

THROUGH PUEBLO ORAL TRADITION AND PERSONAL NARRATIVE:
FOLLOWING THE SANTO DOMINGAN 'GOOD PATH'

by

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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Thanks to the support and guidance of my Committee members in this project.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to the future generations of Santo Domingo people. May you continue the ways of our people.

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ABSTRACT

This master's thesis is an autoethnography. According to Denzin and Lincoln, an autoethnographic piece "works to hold self and culture together, albeit not in equilibrium or stasis," (207). This thesis, presented in story form, tells how I was educated into and came to follow the "Good Path" in becoming a member of Santo Domingo Pueblo, and more specifically, a contemporary Santo Domingan woman. My story is framed within a Puebloan paradigm of remembrance as articulated through oral tradition, narrative and text, and the social and natural environments of my Santo Domingan world. Through introspection and reflection on the narratives, I elicit what I believe to be the foundational core values of Santo Domingo culture. I identify and reference these core values as Breath, Corn, Hair, and Family. It is through my stories that I have also come to understand the strength and power of oral traditional narratives and teachings.

PREFACE

This thesis does not follow the traditional thesis format. Rather it is an autoethnography, a creative narrative in which I critically reflect on my Santo Domingan upbringing— how I grew up and how I came to understand what it means to be a Santo Domingo woman. Thus, this autoethnography allows me to convey that it is through attentive listening to relatives and Puebloan oral tradition, reflecting on their messages, and conducting oneself respectfully through one's activities, thoughts and speech, that a person can become conscious of significant core or foundational values of one's culture. Such values provide lifelong guidance for each individual so these may differ among individuals. It is through my reflections on my personal journey to adulthood, that I identify those values which were most significant in marking me a member of my community.

In this paper, I use the terms Pueblo/Puebloan to refer to the Keresan-speaking Middle Rio Grande Pueblos of New Mexico, and more specifically Santo Domingo, Cochiti and San Felipe, which are within a 10 mile geographic radius of each other and have general cultural and linguistic commonalities. I must emphasize, however, that I do NOT speak on behalf of or for the Santo Domingo Pueblo collective or that of any Keresan speaking pueblo. Nor do I talk about what the Santo Domingo culture collectively perceives, identifies, recognizes or distinguishes as its core foundational values. I respectfully and humbly state that I do not have the authority to be considered such a spokes-person nor will I overstep that authority and divulge such information. Further, it is not my intention to have this thesis serve as a document to advise or guide

future generations of Santo Domingo Pueblo children; I have no authority to guide them. Rather, in this thesis I articulate through my personal stories what I have understood to be the core foundational values through my years of Puebloan instruction. This thesis is my first attempt to know, comprehend, understand and to put into written word, the significance of the values of my life. In a sense this thesis provides me with the opportunity to revalidate oral tradition as a guide –the literature that has helped assist me to develop a deeply personal conscious awareness of my Puebloan knowledge, the ways of knowing the ‘Good Path,’ helping me to recognize and follow it.

The topic for the autoethnography had its origin in attending a talk given by a Puebloan speaker. This person described the Pueblo collective values of his community as he addressed the audience. As I listened, I thought to myself and reflected that we, as members of our community collective, often heard the same concepts in speeches given by speakers, elder, and leaders. I wondered, “Do such speeches and verbal messages hinder or help a youth’s ability to articulate what it means to value what our people as a whole value?” As he continued, the speaker talked about his *personal* understanding and teachings of Puebloan history. I heard him say that the collective whole valued their culture, language, water rights, land, and so on. I listened attentively and observantly as I had been taught to do. I carefully watched his mannerisms. I simultaneously recalled my own personal narratives. I began to think about these stories. Through this critical reflection, the four values, Breath, Corn, Hair and Family emerged for me as those which were of significance in my personal life journey. These values are at the center of the thesis and they are those upon which I reflect in depth in my thesis.

My guiding questions for my reflections include: “What is the deeper understanding of what we, as Santo Domingans, value? What are the core values that form the foundation of our understanding of our Puebloan worlds and cosmos? How do these values help to maintain an individual’s Santo Domingan identity? How do these values work to strengthen the Santo Domingan identity?” Each question brings to the surface vivid personal stories of past experiences, memories, significant others, and teachings.

It did not take me hours to ‘acquire’ specific personal narratives to reference. I had been trained to reflect on these stories, and my training was now useful in a way I had never anticipated. My personal stories provided the answers to the questions I raised. The personal narratives shared in this thesis are the narratives that immediately came to mind when I thought about my and my community’s most important ‘values,’ my understandings of what it means to be a member of Santo Domingo culture, and to walk the Santo Domingo ‘Good Path.’

The following paper combines two writing styles, a linear approach, which is reflective of western writing styles and a Pueblo writing style, also known as ‘spider-web,’ familiar in Laguna Pueblo author Leslie Marmon Silko’s work, Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today. I provide further discussion on stories as “spider web” in Chapter 1. The dual writing styles work in a complimentary manner. The linear approach uses the human life stages to frame my stories while the ‘spider-web’ Puebloan style allows me to “pull in” my personal narratives--‘spider’s silk strands’-- and allows for the incorporation of other dimensions

of Puebloan knowledge. The flexibility of the ‘spider-web’ allows me to connectively incorporate other dimensions of Puebloan knowledge—‘good path,’ authoritative voice, strong mind and silence through timely (age appropriate) and purposeful reflection. The spider-web permits me to incorporate another “strand”—to change the ‘environment (story context)’ within the story and paper. My goal is to emphasize what Silko describes as fluidity of movement of idea and thought as the anchoring substance of understanding and comprehending the dynamics of the Puebloan structure of framing oral text, narratives, and stories. My narratives do not directly, but rather indirectly, reveal those values—Breath, Corn, Hair and Family—I identify as central and salient in my life and bring them from the depths of my identity to the surface.

Orality and Oral Tradition have been the means by which I have become a Santo Domingan woman. Orality and Oral Tradition were the means by which traditional oral societies such as Santo Domingo pass on valuable information to the younger generation. Cambridge Dictionaries Online defines oral tradition as “a system for keeping a group's beliefs, customs and history, in which parents tell their children about them, and the children tell their children and so on” (Oral Tradition def 1). My definition of oral tradition emerges and continually develops from the living institutions of the collective and cultural whole of the Santo Domingan way of life. Children, like myself, through participatory performance in Santo Domingo oral tradition which includes but not limited to song, dance, and imager, internalize cultural knowledge and develop a unique Santo Domingan identity. Oral tradition is then observed as factual by the collective whole or individual from a cultural frame work. Thus, the structure of this thesis follows Santo

Domingo philosophy and cultural framework, and reflects Santo Domingan and a woman's knowledge.

The Introduction and Conclusion of the autoethnography mirror the importance of the Santo Domingo moiety system¹. The moiety system provides balance of the two halves, the Turquoise moiety and the Pumpkin moiety, in Pueblo culture. The Introduction represents the Turquoise Moiety and orients the reader to the overall storyline of the paper. The Conclusion represents the Pumpkin Moiety and serves to bring together the complete narrative, connecting the beginning to the end and vice versa.

Chapter 1 is titled, Turquoise Moiety. It is also the Introduction to the paper in which the reader is informed of my developing relationship with Puebloan knowledge as I was growing up in Santo Domingo Pueblo. Reflecting on the view of time, space, and place as it relates to oral tradition from my Puebloan perspective, I set the tone for the reader to engage in my perspective of the interplay of Puebloan epistemology as it relates to my personal narrative.

In Chapter 2, titled "Understanding This World through a Puebloan Lens," I guide the reader on my own journey in this world. I use my stories to engage and involve the reader in my upbringing through the exposure to Puebloan formal education and oral tradition. Furthermore, the reader will accompany me through one of my days as an adolescent--a Puebloan teenager—, starting from the time I awoke until bedtime. During

¹ "Moiety: A Dual division of the village. In most of the Rio Grande pueblos where moieties exist, an individual takes the moiety of his father, but this affiliation may be changed later for various reasons. In some pueblos if the parents belong to different moieties, their children are assigned alternately to one moiety and then the other. Pueblo moieties are neither endogamous nor exogamous."(Dozier, 1970, p.213)

this ‘walk’ the reader will begin to grasp how I make sense of my understanding of how oral tradition, Pueblo ways of knowing and understanding helped me interpret the importance of spoken and non-spoken speech, and the importance of language when facing problems and death.

Chapter 3 is titled “Guidance of Directions through the Path of Color.” My journey continues to take the reader through multiple personal narratives gradually proceeding towards the ‘core foundational values’ that I consider as the nucleus of my Puebloan life.

I have attempted to illustrate or diagram these values and how they interrelate and interact in Figure 1 (19). The organization of this chapter is a reflection of this schematic. This chapter ‘walks’ the reader through each direction/color section, following the Puebloan directional order and color association to that direction, beginning with North--Yellow, West--Blue, South--Red and White--East. This structure attempts to replicate the 3-dimensional Santo Domingo Puebloan worldview. My perception of what I believe to be Santo Domingo foundational concepts, also known as foundational core values—Breath, Corn, Hair, and Family—are ‘positioned’ between the ‘two directions’ Zenith²--Brown, and Nadir--Black³, which further frame my work. This diagram depicts the continuance of harmony and balance within the multi-dimensional realms of Santo Domingo belief systems, worldview, and philosophy. They are complex,

² Zenith: “the point of the celestial sphere that is directly opposite the nadir and vertically above the observer” (“zenith” def.1)

³ Nadir: “the point of the celestial sphere that is directly opposite the zenith and vertically downward from the observer” (“nadir” def. 1)

embedded in the multifaceted cosmos and physical world, and require a lifetime of learning, reflection and interpretation to understand.

I purposely did not indicate why I chose to use a specific personal narrative nor did I articulate their educational point at the end of each story. This rhetorical style leaves the reader, especially Puebloans or next generation audiences, to interpret each personal narrative based on their own environment, experience and conceptual understanding of time, space and place as it relates to them. However, after each narrative I posit the following statement, “Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Chapter 3, “Guidance of Directions through the Path of Color,” adds additional features of Santo Domingo philosophy to the core or foundational values: the importance of the cardinal directions and their color associations. Each section opens with a story of one of my grandparents followed by personal narratives. It is in this section that the reader will noticeably see the interplay of both non-linear and linear writing styles that bridge the writing styles. The linear concept guides the reader through the life-cycle pattern: infancy, childhood, adolescence and early adulthood, midlife, and old age. The ‘spider-web,’ non-linear approach, joins and contextualizes the importance of the elder’s voice and personal narratives, inviting further reflection on different facets of Puebloan understanding, such as the ‘Good Path’.

