on “American” soil since before the arrival of Europeans, the Red Power Movement was the first time in United States history that there were true acts of aggressive and prolonged protest.[[19]](#footnote-19) Specifically, the Indians of the Occupation of Alcatraz cite the history of the Ohlone people, the original inhabitants of Alcatraz Island and the surrounding Bay Area, in order to substantiate their claims to the Island.[[20]](#footnote-20)

 Going into the mid-20th century American Indians were beginning to find themselves in both cultural and economic crisis. The federal government had moved into a period of termination after the conclusion of World War II, and the already struggling tribes and reservations became more prone to extreme poverty. The termination period worked to assimilate the Indians into dominant American culture through series of culturally detrimental legislation. The twenty year period saw hundreds of thousands relocated to cities, such as San Francisco or Los Angeles. The termination era meant that hundreds of tribes lost federal recognition and financial aid from the government, which skewed relations further between the two parties. The amount of American Indians that were moved to urban areas helps give researchers a visual insight into the rising tension which led to the birth of the Red Power Movement. Instead of being spread thin across the entire continent, now the Indians had the advantage of being able to form large urban communities. This unity is what really gave the Red Power Movement its influence and vitality.[[21]](#footnote-21)

 In order to really capture the significance of any so-called symbolic event, it’s important to ask why and how the event is noteworthy and important to the historical record. The Occupation of Alcatraz Island and the subsequent hurricane of the Red Power movement became symbolic because “the prospect of future government-sanctioned celebrations of the occupation in cooperation with Native people was unthinkable in its immediate aftermath.”[[22]](#footnote-22) During the occupation, the occupiers were viewed as vandals by the government. Even when the Island was handed over to the National Park Service in 1973, initial tour representatives referred to the occupation as a frivolous act of rebellion that was something akin to a rowdy teenager defying his or her parents. Now, the Indians view the Occupation with esteem similar to how we view the landing of the Mayflower and the first American Thanksgiving. It is celebrated annually and considered one of the most vivid and noble civil rights movements in the country’s history.[[23]](#footnote-23)

 The historical accounts from the Red Power Movement can be problematic when endeavoring to enlighten the general public, as many view this kind of critical reading as tedious. Many may see the writings of people such as Stephen Cornell and Troy R. Johnson as dense, since the extensively detailed accounts are hard to process and identify with the everyday life of a mainstream American citizen. On the other hand, sometimes the straightforward, to the point narratives like those of Margaret J. Goldstein are often too vague and juvenile for serious academics or researchers. History serves to be an educational tool for all levels of education and all ages. Really, the best historical account about the Red Power Movement would probably be a happy-medium of an academic article and a clear-cut textbook style approach. To undergo the act of analyzing discourse, it’s important to first understand the basic influences, events, and effects of what is being studied, such as the Occupation of Alcatraz or the Red Power Movement.

 Researchers such as Troy R. Johnson, a well-known historian who focuses heavily on Native American history and American Indian activism, reflect that tenet of the research process well. Being so familiar with the activist movements, Johnson was able to provide detailed information about the Occupation that other researchers, such as Goldstein, may not have thought or known to include, such as heavier emphasis on the effects of the original March 9th, 1964 occupation of Alcatraz by five Sioux Indians claiming that the Fort Laramie treaty of 1868 granted them the island since it would be surplus land.[[24]](#footnote-24) However, sometimes a familiarity can serve as a detriment to the execution of writing, since as a researcher Johnson has been able to accumulate personal opinions and bias on the subject and about the various events of the Red Power Movement.

At the time he was writing his book about the Alcatraz Occupation, Johnson claimed that not enough literature had been written or published about American Indian Activism and the Red Power Movement, which is true. However, he impulsively goes on to say that most of what has already been written credits the American Indian Movement (AIM) with the Occupation of Alcatraz.[[25]](#footnote-25) Most of my secondary source literature, and some of my primary source literature, was written and published in the 1980s and 1990s, with some being written within the last decade. Of those that were written during the peak of Johnson’s research career, none of the books or articles I read from the 80s and 90s credited AIM with the Occupation. At most, the Occupation was credited for influencing the growth of AIM’s power, a reversal of Johnson’s claim.