Chapter 4, Conclusion, is titled, Pumpkin Moiety. Chapter 4 is a personal reflection of my own past, present, and future, presented in the form of two poems. Each encapsulates my journey in this life. These poems, along with my reflections, describe

my experiences in this world and show how my active engagement in Santo Domingo oral tradition has assisted me in keeping at a conscious level both the physical and spiritually powerful presence of my Puebloan identity. These poems serve as an example of how an individual growing up with oral tradition as part of his/her culture retains the knowledge and experiences of an entire society. As a personal narrative, this section also offers Santo Domingo Puebloans and other native peoples an opportunity to share my journey as I use the thesis as an opportunity to articulate how I have come to understand the process of maintaining a strong sense of identity by understanding and remembering the basic foundational values and core values an oral community continues to express and convey them to its young. This journey has led me to recognize how the process of Santo Domingan socialization and enculturation helps me maintain my balance in a world of consistent change and daily challenges. Finally, these cultural narratives demonstrate not only the resiliency but the continuing strength of Santo Domingo ideology and the practice of oral tradition in cultivating and nurturing despite consistent internal and external pressures brought about by modern circumstances.

SPECIAL NOTE TO SANTO DOMINGANS

I cannot direct you to use this as a guidebook as it is your parents' and guardians' obligation to direct you. It is not my place to say my way is right as I may or may not be the matriarch, first born or authoritative figure in your family--immediate or extended. I have written this thesis with thoughts of my family at the forefront—they are to whom it is and will be my responsibility to assist in following the Santo Domingo 'Good Path'.

One thing I can say to all who read my words is that you must always respect the Santo Domingo ideologies and philosophy from which you will obtain guidance. Further, you must value our elders and their stories, and the Puebloan ways of life.

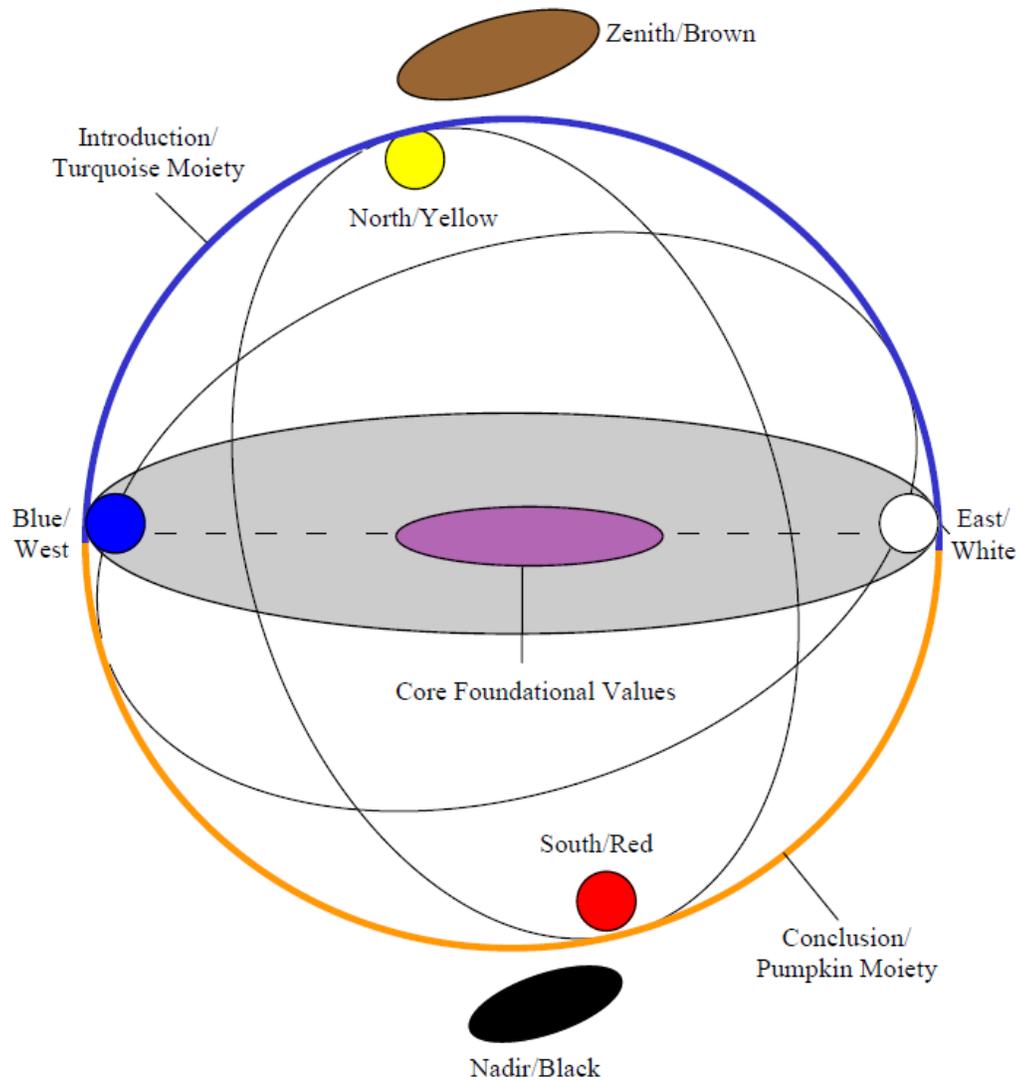


Figure 1: 3-Dimensional Image of the Structure of this Paper. Santo Domingo core foundational values Breath, Corn, Hair and Family are situated between zenith and nadir to demonstrate that they are at the nucleus of the Puebloan worldview and —show the interconnected relationship of tangible and intangible concepts in the collective whole.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
TURQUOISE MOIETY

“Grandchild, come sit down...let me tell you of our ways. This will help in your journey as you grow.” –Grandmother Niyawin

Guiding Footprints

Indigenous peoples have traditionally taken great care in orally passing knowledge down from generation to generation. Information regarding historical events, cultural and social knowledge, botany, the landscape, agriculture, and medicine, as well as how to live life as a member of a society and to survive well in a given environment have been successfully passed down through the use of mnemonic devices, songs, chants, and cultural stories and through the thoughtful choice of words. For example, the teachings from my parents and grandparents came to me through storytelling⁴. I was told bountiful stories, in which geographical and historical events were conveyed to me with much care. In these oral texts, individual characters are the features, aspects or points essential to associated narratives, since these characters interact with different deities, animals, and weather elements. These relationships are essential in teaching life lessons, beliefs, principles, and concepts and life goals such as balance and harmony to

⁴ Puebloan Storytelling expresses different forms of oral tradition that includes song, dance, Puebloan imagery, and symbolism. Storytelling is used for entertainment, educational teachings and to transmit Puebloan values.

individuals. “Pueblo oral tradition necessarily embraced all levels of human experience,” according to Laguna author Leslie Silko (Silko, Yellow Woman 31). That knowledge and the perspective on how to understand and later use that knowledge in particular situations, coupled with the “reasonable accuracy” of my western education helps me pinpoint the timeframes of certain events and understand why they are important and how they can help guide my life and help me make choices.

Educational transmission via oral knowledge involves the listener’s responsibility to understand the information accurately and pass it on to the next person or generation correctly⁵. This requires that the learner/future educator pay attention to details, word choice, and sequence. Especially important is repetition in its culturally expressed form. Songs are used to help the teacher and listener with time sequences and encoded messages which demonstrate the importance of cultural context. Songs also aid the memory to retain and remember the messages explicitly. The uniqueness of oral tradition as a primary form of enculturation is its means for demonstration and fluidity to inform the listener of each important aspect in a setting⁶. Oral teachings and their methods of transmission in specified contexts and times in a person’s life are therefore beneficial,

⁵ “...from the youngest child to the oldest person, was expected to listen and be able to recall or tell a portion of, if only a small detail from, a narrative account or story” (Silko, Yellow Woman 31).

Santo Domingan children are encouraged to recite a story to the family, helping them acquire storytelling skills.

⁶ Fluidity is used in the sense of storytelling: Santo Domingans through years of storytelling and oral teachings can recite stories that may take up to four days to tell. These are the equivalent to epics in Greece or Ireland. Some stories may have multi-story lines within one story. Individuals can gracefully go from one spectrum of the story to the next, maneuvering through the main story line and telling all the stories encoded in the main story. This results in all story lines within the major story being shared. Depending on the individual, people may acquire this skill by the age of sixteen.

and indeed, necessary to understand a people's history. Oral teachings also provide clues to how historic incidents, processes, and cycles should be viewed, remembered, and interpreted. Finally, the oral tradition's message is fundamentally the understanding that what is being related is important to remember because what the ancestors have learned is important for our lives. They have met life's challenges and their solutions and views needs to be passed on by time honored mechanisms.

Indigenous communities rely heavily on oral traditions as the basis for their cultural, social, and philosophical teachings. Stories take place at a certain time, in a specific space and place in order to bring the story to "life" through breath, song, and the spirit of eager speakers and learners. Learners gain different levels of understanding about a story's relationship to the indigenous world-view based on their experiences of time in space and place and these may change as a person ages. Each individual is influenced by his/her immediate social, spiritual and natural environment; however, each society's oral tradition controls these elements and depicts the nuance of the original oral text, effectively allowing the listener to revisit the past in a time honored way and to do so anew with each hearing of a story. While the story does not completely disregard the listener's personal worldview, oral tradition effectively uses the memories and knowledge of the listener to help him/her relate the current time and place to waves of time, space, and place from the family's and community's cultural history. In order to understand this idea, one must comprehend the difference between time, space, and place within oral tradition and time, space, and place as understood in terms of the Western mindset where time consists of increments of hours, minutes, and seconds that are

discrete and never to be repeated. In this worldview, events are always new and the past can, at least, theoretically, be ignored. This Western idea also allows one to deny the importance of space and place, because western concepts emphasize date and time with no value in regard to space and place, due to their linear perspective of their worldview.

My experience of time, space, and place requires understanding time in terms of emergence, the immemorial past, the historic past, present and future. This categorization or schema includes the ideas of space and place within these delimitations or periods of time. The Indigenous concept of time is a complex continuum that spans beyond the western notion of 'date' time. Time and history does not start with European contact. Time and history started within the scope of each Indigenous community's concept of their own time, space and centered place. Space determines the context of each time period, drawing a vivid image that includes Puebloan symbols, smells, textures, and sounds to bring life to the 'place' being described. Place emphasizes the environment or setting of action, choice, breathe and thought, and can be put into terms of landscape, water, corn fields and anything else that is associated with the physical context where the action of the story occurs. Place and space inform time, but they also relate directly to each other.

Oral stories use space and place to transport the listener from one realm to the next, allowing the individual flexibility to convey the story through the contextual perspective of the imagery the storyteller provides to the listener. These images of smells, environment, and landscape all help in the fluctuation into the next space/realm/world. This flexibility virtually bridges the present world to the previous

Puebloan worlds and other multi-dimensional spaces of the Pueblo belief system, allowing for the past, from creation through time immemorial, into the present and future which is meaningful to the individual. This spatial-temporal philosophy then allows the individual to make any oral tradition applicable in today's setting, resulting in fluidity.