 Secondly, there were some statements made by Troy R. Johnson that insinuated most of the occupiers of Alcatraz to be alcoholics or drug addicts. He often stated that alcoholism was a rampant problem on the island and that by the end of the occupation there was hardly a sober Indian on the island. This type of discourse fits the public image of Indians that a lot of government agencies and mainstream advocates would have wanted the general public to see. The tendency to label Indians as substance abusers comes from stereotypical discourse that says more about the sociocultural attitudes of mainstream American society than it does the Indians. It’s true that alcohol and narcotics were present on Alcatraz during the occupation, but from the outset the Indians had actually tried to ban their consumption or presence on the Island altogether. It was the non-Indian occupiers, the hippie generation, who were mostly at fault for breaking that rule and causing most of the disruption.[[26]](#footnote-26) This shows not only how important fact checking is, but how American sociocultural discourse can tend to denigrate efforts of civil rights groups by way of stereotyping.

 Finally, it’s important to round out secondary research into the discourse of the Red Power Movement by making sure to consult sources that manage to convey the virtues of the Nixon administration regarding American Indian civil rights and political activism. The administrations of Kennedy and Johnson had started to undo what damage was done during the termination era. Nixon’s administration went even further by starting formal negotiations with the Indians, some of which ended with the granting of millions of acres in returned land, such as with Blue Lake. Nixon believed that previous, and some current, federal Indian policies were unfair and tragic. He stated: “Our overriding aim, as I see it should not be to separate the Indians from the richness of their past or force them into some preconceived mold of human behavior.”[[27]](#footnote-27) If a historical linguist were to use this statement and then go back through the manifestos and demands of the Indians, it may prove that this message was the central tenet of the Red Power Movement. The point of self-determination was the right to celebrate heritage and culture in the same openly unapologetic way that American citizens celebrated mainstream American culture in their everyday lives. So much literature about the sociopolitical conflicts during the Red Power Movement seems to automatically pit the Indians against the federal government. While there is still opposition between the two parties, it is also important to acknowledge those that believed in the fight Red Power represented.[[28]](#footnote-28) Discourse analysis in this sense allows researchers to understand that in this instance, disagreement could exist alongside understanding. The federal government understood what the goal of the American Indians was; they just disagreed with some of the methodology that the Indians were using to make their demands known.

Discourse analysis is all about context clues and gaining insight into meaning. The Red Power Movement is revered by American Indians, but most mainstream American citizens are ignorant that it ever happened. Helping the general public to understand the symbolic nature of a civil rights clash like the Red Power Movement can teach valuable lessons in diplomacy and conflict resolution that may help lead to a less volatile future.