Place can also be interpreted in terms of time. Time allows for tribal historical documentation. An example is the migration from an ancestral homeland to present-day homelands. My Pueblo's ancestral home lands are the areas inhabited by people who lived at Mesa Verde, Pueblo Bonito, Chaco Canyon, Bandelier, the pre-Pueblo revolt villages in present day New Mexico and today's modern communities; these are my people's historical footprints. All of these places are connected and made meaningful through oral traditions, which combines the ancestors' and our stories with teachings of respect towards cultural knowledge and historical information. In his work, Wisdom Sits in Place: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache, Keith Basso describes place as very complex, because it encompasses multiple dimensions within cultural and local knowledge. He goes on to say that place "illustrates with numerous examples the mental conditions needed for wisdom" (130). Places may hold significant meaning for individuals, family, or a tribe. Places may be of physical or spiritual origin. These places may be significant for healing purposes, for the historical remembrance of warfare, as sites of religious worship, and as places of training. Place is dynamic in the sense that it may be thought of as intangible, existing in the connection of obtaining sacred knowledge and reconnecting to one's place of emergence.

Place is a strong foundation for an individual. It grants a sense of belonging and connectedness to one's culture, identity, relatives, and language. Puebloans believe that this sense is both learned and encoded in our DNA. We share memories with other individuals of our culture, across time. For example, I have a similar memory to the one Gregory Cajete describes from his childhood: "I remember swinging through the air wrapped up in something that I later came to know was a traditional cradle, suspended from the *vigas* (ceiling rafters) in Pueblo homes" (Cajete, Mountain 171). When I read this, I recalled the same mothering and sensation. I remember my grandmother or aunt wrapping me into the traditional cradle swing. Furthermore, I remember a sense of security, family, and place—a place I cannot say is either wholly physical or spiritual. My memory goes even deeper. I felt as though I was in that realm of the time when Grandmother Spider could still speak directly to her human grandchildren and they could communicate back to her.

As I analyzed this memory, I wondered how these shared experiences, memories, and stories relate to respect. In the Pueblo worldview, the cradle swing is Grandmother Spider's web in which the baby is cradled. While the child is lying in the swinging cradle, Grandmother Spider protects the infant. At the same time the infant is learning the skills of balance and coordination. The infant child, according to Puebloan belief, travels back and forth between the spiritual and physical worlds, acquiring essential teachings from both realms that will be needed to negotiate life. Included in these teachings are the initial understandings of respect. Respect from a Santo Domingan

perspective acknowledges Puebloan belief systems, appreciation of all living and non-living things, and gratitude towards elders and family.

Respect is learned through the infant's interactions with family and oral teachings. I recall from my childhood the lessons that taught me the importance of respecting my elders, anyone older than me, and spiritual beings. It is a complex lesson that is nevertheless skillfully and successfully taught to children. Meanwhile, through travel while in the cradleboard, the child is surrounded with the culture and language of the Pueblo, learning the richness of the language and teachings of the culture, listening and watching. When the child comes of an age to understand this complexity (this varies from individual to individual), he or she will reflect on place and time and the senses he or she remembers.

The theme of respect is constantly reinforced to children through examples and stories as they grow up. Respect is taught as a cultural function, or, as previously mentioned, it is taught along with the notion of different "places." In Santo Domingo epistemology, a child has knowledge of the concept of respect, because of the tangible flux of entering the spiritual Puebloan world while residing in the physical world. Children are taught by Grandmother Spider and other deities while carefully lying in their cradle boards, cradle swing or wrapped in a blanket while sleeping. It is said a child is learning while asleep, from both the "other" Pueblo realm and the contemporary physical realm. The question remains, How does the individual demonstrate understanding of the "respect element" learned as a child when he/she was in the swing? The expected answer is that the individual will remember the care given in the swing, and will then reciprocate

this care when his or her parents or grandparents reach old age. Throughout a child's lessons, until their teenage years, particular stories dealing with "reciprocal roles" are emphasized. These stories often reference a mother and her breast milk, which provides food and nourishment for the child. The stories also highlight the father's role of providing a home for the child. These teachings strengthen the value of reciprocally caring for one's parents. When children become adults, the desire to help their parents is second nature. This is considered traditional Puebloan appreciation, admiration, and gratitude for the selflessness of parents.

Similar concepts are found in the central values of other native cultures. N. Scott Momaday, in The Way to Rainy Mountain, emphasizes the ideas of place, space, and time, mentioning different places of significance to the Kiowa. For example, their place of Emergence, the Hollow Log, is embedded in Kiowa culture, stories, and language; this is one of their strongest connections to "Place." This place of Emergence is always real to the Kiowa, physically and spiritually. This particular place is the center of the Kiowa world, giving individuals a proper sense of belonging. This place then is sacred since it connects them to their emergence homeland. Momaday also demonstrates the cultural context of using space in a contemporary time frame through the use of three voices: tribal oral tradition, historical accounts, and personal narrative. The space in correlation to place reveals sacred, historical, and personal realms.

The written word, cultural awareness, and historical events bring the stories used in oral traditions to life. The true power of oral tradition is that it takes a different shape, in the mind of each listener, in each of the three realms of space, place, and time, and that

this evolves with each telling as the listener matures and has more life experiences. For an individual who has grown up with this method of learning, it is almost like a movie being played out in the mind. Oral stories keep intact moral messages regardless of the time in which they are told. Repetition is also a key element in transmitting oral stories; it enables the listener to recognize important ideas, songs, phrases, and imagery while the story is being told. This allows the listener to retain the principal account of a story or narrative.

A language transports the listener to another dimension of understanding and learning through oral tradition. It is difficult to comprehend or understand the complexity of oral tradition through language if one has not been exposed to this form of transmission. The Pueblo voice that is projected in the words that are uttered in English or Keres are the footprints of the Puebloan peoples' past. With oral tradition, this “voice” is passed on to the next generation. The usage of one’s native tongue can also help one understand the multiple dimensions of oral traditions and how they are related to the Puebloan worldview, identity, and core values.

Today, many indigenous people are reanalyzing the usage of the English language to transmit their Indigenous worldviews and knowledge. By cleverly altering the English language and writing in a Keresan narrative, as demonstrated in Leslie Marmon Silko’s, Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today, the Puebloan people can give a new form of expression to the native voice. Silko uses the ‘spider-web’ method to convey her stories. She follows the Laguna Pueblo pattern of

storytelling keeping the essence of Puebloan storytelling authentic. Silko explains the ‘spider-web’ method as follows:

Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider’s web—with many little threads radiating from the center, crisscrossing one another. As with the web, the structure emerges as it is made, and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made. (48)

This new transmission of storytelling is still holistically Pueblo as it encompasses the main points and ideas of storytelling despite the new mode of transmission, the written language.

To understand the complexity of oral traditions one has to obtain a broader understanding of what oral tradition is, and how it is transmitted. A combination of the elements of dance/movement, song, art, reading, theater, hearing, and seeing engages the learner/listener to take on different thoughts and ideas about oral traditions⁷. These combined elements also help in relating the experiments and solutions to past problems to providing guidance for life’s challenges in the present and to understand the past through the footprints, all presented in their language which has grown and evolved in tandem with the wisdom and culture. It is a seamless whole. Oral tradition grounds the ideologies of the Santo Domingan, and reinforces all aspects of learning.

Each culture, however, understands its own footprints differently and uses different techniques for transmission from all others. For example, the usage of modern technologies such as films lets the “learner/viewer” understand the delicate procedures of oral tradition in new circumstances. Seeing, hearing and even “feeling” the importance

⁷ The type of oral tradition being conveyed will determine which elements will be used. For example the Pueblo Corn Dance encompasses the elements of dance, song, art, theater, hearing and seeing.

of ceremony communicated through these processes conveys the essence of oral tradition to the viewer through the combination of song, dance, voice, mnemonic devices, stories, and cultural symbolism. Infusing media and 'traditional' forms of transmission will result in the learner/listener engaging in both simple usage of oral traditional expression, such as song, dance, voice, or mnemonic devices, which is passed on through repetition, whereas non-traditional methods include the usage of mass media, film, radio, television, publications and the Internet. The listener takes the story's journey, and through repetitive language, reaches connectedness with the story's place and landscape.

There are different ways cultures acknowledge or respect oral tradition. For example, in Mesoamerica, the Mixtec and Mayan cultures would "ritually feed the books with sacrificial blood" (Silko, Yellow Woman 157). In Pueblo communities, when a story was completed, a young girl would go outside with cornmeal and acknowledge the ancestors' presence. In doing so, she would bless the children with the honored knowledge of oral tradition, as well as physically acknowledge how the wisdom and knowledge contained in the story guides and blesses her community. This action is a sign of respect. The girl is also reinforcing and acknowledging the female role in a Pueblo society. She is the giver of life and as such, it is her responsibility to breathe the continuance of the oral tradition life force of the Santo Domingan.

Another example of how different cultures employ oral traditions can be found in Wilson's, *"Power of the Spoken Word: Native Oral Traditions in American Indian History."* "[The] Dakota people's stance on 'oral tradition' refers to the way in which information is passed on rather than the length of time something has been told" (103).

She also mentions that learning to tell stories properly is rule bound in her society, the rule of being a good listener and to have a good memory which “rigorous and extensive training [is] required” (Wilson 103). This is a common theme among Indigenous people: good listeners mean that history is retained in accessible memories, and will be passed on once again. Proper telling also ensures that the important details are not changed and that proper respect is given by the teller. It also means that to tell a story incorrectly can bring harm, not to the individual telling the story, but to the spirit of the character(s) within that given story⁸. No harm is brought to the teller. By being inappropriate or altering the story to where the character does not ‘remember’ it and the listeners recognize that it is out of context, ignoring the main points of the narrative, will create an imbalance in the Puebloan cosmos effecting the ‘character’ in the realm/Pueblo world they are residing in⁹.

In Santo Domingo, it is said that when oral tradition/narrative/story is being told, the person, deity, animal or main character is present during any telling of ‘their’ account. The proper name of the character, like that of the ‘Yellow Corn Woman’ stories, is acknowledged but she is referred to by her Keres name. This relationship of teller and spiritual entities acknowledges the inter-relationship connection of past and present, and human and deity association. These interconnected relationships help in delivering the

⁸ In Santo Domingo these characters are still living, however, they are living in another realm/Puebloan world. They leave that world to be active in this present day—physical world, when a story is being told about them. They become guests while ‘their’ story is shared with their descendants.

⁹ “How can a character not ‘remember’ if it is not living?” In Puebloan belief the collective group understands this complex thought of ‘remembering’ and knows when narratives are out of context. This cultural knowledge and teaching is complex to define in English.

narrative to the listeners. It is those ‘spiritual beings’ that will guide the listener to tell the stories properly.

When it comes to Indigenous communities, oral tradition connects a people to their past and therefore it gives them a sense of unity, continuity, hope, and strength and a road map for the present and the future. It is a significant part of a people’s culture. Oral traditions tie together culture and identity, the collective group or an individual, through the understanding of foundational and core values, as well as provide a shared history and community memories.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purposes of this paper, the following important terms are defined.

Collective values: The collective normative values of a family, kinship group, or community. These values are expressed in but are not limited to agriculture, language, religion, culture, water, land, botany, animal husbandry, prayers, art, humor, and community.

Exceptional individual: Someone living in accordance with Pueblo ideals, values, and law.

Foundational core values: The basic philosophical values and principles by which life is understood and their metaphors and symbols one must comprehend to recognize and appreciate the collective values of a community.

Good Path: The ideal Santo Domingo path of life. This ideology identifies the importance of appreciating, comprehending and identifying, as well as living in

accordance to the Santo Domingo way of life. Full comprehension will allow the individual to be spiritually connected to the Santo Domingo belief system. Also, praying every day for guidance in this world and respecting all living and non-living things, elders, parents and family.

Harmonious state: "...permeates every aspect of the people's life; it determines man's relations with the natural world and with his fellow man. Its basic concern is continuity of a harmonious relationship with the world in which man lives. To maintain such a relationship between the people and the spiritual world..." (Sando, Pueblo Indians 22).

Keres: An isolate language containing two sub-categories, Eastern and Western Keres. Eastern Keres dialect is spoken at Santo Domingo Pueblo.

Kiva: "Called "Estufa" by the Spaniards. A Pueblo ceremonial structure, or native church used for ceremonies. It is either circular or rectangular in shape" (Sando, Pueblo Indians 240).

Oral tradition, text, story: Mechanisms that serve as teaching platforms for life lessons, history lessons, beliefs, principles, and balance and harmony for individuals; constant reminders of cultural identity and the transmission of Puebloan knowledge and guides for proper behavior, morals and philosophies.

Place: A particular portion of space, encompassing time and location.

Pueblo: The Spanish term for "village." Also, Indian tribes that historically and currently live in this type of community are referred to as Pueblo. "A general village settlement pattern appears to be roughly correlated to the language groups. The

distribution of *kivas* in the individual pueblos has obvious socio-ceremonial significance. The Keresans have two *kivas* of approximately equal size which function primarily as gathering places and as rehearsal and costuming centers for dual drama-dance groups” (Dozier 126).

Respect: Acknowledges Puebloan belief systems, appreciation of all living and non-living things, and gratitude towards elders and family.

Responsibility: An unstated cultural obligation placed upon each Pueblo member to maintain the ways of the Pueblo people.

Space: A three-dimensional realm when events occur, which also encompasses time and place.

Strong Mind: Enables an individual to be disciplined within the Puebloan ideologies of the good path, respect, responsibility, and understanding of the foundational core values.

Time: When events occur, whether in the past (starting with creation), present, or future.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THIS WORLD THROUGH A PUEBLOAN LENS

“As Thought Woman and her sisters thought of it, the whole universe came into being. In this universe, there is no absolute good or absolute bad; there are only balances and harmonies that ebb and flow” (Silko, Yellow Woman 64).

My Journey

On my journey through life, I often take the time to reflect on my experiences in this vast world. I recount the times I have spent with my loved ones, who are my guardians in this life. I reflect on my great-grandfather Odyiwa, great-grandmother YaO, great-grandmother, Rosa, grandmother NIyawin, grandmother Tenorio, grandfather Sh’Idyath, grandfather P’arIshan, and uncle Keiya, who have passed on into the next Puebloan world. Although they are no longer in the same ‘place’ with me, I can transport myself to the time and space that we share and reflect on their teachings and presence to help me continue with my journey in this time, space and place. Although I never met my great-grandfather Odyiwa, I have had the opportunity to know him, his way of life, his characteristics, his values, and his views of the Puebloan world according to the advice and teachings that have been transmitted to me through my father, Ca’Win.

I consider myself blessed to have known and learned the basic values of Santo Domingo Pueblo from my instructors. They have and still do help me clearly understand the importance of family and Santo Domingo Pueblo. I will be describing the world I

walk in through a Puebloan lens and analyze the increments of my life to help others understand how I have maintained my cultural identity in the face of mainstream influences that have crept into my life.

Infancy and Childhood

I can recall the world as being calm, tranquil, and protective while I was in my infancy. I know I was immersed in my culture, language, and family. My grandmother, Niyawin, would always sing a song to me while I was in my cradle swing suspended from the vigas (ceiling beams) in her living room. She would place me in the swinging cradle and tie a shawl around me to strap me in. I was taken care of by both my physical and spiritual grandmothers. Niyawin would speak and sing to me, teaching me to listen to the world around us and exposing me to her natural and social environments. All the while, my spiritual grandmother, Spider, was safeguarding me from unkind elements. As homage to her, the Puebloan swinging cradle pouch is woven with senu, man-made string or rope, depicting a spider web design, in which the baby rests. As an adult, I often find myself humming a certain melody. Although I do not recall the specific words, I recall the tone, pitch, and length of the song. When I am overwhelmed I tend to find a quiet place, where the sun's rays touch my skin and then I subconsciously begin to hum this melody. I believe that my grandmothers' spirits are nearby, lending their song to me to help me regain my state of tranquility and balance.

As I began to explore the world around me as a child, I remember being around my extended family, listening to the laughter in the air, and my siblings and cousins

playing and learning from our aunts and uncles. There were many rules. I recall that we were not allowed to watch television at any of my grandparents' homes. The television set was always covered up with a shawl. At about 6 o'clock every evening, my aunt would take the shawl down to watch the news, after which the television would be covered back up.

Another interesting childhood memory involves going on 'selling' trips with my parents or grandparents. This entailed traveling with them when they went to market their jewelry in galleries in Santa Fe, Taos, or nearby Pueblos in New Mexico. These trips were always fun, as I got to travel to new places. I remember I would refer to Taos, New Mexico as "little Santa Fe." I met people my father did business with, and as an adult, they have remained family friends.

Along with these more traditional Pueblo memories, I can also recall how pop-culture influenced me. When I was five years old, my aunt Margaret gifted me with a Strawberry Shortcake necklace. Oh, how I fell in love with that charm! One school day during recess time, I was playing on the slide. After sliding off I remember feeling my neck, and to my amazement, my charm was gone. I had a sense of panic; I informed my teacher that I had lost my charm. Graciously, he and my classmates helped me look for it. We looked through the grass, near the slide, but we never found it. When I went home, I explained the situation to my father, and he sat me down and told me a Puebloan oral story. The story was about a young lady who fell in love with a necklace. It was a beautiful coral necklace, a prized possession in Santo Domingo, and a symbolism of

wealth within our pueblo¹⁰. She would wear her necklace every day. One morning as she was getting ready, she went to her cedar chest where she placed it for safe keeping¹¹. As she opened her cedar chest, her eyes grew big and she quickly reacted. She said to herself, “Where is it?!” She reached in, lifted her blankets, and started moved things she had in the cedar chest around, trying to locate it, hoping she would discover it in her cedar chest. But to her disbelief it was gone, lost! She started to cry and was puzzled. How could she lose such a beautiful coral necklace she had taken care of? The young lady fell ill because she kept thinking about her necklace. Her thoughts where constantly on how she lost or misplaced it. She never found that necklace.

This story was told in the perspective of where I understood it at the age of five. The teaching of the story was that one mustn’t become too attached to material items, especially western-made objects. The reason for this is that we will abandon the true teachings of spirituality and the state of humbleness by redirecting our focus to western ideals of materialism, resulting in the idolization of materialistic objects rather than the teachings of the Santo Domingo ways of life. To this day, I vividly remember the words from that lesson, and as an adult, I never become too attached to material items, even if there are intricate connotations associated with them. In referencing the story, it is said that our deities will ‘take back’ items from us or have us lose them if we begin to go away from this teaching of remaining humble. This is to ensure that one will not become

¹⁰ Since coral is hard to get, Santo Domingo designates this object a symbolism of wealth. Other wealth objects are turquoise, spiny oyster shells, certain embroidered sash belts, deer skin moccasins, grinding stones for corn grinding, Navajo baskets and rugs.

¹¹ Cedar Chest: a chest used by Pueblos to keep their dancing regalia, blankets or personal items for safe keeping.

greedy, selfish, or covetous which leads to materialism and consumerism. To remain humble a person must be reserved, respectful, polite, and live in accordance with the “Good Path”.

This is somewhat of a perplexing situation. A question may arise, “what if a Puebloan is humble by not becoming attached to material items and still loses their possessions”¹²? One explanation told to me is that someone, a spirit, might have liked the necklace and taken it for himself. I was told that if this happens the particular spiritual being, who could be your (dead) relative, will bestow blessing to you in the future¹³. Again, this goes back to the interconnected relationships with humans and spiritual entities, discussed Chapter 1.

From my childhood, I can recount a certain word or phrase that was not allowed to be uttered around my siblings and me. This word was ‘*amu*,’ meaning poor thing, or poor little one, depending on the context. The ban placed on this word is due to the belief that saying it will keep the child from transitioning into the next phase of Puebloan education, beginning the process necessary to become strong-minded. A strong mind enables the individual to be disciplined within the Puebloan ideologies of the ‘good path,’ respect, responsibility, and understanding of the foundational core values. Parents and grandparents begin to talk to their children/grandchildren with an authoritative voice, to have the child exposed to the tone, expression and power of the Keresan authoritative expression. The reason for this is that it enables a child to begin the next process of

¹² A possession in this context refers to small items such as necklaces or small pottery, not possessions such as vehicles, homes, or large items.

¹³ It is not proper to call them ‘dead’ relatives as they are living, as such dead is in parentheses

Puebloan education. This new level involves a great deal of oral tradition; these oral texts teach life lessons. Children are given situations suitable for their age and taught to begin to articulate how they would solve or handle a given situation, mostly relying on previous oral stories, narratives, and cultural teachings they have been exposed to. One lesson we were taught around the ages of four to six was about someone handing us money or certain objects of value and what we would do. For this lesson we were taught never to take money, candy, or turquoise from anyone as this was taboo in Puebloan teachings. We were told that by taking these items we would potentially cause ourselves grave harm either in the physical or spiritual sense¹⁴. The reason for this is that we did not know who has handled them in the past or what the ‘givers’ intention was. With the progression of Puebloan education, the next stage of instruction was the development of analytical and critical thought. Puebloan learners are taught to draw upon oral tradition for possible solutions in lessons that were given by the Pueblo teacher.