## Interpretation and Methodology:

1. How can looking at the history of sociopolitical discourse give historians and linguists clues on what future strategies may be beneficial in settling future domestic and international conflict?
2. It seems reasonable to assume that looking at past communication during sociopolitical struggles could be one of the best ways in which to gather conflict resolution strategies for the future. One reason why I feel this conclusion is appropriate is because during the Red Power Movement there was considerable work done by the Nixon Administration to both negotiate with protesters and recognize that many of the demands and civil rights they were fighting for in the first place were owed to them. Instead of past presidencies where federal Indian policy focused on assimilation and termination, Nixon and his cabinet acknowledged the Indian right to self-determination. Nixon valued the kind of diversity that the hundreds of tribes, languages, and cultural traditions of the American Indians provided to the United States.[[29]](#footnote-29) Therefore, the Native American culture was finally being allowed to revive after over one hundred years of federal tempts to suppress it. This is important, because the Native American struggle emulates what many Muslims today are facing. Cultural discrimination is a huge problem in both the domestic and international world. I think what few people realize is that the underlying cause of most all sociopolitical conflict is due to cultural discrimination or difference. Specifically, we need to study discourse because not only can federal and foreign officials benefit from conflict resolution education, but they and the general public are given the chance to learn about a “foreign” culture. Hopefully this can help reduce the ethnocentrism that lead to these conflicts in the first place. The world needs to understand through discourse analysis that no one culture is better than another, just as no culture is inherently right or wrong. Beliefs, traditions, and attitudes may differ between different cultures and nations, but that doesn’t mean they can’t be understood by others and acknowledged as being legitimate.
3. My conclusions may challenge or change as I delve deeper into my project due to the technological boom that’s occurred over the last 30 years or so. The Red Power Movement occurred just before the advent of the internet, cell phones, and social media. Today, these additions to the everyday world have made it easier to spread a message to a wide and varied audience, but also means it’s very easy for one single statement or opinion to start a sociopolitical war. Today the world is in a precarious place. In the recent past sociopolitical conflict has influenced the last presidential election, the first months of Trump’s presidency, and Brexit. There are also more complex conflicts that are simmering on the backburners right now such as in regards to Russia, Syria, ISIS, and North Korea. All of these conflicts and possible sociopolitical disasters have cultural conflict in common. There are so many different beliefs and somehow historical linguists need to use past conflicts that are similar to these in nature to help federal and international officials try to curb a start to what more and more seems like the impending start of World War III.
4. My research will reflect professional standards by remaining truthful, objective, and ethical. My interpretations will not be written at the expense of any one culture or idea. Likewise, my sources in the way of interviews will be recorded and my use of primary and secondary source material cited where recognition is due. My research will not unduly be copied from another historian, it will be entirely my own with insight gained from reading primary and secondary literature. Finally, my interpretations will be just that, mine. They will be put forth as objectively as possible for interpretation by other historians and researchers as they see fit. An historical interpretation should only be a suggestion of a possible version of truth. It should not pressure one to change their beliefs or coerce one to go against personal values and attitudes.
5. The weaknesses I was able to perceive during my reading of primary and secondary literature in the way of the research methods of other historians mostly come about as a result of the execution of writing the account. For example, in Smith’s book, she does a great job delving into a side of the Red Power Movement that no one else had thought to look into before. It is known that the Hippie generation was present during the Occupation of Alcatraz, but not much mention is made by historians about their overall impact on the occupation itself, or whether or not they were involved in other American Indian activist movements. Acknowledging the role of the Hippie generation in the Red Power Movement is important because it provides an instance of non-Indians joining in the fight for American Indian civil rights. It shows that others in the world supported the cause for the protests and that the Indians weren’t fighting in vain or just to be rebellious toward the government. However, Smith’s book lacks the emotional palpability that I’d think would be evident in an historical account like this. She conducted a lot of interviews during her research, and thus was able to gain firsthand insight on the experiences, sights, and sounds of the Red Power Movement.[[30]](#footnote-30) Carrying these psychological and physical senses over into the writing would have added considerable power to her words and possibly elevated her book to a higher place in historical research today. This kind of oversight can unfortunately be common in historical writing. I think this is due to the endeavor to remain objective. Emotional influence and evidence can run the risk of producing bias, but if utilized sparingly enough and effectively, it can really change how an audience will perceive it. These kinds of accounts feel more identifiable and raw, and therefore may be more accessible to the general public.
6. The research methods I plan to employ are reading through past relevant primary and secondary literature about the Red Power Movement and to conduct personal interviews with Native Americans who had family members who were involved in some of the movements, such as Alcatraz or Wounded Knee. In these interviews, I think it may also be prudent to ask them how they think rethinking communication and conflict resolution could change the nature of future sociopolitical protests both within the United States and in the larger world. Reading past literature lets me see how historians have approached the Red Power Movement in the past, and can also help me figure out how I can make my methods and research unique from the rest of the research and literature out there about the Red Power Movement and the impacts of sociopolitical discourse. By conducting interviews, I am also giving myself the opportunity to both learn about different Native American values and cultures, and to see how the effects of the Red Power Movement are still being felt today in the Native American communities throughout the country.
7. As stated previously, ethical issues when doing any kind of historical research are present in the form of trying to remain objective and avoid making statements that could be construed as being ethnocentric. Also, since I will be representing a culture that is foreign to my own, I have to keep in mind that I need to write in a way that neither pits nor elevates any one culture against another, but simply evaluates a different way of life in an academic matter and for educational purposes. Logistical issues may come up mostly in the forms of travel and monetary resources. Conducing my interviews may require frequent and or extensive travel to various parts of the country, especially the Midwest and Bay Area. I will want to make sure to utilize efficient transportation that is also cost effective. Perhaps instead of flying I will look into rail travel, as trains may not be quite as expensive as driving a car that needs frequent gas refills or spending thousands of dollars on airplane tickets. Train travel is also less likely to get delayed due to inclement weather, such as a thunderstorm or snow. I might also consider the possibility of staying with host families, which would allow me to further engross myself in the culture I am learning about by being a part of everyday life. I also plan on trying to apply for grants, such as the Merle Curti Social Research Award, which will help cover some of these travel expenses.

## Rationale: Language is one of the most innate parts of being human, and is often a crucial component of social, cultural, and political communication and conflict. Language is diverse, written, spoken, and emulated through gestures and cultural attitudes and beliefs. All this comes together to represent what linguists call discourse. Analyzing such sociocultural elements and breaking them down may help researchers better understand different cultures and how these differences can lead to conflict with outside cultures. Ultimately, discourse analysis may help in trying to establish a more peaceful sociopolitical world.

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