If we answered incorrectly to a situation or didn’t elaborate on how we came to the conclusion of an answer, our ‘teacher’ (parent/grandparent) could speak to us in the firm Keresan authoritative voice. This voice is equivalent to getting scolded but it is not the same, for there is a different language dynamic used. While speaking in the Keresan authoritative voice, the pitch, tone, sound, manner and character lets the listener know that they are being spoken to in this expression. This Keres voice sounded harsh at first. I remember I wanted to cry the first time I was spoken to in this style of speech. But I held my tears back. The reason why I wanted to cry was I had always been spoken to in

¹⁴ This will not be disclosed in this paper due to Santo Domingo Pueblo restrictions.

a soft, tender and gentle voice. After years of exposure I was disciplined in this instruction, and it made it easier for me and my siblings to begin to understand Puebloan life ways through the contextual teachings at hand¹⁵. The pueblo dynamics of family also helps in this form of teaching because if you are a girl your uncles will not speak to you in this firm tone, vice versa for a boy and his aunties. Most of the time the persons speaking to you in this tone are the ‘first-borns’ of the nuclear and extended family, the matriarch and patriarch of the family, elders, parents and grandparents¹⁶. We were seldom spoken to ‘softly,’ after the age of nine and throughout our teenage years. Our father, Ca’Win said that this is how he had grown up and how his parents and grandparents grew up. This was a way for us not to be in the state of ‘amu,’ which would hinder us later in life keeping us yearning to be mothered. This is not to say that we weren’t spoken to gently at times; we were spoken to respectfully in both firm and non-firm authoritative Keres. We would be praised for the positive things we did in our life but not in a way that would deter us from the ‘strong-mind’ teaching. This transition is meant to create a sense of responsibility that will allow the child to enter another level of maturity.

The beginning of the ban on the word “*amu*” happened on a day when my extended family was at the dinner table, and my father was picking me up to take me home. I was crying, because I didn’t want to go home. My grandmother, who was sitting at the edge of the bench at the dinner table held her arms open and said, “amu,

¹⁵ The word sibling includes my brothers, sisters and cousins on my mother’s and father’s side.

¹⁶ It is complex to detail this dynamic, however, this is the basic level of understanding of this voice dynamic, which can also become situational.

granddaughter come here” in the Keres language. I automatically knew what kind of feeling to use, and went to the embrace of my grandmother. She said to my father, “Let her stay.” My father announced to my family that they were no longer to say ‘amu’ to his children, because this would go against the foundational value of strong-mindedness. He did not want to allow his children to have weak minds. In his opinion, after a certain age, children should not be praised or shown affection with this word, as it promotes the development of baby-like characteristics, such as irrational crying, which is not a Puebloan trait. From that evening on, that word was reserved for only culturally-appropriate occasions or if someone truly needed to be shown that affection. I am grateful for the decision my father made because it helped me become a strong-minded individual, and more importantly, to recognize the importance of having a strong mind. By recognizing the importance of having a strong mind at a young age, I became focused in walking the ‘good path.’ By living in accordance to Santo Domingo principles of proper behavior, by being respectful and responsible, I was able to gain understanding of the complexity of psychological strength. By understanding this component, I began to understand the structure of having a strong mind. It took years to understand this educational component as I reflected on cultural teachings and advice from elders/parents, oral tradition, narratives, and stories to help in grasping the concept of strong mind. By understanding what it means to have psychological strength, I was able to then articulate and comprehend the importance of the foundational values of Santo Domingo, which will be discussed in Chapter 3. These principles then helped me to reach the essential understanding of Santo Domingo Puebloan epistemology, which then

helped me to refrain from western distractions that can potentially alter my otherwise harmonious state. In order to become articulate in this arena one must always be patient, since learning these skills will take years. Moving through adolescence and into the teen years provided further experiences. These skills continually promote Puebloan learning and responsibility. Nurturing the teenager to become a respectful member of the collective whole and his/her family.

Looking at the world through a teenage Puebloan lens is interesting, as I know that other non-Santo Domingan teens in my world had a completely different way of life from mine. Adolescence was a very strict time in my Pueblo and in my home. My parents and grandparents didn't allow my siblings or me to listen to certain radio stations, we had curfews, and we were only allowed a certain amount of time to do our homework. I can now understand that these restrictions were placed on us in order to maintain the collective values of the family and community, and to assure that the Puebloan life way was not compromised, or if compromised, to a very minimal extent. In the following story, I take you through one day as a Puebloan teenager.

My Day

My average day began at five o'clock in the morning, when I would wake up, get ready for the day, greet the morning sun, prepare breakfast for the family, and leave the house by seven o'clock to catch the bus, which took us to an off-reservation high school. Some days, I would leave my home by 6:45 to walk the half mile to my grandmother Niyawin's home. There, I would pick up my cousins, so we could walk to the bus stop

together. When I arrived at my grandmother's home, the wood stove would be burning. She would be preparing a fresh stack of tortillas and setting the table, awaiting her sons to walk in and visit with her in the morning. When all of her grandchildren were gathered, the first thing she would ask us was, "Did you eat?" If we had not had breakfast she would make us sit and eat. From her, we learned of nurturing and the importance of food, as well as the Puebloan traditions of starting the day with a corn tortilla, blessings, and gratitude. Before we left to meet our bus, she would have us tear a piece of tortilla and take a bit of the other food that was served, and remind us to offer our sacrament to the church and ask for guidance in school. As we left her house, she would walk us from the kitchen to the living room and open the door, and give us parting advice. She would say, "Be good. Learn so you can help the people, remember to put them first. You hear?" And we all would respond, "Yes, okay."

By 7:20 in the morning, my younger sister and I would be on the bus, on our way to Bernalillo High School, in Bernalillo, New Mexico. When we got onto campus we would have about 15 minutes to mingle with our friends before the day of instruction began. After our day was over, we would get back on the bus and be in Santo Domingo Pueblo by 4:15 in the afternoon. I remember we would rush to be home by 4:30, as this was our curfew. Once we had returned home, I would put my backpack away, tidy up the house, and begin cooking dinner. Meanwhile, my father, uncles, and brothers checked their animals and fields.

My mother, Hε'nathits, would supervise me and my sister as we cooked dinner or cleaned the house. She would make suggestions if we didn't quite get the food to taste

how it should, which was rare. My mother, who is non-Santo Domingan, is from a northern Pueblo in New Mexico. She met my father, Ca'Win when she was still in high school. My aunt Joann and she were best friends. My aunt would bring her to Santo Domingo Pueblo to visit. It was on one of her visits that my dad met her. They were friends for over four years before they started dating. They got married and my dad then built our adobe house in which my siblings have been living in since we were children¹⁷. Since they were married, it is customary in Santo Domingo that the children be raised as fully Santo Domingan, with little or no exposure of the mother's culture. This acculturation method is acceptable in the Pueblos of New Mexico. This keeps children from having an identity complex as they grow up¹⁸. My mother, encouraged us to know and be active participants in Santo Domingan functions, from cultural events to family gatherings to knowing and speaking the Keres language. This is not to say we don't know my mother's family. We do. I know my aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins. But to internalize her Puebloan ways, belief and language was always secondary. I have no desire to learn or know that way of life as I was brought up as fully Santo Domingo

¹⁷ In Puebloan teachings a child cannot leave his/her parent's home unless they are married. If their daughter marries, her husband must build her a house for her and their children. Extended family units are encouraged unlike the Anglo-American nuclear family. If the children are not married, and their daughter has children her family stays at her parent's home*. This establishes the Puebloan extended family.

*Another note: Puebloans do not attach labels such as 'babies born out of wedlock.' Such an idea is non-Puebloan.

¹⁸ The child won't question what tribe/pueblo they should associate with, what language they should speak and/or what Pueblo religion they should practice.

and am content¹⁹. This way of enculturation has been going on for centuries in Pueblo country and is a norm.

While my sister and I were preparing dinner, our mother would be calling my dad's customers, usually setting up appointments, or making arrangements for my dad to attend art shows. All the while, my brothers would be at the fields, making sure that their animals were feed. My brothers would also tell us that during their time at the fields our grandfather, Sh'Idyath, would tell them gender specific, cultural teachings, which they needed to know by a certain age. While this took place, our grandmother, NIyawin, would do the same, passing down our gender specific information²⁰. It was always enjoyable to learn new things about our ways of life and what our duties were as a member of our Pueblo.

By six o'clock, we would have dinner. Before we would sit down, prayer offerings were made to the shrines that are located both within the home and outside it. After dinner, we would clean up and then have family interaction time. By 9 pm it was "lights-out." However, I still needed to do my homework, so I would close my bedroom door and start on it. I usually would finish by eleven o'clock or midnight. I remember my uncles saying that when you got home, your first priority was "home" work, and homework was second. "Home" work meant that anything relating to the Pueblo or Puebloan teachings had precedence over actual school homework. It is thought in Santo Domingo that the child spends all his/her day at school learning western concepts, ideals

¹⁹ As such I will not disclose my mother's Pueblo because it will take away from the aspect of being fully Santo Domingo.

²⁰ 'Sacred' gender specific information is not discussed with the opposite gender, even if they are siblings.

and the English language. Returning back to the Pueblo was time for Puebloan education, and reflection on it the Keres language. Once we entered the Pueblo, the students knew that it was Keres only and Pueblo teachings. As a result, school homework was to be done either on the bus ride home, when we had finished our chores at home, or after family interactions/gatherings. This is where as teenagers we started to see the demands of juggling how to maintain our way of life while meeting the demands of western pressures. By cleverly balancing the two, we were able to finish our homework and obtain the rich and vast knowledge of Puebloan ways of life through our ‘teachers,’ parents, elders, and family members in the proper time, place and setting.

I believe this was my extended family’s way of maintaining Puebloan teachings, family ties, and eliminating the outside world and placing boundaries on how much western influence was allowed in the home. This period was a stressful time in my journey; however, I realize that it helped me in balancing my studies with the Puebloan demands of today. This experience helped me understand that Puebloan life and teachings must supersede western education, although, western education is beneficial for obtaining knowledge or certain skills that may help the Pueblo. With the large demands on time that each seems to crave, it takes responsibility and concentration to honor both.

Finally, my perspective of this world as an adult is an intriguing combination of American and Puebloan societal concepts of individual expression as articulated through music, fashion, and speech. The western world with its instant gratifications is very appealing, fascinating and attractive for anyone. Today, there are numerous ways of communicating through computer technologies such as social networks and Twitter, face-

to-face-interactions, and mobile phones. The whole dynamic of how one relates to space, place, people, and all of life is different from what it was for my forefathers, and indeed, for anyone's forefathers. Only 100 years ago the first cars and airplanes appeared, but there were no computers, video games, or cell phones. As time progressed and more influences infiltrated the Pueblo via pueblo members, it was the collective whole, the families, which set standards of how much exposure children should have. It was, and still is, especially important that children under the age of ten have minimal exposure to western influences such as TV, video games, and internet interaction, as they are learning Keresan and fundamental Puebloan skills that will help them to attain and comprehend higher levels of Puebloan understanding. Elders understand that an individual without proper knowledge, education and instruction is highly likely to abandon, or deviate from the Pueblo ways of life and understanding. This could create and lead to a state of imbalance which could potentially be harmful to their spiritual state of being, which may have consequences extending into the next Puebloan world²¹.

Reflections on Words and Conversation

Different cultures have different views on the customs of speech, how one talks, when one speaks, what one can say in what type of situation. Personally, I am curious about the idea of total "freedom of speech," because from a Santo Domingan perspective, although all Native people are free to think as they like, an individual must watch what he or she says, the manner of how a thought is articulated, and to whom statements/

²¹ I will not be disclosing any more information on this topic due to restrictions.

speeches/remarks are made. I was always encouraged to think of the multiple dimensions or dynamics of my speech. It could be positive or negative and each side has its own ripple effects that may impact me, my life and my Puebloan society. Therefore, the western idea of unthoughtful freedom of speech—that anyone can say anything at any time, no matter how hurtful the speech might be without consequence is not really encouraged unless one understands the dynamics of speech from Puebloan teachings and the power of thought and uttered words. Being influenced by western culture to unthinkingly speak your mind, and the notion that your opinion matters, is somewhat hard for me to grasp. I sometimes find myself wanting to say how I feel about an issue. And it is expected in classes and even penalized when it is not spontaneous, however, I must practice the Puebloan art of patience, as situations are fluid, and consider that a change may occur that will prove there was no reason for me to have spoken at all. This is an interesting division in my life - my cultures' perspective on speech vs. the surrounding culture's perspective.

As a Pueblo woman obtaining a western education, I sometimes find it difficult to engage in conversations with individuals due to age and gender. I sometimes have to remind myself that I am not in a Santo Domingo setting and that it is permissible to engage in conversations with individuals who have different levels of learning and understanding. In Santo Domingo society women generally, depending on age, are expected to remain observant and speak only when they feel it's important to correct or contribute valuable information. Usually young women, under the ages of 20-25 are to remain observant but can have side discussions with other females, regardless of age.

However, for opposite gender interaction women over the age of 25 may engage as they understand the proper social interactions with the opposite gender. Young men go through the same process of listening and observation. During the observational period, one learns the Puebloan norms and values of social interaction when it comes to speaking. One learns of specialized speech or phrases that may be used in conversations or debates depending on the situation. During the duration of observing, one will learn the space and distance one must have between elders, leaders, gender and age groups, also acquiring the understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication. This is an important time to learn, as everything is situational, and the level of one's understanding is dependent on one's knowledge of how to act and respond appropriately. This ability is a reflection of a person's personality and how well he or she has learned. If you are respectful, in the sense of having proper 'communication' skills, you are considered to be a respectful individual.

I feel that my tendency to listen and observe instead of jumping into a conversation is due to my Pueblo upbringing. When I'm comfortable with the individual I will gradually build a conversational relationship. For me, it is based on the concept of respect that I learned through the oral tradition of my people. If this ideal influences you, you listen to your elders and learn. By doing so, you will obtain knowledge and then will have the opportunity to build a comfortable conversation environment reflective of how the Pueblo people hold conversations. This I see as a cultural ideal. I was taught through cultural norms that one must actively engage in observation, and only when necessary may one start or engage in conversation. This is an example of how the two societies I

am part of can cause conflict within my life. For example, when a ‘Puebloan teacher’ (elder/parent/grandparent) teaches you new information, you must observe how the information is being projected to the learner, the specialized language being used, the verbal and non-verbal communication that is used, as well as the teacher’s facial expression to completely understand the lesson. When the teacher finishes the lesson, only then does the listener/learner engage in conversation with the teacher. The listener/learner must articulate questions using exceptional Keres verbal skills to demonstrate a level of respect and significance to the lesson/conversation/debate. Doing this validates the level of Puebloan knowledge transmitted to the learner and also establishes the sophistication level of complexity and understanding that one has attained, granting the learner access to the next level of knowing.

In western educational settings, it is permissible for a student to interject with a question in the middle of a teacher’s lecture if one is confused, so that the learner can grasp the understanding of what is being taught. This is uncharacteristic of Puebloan teaching and is disrespectful. Another aspect of western communication that is culturally awkward is that a learner/student is constantly engaged in conversation to demonstrate they are acquiring knowledge in their area of study. To me this is quite exhausting; I do understand in the academic world, conversational engagement is required. In my Puebloan teachings the more you speak, the more you demonstrate a lack of knowledge. These cultural variances can hinder some Pueblo students, however, learning the variances and potential similarities may help one to accept and enjoy the cultural differences in communication.

Engaging in conversation through a Puebloan perspective has dimensions of accessibility. Occasionally, you must be invited into the conversation. Frequently, you are allowed to listen, but if you have something to say, you must say it respectfully, and have information to justify your speech²².

My experience with western education has been good. I often think about what I would like to do for my people, as this was something that my grandmother NIyawin always promoted. She also stressed the importance of Puebloan formal education and taught it alongside our exposure to western education. As I left the Pueblo, my relatives who had promoted western education emphasized the importance of ‘being good,’ that is, to follow ‘good path,’ as I was away from the Pueblo pursuing my education. This I believe was an underlying value. In order to do positive things in your life, you must be in this state of ‘goodness²³.’ The state of goodness is defined as living the Pueblo ideology of harmony and following the teachings of the Pueblo epistemology.

I am the first in my family to acquire my master’s degree. On the ‘road’ of western education, I sometimes feel alone, lacking guidance regarding how things are done. I feel that I am actually walking with my eyes closed on this road, not knowing what will happen. Whereas, in Puebloan teachings you have your oral stories and advice to guide you, there seem to be few oral stories to help graduate students. That is why I heavily reflect on my oral teachings while in school, and use them to guide me in

²² Respect: Acknowledges Puebloan belief systems, appreciation of all living and non-living things, and gratitude towards elders and family.

²³ The state of goodness: fully understanding the ‘Good Path’ and ‘Strong mind’.

completing my journey through western education by remembering what my relatives taught me was important. For example, one way I stay grounded in my Pueblo identity is I still employ the custom of rising early and greeting the sun. I find this to be a wonderful way to orient my day and remind me of what is important.

We were not isolated from the world although we were centered in our home and community. Our world was expanding through the interactions with neighboring Puebloans and non-Indians while attending high school in Bernalillo, NM. During my teenage and young adult years, like any individual in this world, I had increasing exposure to the news of the country and world and greater comprehension about the issues involved. I remember hearing about the harshness of war, from the Gulf War to the tragic event of 9/11 and the Iraq war. It seems that as a young teenager, reflecting on the Gulf War, I and my classmates often found ourselves bringing humor to the situation; it was our defense mechanism to suppress our fear at the constant exposure and sensationalism of media portrayals and endless words and idle speculation about death. For example, during the Iraq-Kuwait War, we would call it ‘K’uwah,’ which means ‘sweet’, in its basic Keres form.

Some moments stand out as extraordinary in my youth. I especially recall the O.J Simpson trial of 1996 and the day he was acquitted. The whole student body rejoiced. I don’t know if it was because it was over, or because they finally got an answer. I think the student body was not into the innocence or guilty ruling but more concerned to just react to the verdict. I just remember when we were ready to break for our next class, the verdict was read and my friends just yelled and screamed. They weren’t ‘into’ the case,

but I believe they wanted to be a part of the ‘pop-culture history,’ so they could talk about this event. All I recall is their reaction and the issue behind who wore the black glove.

I remember that our Puebloan societal guardians told us that they had protected us through prayers from such elements, and to go about our lives in good spirits and continue to believe in our life ways. To pray in our Keres language for strengthen and maintain in good thoughts and spirits is more potent then thinking and saying it in English. The Santo Domingo belief is that a person speaking Keres will have a closer connection to our Puebloan deities and spirits because they will be understood.

The Importance of Keres

During our secondary education phase, my siblings and fellow Santo Domingan classmates were constantly informed by our community members, elders and leaders to speak our language and not to speak English when we returned home from school. My great-grandmother YaO was a huge advocate of the Keres language. Throughout the 19 years of my life that I shared with her, she never uttered an English sentence or even a phrase in my presence. If you spoke to her in English, she would not respond to you at all. I sometimes wondered if she knew the English language. I have a strong suspicion she did, however, her stance was solely to speak and think in the Keres language. If you wanted to converse or know family, communal or cultural information, you had to speak to her in Keres, and she would respond to you only in Keres. She promoted active language learning and speaking within her home.

I recall my sister and cousin reminiscing about a shared memory they had of our great-grandmother. They both remember it was a beautiful autumn day, the leaves of the cottonwood trees were a golden brown color, the air was filled with the chilled breeze of Fall and the warmth of the living room kept their little hands from becoming cold. They were both four years old at the time and had just gotten back from Headstart, when Darva wanted to play a board game since it was too cold outside to play. She called out to Naomi and asked if she would play the game 'Candy Land' with her. Naomi agreed to play, so Darva, went to the showcase where her mother, Susie, had placed the board game. Darva brought it over to the living room floor where she opened the box and set up the game pieces. As they sat on the floor, our great-grandmother entered the living room, and asked them what they were up too. They both replied, that they were about to play 'Candy Land' and extended an invitation for her join them. She agreed to play the game with them. They both were excited that she was going to play with them, so they quickly explained the rules of the game in Keres to our great-grandmother. They both recall telling her to choose her game piece and what the objective of the game was. They remember laughing and having fun, as our great-grandmother put a new spin on the game by incorporating different elements of Puebloan teachings, such as directional information, what to call the characters on the board game, what the colors and numbers were in Keres. They both said that it was during this time that they learned the color, number and directional systems of Keres. Naomi and Darva can vividly remember the laughter in the air, and most importantly the great-grandmother and great-daughter bonding they shared. It was, as they put it, rare to have such interactions with her as she

would be busy visiting relatives, or hand stitching her own dresses. We all agreed that we miss her dearly.

Despite the introduction of two dominating languages in Pueblo linguistic history, first Spanish followed by English, Keres is still spoken among all age groups²⁴. I recall the prominence of the Keres language throughout the village. English was not spoken. In fact, speaking English in the community was frowned upon to speak, and it was always discouraged. I can recount one time that someone who spoke English and not Keres was told to be quiet and not say anything during lectures or dances. If English was uttered, especially in the *kivas* or plaza it was a sign of disrespect, for you were in the presence of spiritual entities who did not understand English. This was the way the collective community maintained language usage.

As I reflect on the importance of the Keres language to my family and community demonstrated through such community restrictions on the use of English, I understand that everyone in our community is a gatekeeper and has the responsibility to not only protect but guide and teach Santo Domingan members our language and cultural ways. The historical and social disturbance—the imposition of learning these dominating languages—that was experienced when the Spanish and Americans made contact with the Puebloans left a lasting impact. The Pueblos desire to maintain their mother tongue, it is the language that keeps them connected to their Puebloan deities, mothers, and the

²⁴The Pueblos of New Mexico had spoken Spanish alongside their mother tongues. With the arrival of the Euro-Americans and the English language, a major language shift from Spanish to English occurred, I believe, during the period following the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. Regardless of the language shift from Spanish to English, the Pueblos have maintained their mother tongues; most are bilingual speakers.

Puebloan ways of life. Without the Keres language Santo Domingans believe that their prayers will not be heard, resulting in a disturbance in our harmonious state²⁵.

Problems and Death

Life was not always idyllic in my home community. There were problems. When I was 14 and 15 years old, I experienced tragedy and sadness for the first time. I lost my first Santo Domingan classmates to alcohol-related deaths and murders. It was shocking. It affected all of my classmates since we had been in school together from the time we were 5 years old. We had played and learned together at the Pueblo.

I remember the last day I saw my classmate, John*. We had English class together. He sat in the back of the classroom with his friend. I could remember hearing them talk about their weekend and what they planned on doing. It was almost time for the bell to ring, for us to go to our next class. Before we left, we watched Channel 1, which provided updates on what was happening around the United States. John and his friend were clowning around when he said, "Stephanie, turn the volume up!" in Keres. I just looked at him and said, "No, it's already loud enough." They began to laugh hysterically; I guess it was a teenage male thing since our teenage hormones were at play. When the bell rang, I remember those two opened the window and jumped out. I was perplexed by their actions and thought, "Crazy boys, they could have used the door." I

²⁵"...permeates every aspect of the people's life; it determines man's relations with the natural world and with his fellow man. Its basic concern is continuity of a harmonious relationship with the world in which man lives. To maintain such a relationship between the people and the spiritual world..."(Sando, Pueblo Indians 22).

*Actual name is not being used.

guess it was their way of being different and noticed at the time. I didn't see those two after that.

The next morning, I went through the same routine of getting ready, going to my grandma's house, and then getting on the bus. However, the day was eerie. It was a cold, cloudy, and blustery autumn morning. As we got on the bus and began to leave the village, we passed the houses. As we began to exit the pueblo, we saw BIA, FBI and Tribal official cars, and the yellow caution tape near the conservancy ditch. All of us in the bus started talking; it sounded like little birds chirping. When we went to school everyone started speculating about what happened. I remember most of my friends saying, "I hope whatever happened, that they're okay." When we got off the bus, we redirected our thoughts and focused on what we were going to learn in school that day. Before I and my friends would separate to go to our classes, we always made plans on where we were to meet for morning and lunch break. Then we agreed to meet at the designated area. When school was over that day and we got back to Santo Domingo we mingled for a while and then walked back to our homes.

The next day at the bus stop, we discussed the death of our classmate, John. Most of us had found out about his death when we got home the night before. We were saddened and shocked by what we learned. However, we never went to counseling because of the Santo Domingo Puebloan beliefs under which we were raised. We knew that John was in a better place and we were not to worry or be sad for him. In Puebloan belief "...to die in a pueblo is not to become dead but to return to the only real life there is; one "changes houses" and rejoins the ancestors, but one can come back later" (A.

Ortiz 145). For this reason, we were able to go about with our lives. This is not to say that some of us didn't mourn, we did, but mourning is quite different than mourning in Anglo-America. When someone passes away we are allowed four days to mourn for the individual. After the fourth day it is inappropriate to mourn for this keeps the "deceased"/individual from journeying into our ancestral Puebloan world. In Puebloan belief, our departed loved ones return to this world, visiting us—in the spiritual sense—in an annual ritual. I usually refer to this day as our Puebloan thanksgiving, as our departed loved ones and relations gather together and share a meal together. We are bestowed with blessings from our departed loved ones. This goes back to the interconnected relationships with human and spiritual entities previously discussed.

CHAPTER 3

GUIDANCE OF DIRECTIONS THROUGH THE PATH OF COLOR

North: Yellow – Birth and Infancy

“...the midwife handed the baby to its maternal grandfather if it was a boy; to its maternal grandmother if a girl. If the child is a boy the midwife puts his feet and legs into a black pottery bowl “to give him a heavy voice.” If it is a girl she is put in the grinding bin for a moment. The umbilical cord of a boy is buried in the fields cultivated by his father; the girl’s cord is buried in the floor of her house behind the grinding bins.”

-Santo Domingo Elder (White 80)

Yellow Story

When I think of my Great-grandfather Odyiwa, I think of a leader and a humble, intelligent, and caring man. He believed in the good of his people and family, and always put others before himself. I never physically met my great-grandfather, however, I know him. Growing up, my grandmother, NIyawin (his daughter), my uncles Keiya, Yuwa’dzin, Joey, Daniel and Lewis, and my father, Ca’Win, would always reflect on his advice and his walk of life. They would often tell me how great a grandfather and farmer he was. They always spoke of him because he was the patriarch of the family, and he demonstrated the ideal of living in accordance with the ‘good path.’

Odyiwa is one of the main teachers in my life. He taught me how to remain humble by being respectful and responsible for my actions. Through the oral narratives

about my great-grandfather, I learned always to take care of family, be a contributing member to our pueblo, find ways that I could help my people, and how to live the Santo Domingo way of life. To respectfully follow the Santo Domingo way of life is to serve as an aide or adviser to one's family or community, contribute positively to the collective whole, all the while being firm in the Santo Domingo belief system taught through oral tradition. It is a delicate, interconnected way of thinking, being, living and knowing the Santo Domingo way of life. Indigenous people operate using systematic and simultaneous awareness of, or attention to the comprehension and understanding of the natural and social environments around them. The fluctuation of time and space and its relations to the physical and spiritual worlds acknowledges the multiple-dimensions of Santo Domingo way of life and our belief system. Oral tradition was the guiding tool for our journey in this world.

A 'memory' I have of my great grandfather was told to me by my father, Ca'Win. This story takes place when Ca'Win was a young boy. During the end of the summer months, when the watermelons were ready to harvest, Odyiwa and his grandsons rode in their wagon back to the Pueblo from their fields which were just outside of the Pueblo.

At that time, the streets of the Pueblo were full of community activity. Women were sweeping outside their homes, the aroma of fresh tortillas cooking wafted into the neighborhood, and children played in the foreground. The yellow rays of 'our father,' the sun, warmly embraced his children.

When my grandfather reached his home, he told his older grandsons to carry in some huge watermelons, which were placed in front of the fireplace. My great-

grandmother YaO made a cornmeal offering of gratitude for the produce that blessed her family from the planting season.

While the older boys were unloading and carrying in the produce, Odyiwa purposely selected the largest and heaviest watermelon. He called the smallest grandson to him, “Grandson, come here. Take this in.” The large fruit was too heavy for the little boy to carry in but he tried anyway. He walked a few steps and ‘thump!’, the watermelon fell to the ground and split in half. “Oh, grandson!” Odyiwa called, “Way to go!” Then, my great-grandfather called everyone to get a piece of melon. My father said that my great-grandfather would replay this scene every summer.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Co’Win Kienath

My brother, Co ‘Win Kienath, grew up in the natural environment. He was immersed in the vast knowledge of agriculture and Puebloan culture. His instructors were my grandfathers, uncles, and father who continually nourished him with Puebloan educational values as he grew up. When he was a baby, my father would take him to the fields and surround him with the sounds of the Bosque²⁶.

Male children are usually taken to the field when they are babies. This familiarizes them with the smells and sounds of the farm, so that when the child grows he will be aware of his surroundings and will be connected to Mother Earth. Men who are

²⁶ Spanish word meaning little forest.

grandfathers, fathers or uncles are responsible to take their 'sons' to the corn fields after the first three months of a baby boy's life²⁷. This establishes a beginning relationship with the natural environment, Corn Mother, Sun, Water and weather elements such as rain, wind, and breeze. These beings will then begin to speak and create a bond with the child. The men would also sing songs to the little boys as they tended the fields or irrigated the corn crops.

One example of Co 'Win Kienath's connectedness to nature can be seen in the following experience he had in the corn field. When my father would get off work in the late afternoon, he would irrigate his fields, and my brother would accompany him. Co'Win Kienath would be wrapped in his blanket and placed on the borders of the field, feeling the cool ground beneath his small body while my father was closing and opening the borders for the water entrance²⁸.

Co'Win Kienath lay still on the ground, feeling his environment. He felt the ground and plant life. He heard the birds, animals, the relaxing sound of the flowing irrigation water passing by him as the corn and chili borders were being filled. At the same time his small cheeks were caressed by the gentle breeze while the breeze-being sang to him. He admired the sky and enjoyed being embraced by the dusk sun ray beams. All the while, he listened attentively to our father talking and singing to him. He was truly immersed in the natural environment and its surroundings which are contributing aspects of our culture: the language, agriculture, senses, and environment.

²⁷ Responsibility: An unstated cultural obligation placed upon each Pueblo member to maintain the ways of the Pueblo people, includes teaching the younger generation.

²⁸ Our father worked at a sheet metal factory until Co'Win Kienath was two years old and became a full time artist creating Santo Domingo contemporary jewelry and silversmithing work.

By establishing this connection as a child, Co 'Win Kienath became grounded in the Puebloan culture. This in turn helped him maintain his Puebloan identity and strengthened the values of Santo Domingo Pueblo. As a result, he has a strong connection to the foundational values of Pueblo society. I attribute this to the links in the cornfield that he made as an infant. Other scholars have noted this link as well. "Farming teaches community and family responsibility," states Tewa scholar/philosopher, Gregory Cajete (Cajete, People's Ecology 157).

When the men are in the fields, the children, boys and girls, often "play" or mimic their elders by helping clean around the plants or irrigating canals or help bring water to the thirsty plants. While this is going on, everyone is interacting with one another, telling stories or reflecting on how their crops are growing. Singing makes this "classroom" a great source of learning for children. The child is fully immersed in language and culture and becomes aware of all his surroundings and connections to the spirit world. When a young child begins to understand life and the importance of farming, he begins to speak and sing to the crops.

As the young children start to grow, they get excited about the arrival of spring because of the intergenerational interactions it heralds. By the time a young boy reaches the age of ten, he usually stays at his father's field all day, sometimes without the company of his elders. The young boy has learned to care for his plants by clearing away weeds around them, transplanting plants to new locations if needed, and preparing the ditch canals for the next irrigation. When an elder does not have to remind a young boy

what to do, the elder is joyful, because it means that the elder has taught the child well and the child has listened and observed attentively.

Pueblo mothers also help to teach planting techniques. When their sons are still too young to be in the sun for long periods of time, mothers will have them plant a small garden of their own which will be cared for by the children. The mother will praise her children for caring for their small garden. Small children are excited and share their stories of what they accomplish at their garden. This is a direct reflection of inter-generational teachings and their successes. The mother not only praises her children, she also teaches them stories associated with corn, water, and other deities associated with planting. In this way they learn about core values of life, sustenance, prayer, Puebloan education, language, respect, responsibility, strength, growth, religion and balance.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

West: Blue – Childhood

“All adults, apparently, are quite fond of children. Old men and young girls (especially the latter) spend considerable time in caring for the smaller children. I do not believe that the children are ever whipped, but I have received the impression that they are frightened by “bogies.” Young children of both sexes play freely with each other; fights are infrequent.” (White 81)

Blue Story

My grandmother Tenorio was a petite Pueblo woman. She was very kind. When I think of her, I remember that she was always in the kitchen. Most of my memories are of her in the kitchen and dining room at her house. One memory is from when I was about five. She was making tamales for an upcoming Pueblo event. She asked me kindly to sit next to her as she was to teach me how to make tamales. I remember my mother smiling down at us as I knelt down on the bench near my grandmother. She instructed me through all of the steps of making tamales, starting with the precise amount of corn (masa) to use and rolling it into a small ball. After this demonstration she turned to me and said, "Now you try." I got my corn husk, patted it dry, grabbed my corn, made my masa ball and then pressed in onto the husk. I remember turning to my right and asking her, "like this?" She smiled and said, "Yes." We continued to make tamales and she shared stories with me. She said that making blue corn tamales used the same process as making white corn (masa) tamales including learning the specific stories or songs associated with making tamales. Tamale making time was when the women of the family gathered and visited with one another. So that I would mature well, the stories my grandmother shared with me during these times were of her own stories of her childhood and growing up.

"Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?"

Art and Breath

In Santo Domingo Pueblo, art is regarded as a prestigious form of expression. “Art provides reflections of Indigenous educational process, that is, the conditioned way of thinking with its aesthetic, social, psychological, spiritual, and ecological perspectives” (Cajete, Mountain 154). Children are taught from an early age to appreciate the art forms of the Pueblo. They are encouraged to observe their aunts, uncles, or grandparents when the creation of an art piece is in process. This is not only a time of observation but a time for Puebloan teachings to be transmitted. I recall playing with “heishi,” (the Keres word for turquoise or shell beads), and stringing my own necklaces. I was taught the importance of breath and how it helps in the creation of a piece. With one’s breath, one is asking for good thoughts for the turquoise or element that the creator’s hands will touch. By doing so, the transmission of good thoughts will be passed to the person receiving the material item.

When I was eight, I remember making my little necklaces and bracelets. My parents took me to a local art show and a man fell in love with one of my necklaces and purchased it. He even took the ‘card’ that I made. It was exciting to know that I had sold my first piece. As I grew up, I sometimes would think of that man and my necklace. When I was 16, that same man met my parents at the Santa Fe Indian Market held annually in August. He had kept the card that I had made years ago. His wife was with him, and was wearing the necklace. She expressed that she had always felt connected to me through the necklace even though she had never met me. She said that whenever she needed her spirits lifted she would wear that necklace, saying it was a powerful piece.

When my parents told me this, I reflected on the concept of breath and art and how breath affects all aspects of living and non-living elements. It is our breath where positive thoughts begin; it is our breath that carries prayers to our deities that in turn bless the turquoise, clay for the pottery, and other materials that are used for the creation of art.

We are also taught taboos associated with the creation of art pieces. A taboo associated with turquoise/jewelry making is that you should not throw away turquoise excess or small turquoise flakes as this can bring deafness to the artists. An additional taboo associated with pottery, is that one must not admire an unfinished pot, until it has been fired. If praise is given to the unfired pot prior to the firing of the pot, the pottery will probably break during firing. Specialized songs and prayers are taught to us when we are young so we know what to do as we create and market our art pieces. Additional information on breath will be discussed later in this chapter.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Winter

I have a memory from when I was about seven years old. I was standing in the living room of my house. I can recall the sounds and smells that surrounded me. I could hear the crackling sound from the wood in the fire, and the smell of cedar wood burning. That day I had my hair down.

I can picture my grandfather, Sh’Idyath, going toward the fireplace and picking up the poker stick which was made from a cactus root referred to in the Keres language

as “P’iyak’an.” He poked the fire with the p’iyak’an, and I remember seeing the glow of the red embers. He moved the burning wood, all the while creating smoke with the poker stick, because its tip had been burnt a little. I saw the smoke, and could smell the aroma that came from it.

He said, ‘Granddaughter, come here,’ so I walked towards him. I faced him and he told me to turn around. With my back was towards him, he strategically placed the smoking P’iyak’an stick in my hair. The smell of the cactus scented my hair, and he told me he was doing this so that I would have the sweet fragrance in my hair. He told me that his grandparents had done the same thing to him while he was growing up. I believe that not only was it a Pueblo fragrance but I believe he also said a prayer to the fireplace. The deities placed blessings and good thoughts onto the P’iyak’an, that was then placed in my hair transmitting the blessings through the smoke that clung to every strand of my hair, infusing the blessings. It not only allowed me to share a memory with my grandfather but also established an unspoken relationship with the natural environment and my home.

My grandparents and parents continually provided me and my siblings with blessings each day. We would put ashes on our forehead to protect us from daily spiritual or physical harm. We were also given guidance every morning before we left our homes. Since everyday was a new day, we were given the same instruction so that we would maintain balance and harmony throughout the day.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Bandelier

When I attended Cochiti Elementary School in my 3rd grade year, the Keres class took a field trip to Bandelier National Park. When we arrived at the park, I remember that our teacher, *ta'ta ShI'yak'*, informed us to make our prayer offerings to our ancestors acknowledging their presence and asking them to invite us into their place and space. My classmates and I offered a pinch of cornmeal and our breath/prayers to our ancestors. After we concluded our prayers, our teacher, *ta'ta ShI'yak'*, told us to stand in the Corn Dance formation: boy, girl, girl, and boy. At first I was taken aback, as it was not a Santo Domingo norm to perform outside of the plaza. However, I and my fellow Santo Domingans looked on while the Cochiti students danced to the song he sang. We could feel the spirit of the drum moving in our hearts and the energy that was given off by the dancers. Even watching a dance, one must be in tune with the story of the song and the purpose behind it.

While this prayer of song and dance was being offered, I felt a warm, yet cool, and gentle breeze surrounding us. It was as if our ancestors were there singing with him and dancing and watching with us. I remember the song within the wind, and to this day whenever I visit Bandelier or Mesa Verde National Monument, I still hear that same song, the song of my ancestors.

When I returned home from visiting Bandelier, I told my father what I had heard, and he said that it was our deities that were there singing, watching, and dancing with us. As a child, I understood and learned the importance of the spirit world. As I was growing up, my great-grandmother, grandparents, and parents would tell me of the history of our

people through stories that included Yellow Corn Woman, the Sun, and Coyote and the importance of connecting to the spirit realm of belief and teachings. This created and enforced the understanding of the foundational values and promoted the continued survival of the Puebloan identity.

When I was twelve, I revisited Bandelier and felt the same sense of belonging. This time it included a deeper understanding of who I was and my belief in the Puebloan ways of life. I was able to understand this dynamics of the Pueblo belief system as I reached a higher level of Puebloan knowledge through Puebloan education of cultural ways of knowing and the understanding of the multi-dimensional worlds of the Pueblo. This time I appreciated my ancestors even more because I comprehended and recognized the important connection of being Pueblo. I was a part of them; they were a part of me. While there, I could hear my grandmothers and grandfathers from the past singing to me as the wind started to gently go through my hair and touch my face. I could hear and see them doing their daily tasks; I envisioned being with them, learning how to collect edible plants, cooking traditional dishes, and creating artwork. I believe this connection to my ancestors was made through understanding our oral tradition, the concept of breath and the power of prayer. By understanding these elements I was able to transport myself for a moment to their world. I was able to envision what they were doing and be with them. This is how I was able to understand the importance of being a Puebloan. It was during this walk around the park that I could see my past, my present, and my future. I was spoken to; I was told to walk the 'good path' and maintain my Puebloan identity. To maintain this fundamental idea of identity I must continually learn Puebloan cultural

knowledge via my elders and parents and be grounded in the foundational core values of Santo Domingo Pueblo, which will later be discussed in this chapter.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

After School

One spring day in April, my sister, cousin, and I returned home from school. We rushed off the school bus, quickly passed the church and returned to our grandmother’s house. After entering the house we placed our backpacks in our aunt’s room and automatically started our Pueblo duties of cleaning the living room. We swept the floor, straightened slips on the couches and dusted the furniture.

Anyone who would observe my grandmother’s house knew it was quite clean. However, these chores were my grandmother’s way of teaching us responsibility. My grandmother always told me that as girls we must make sure our home is always clean, because our house is a living entity and should be treated and taken care of with respect. We had to make sure the floors were swept, the walls clean, and the furniture and vigas dusted. One day she said there was more to keeping ones house clean; it was also a part of the courtship process. I and my siblings exclaimed “Courtship process!?!” She replied, “Yes, you don’t want a young man who is interested in being your potential boyfriend to say or see that your house is dirty.” She elaborated by telling us the correlation between having a clean house and courtship. She said that a young man who could potentially be your future husband wants to make sure that his potential wife could

take care of a house with great care and respect, since he would be the one to build her a house after they get married. My grandmother went on to say, if a young man sees that your house is not taken care of properly, he would most likely not build you a house as he has seen how you care for a home. He will assume that you would not be able to nurture and care for a home²⁹.

After cleaning the living room, we went into the kitchen and joined the women of the family as they prepared dinner. We were about eight years old at the time and my sister helped one aunt mix the dough for tortillas, while my cousin and I peeled potatoes. I can still remember that warm spring day in the kitchen, observing my grandmother putting the tortillas on the stove griddle to cook, and my great-grandmother blending red chili for the stew, and the potatoes that had just finished boiling.

The sun was steadily setting as the hues of warm yellows and oranges filled the late afternoon sky. I can remember the sounds of young children playing outside. I looked out the kitchen window and saw one of the community grandfathers passing by. The children stopped to greet him. This was truly a mother heartening moment as I saw first-hand young children showing respect to their elders. To observe the younger generation of the community demonstrating the proper way to acknowledge and greet our elders confirms that the children have comprehended the concept of respect, as a basis for our way of life and living the 'good path.' Growing up we were constantly told to respect our elders and to greet them whenever we saw them. We had to differentiate which

²⁹ Nurture in the sense of talking, praying and keeping the house beautiful. By nurturing the house it will protect and care for your family.

greeting phrase to use. While you could not hear what the children said you knew by the elder's reaction that they had used the proper form of address.

When we finished making dinner, I helped set the table as my cousins made two pitchers of tea and two pitchers of kool-aid. It was shortly after six o'clock and almost time to eat when our uncles started to return from the fields or making jewelry. While they were washing up for dinner our great-grandmother instructed my sister to call the "boys" for dinner, during which time, my cousin and I made offerings to each shrine located in the house.

After we made our offerings we sat down and joined the family at the dinner table, I still remember sitting next to my uncle Robert, asking him to pass the pitcher of kool-aid. I suppose I was tired that day and accidentally poured my kool-aid into my bowl, making everyone laugh.

My uncle said to me, "Poor thing, you have been cooking too hard." He then reached for my cup and poured the kool-aid into my cup. I still recall sitting at the very end of the table and looking at the stack of about twenty tortillas on the table. I felt a little embarrassed and shy for having done that. However, the soothing, joking voice of my uncle comforted me. I just smiled while looking up to him. Since my father was not present, it was okay that the word, 'poor thing' was used. I am guessing that it was an appropriate word for my uncle to say.

I also remember glancing to my left and seeing each uncle, aunt, sibling, cousin and grandparent sitting at the table enjoying their meal. That moment captured the true essence of family and enjoyment of being with them. This is why food/eating are

important in Santo Domingo Pueblo. The act of sharing a meal brings both the nuclear and extended families together. It not only acts as a gathering mechanism but also serves as a system of delivering information to the family using Puebloan teaching methods and food. If there is an important oral tradition or advice that needs to be conveyed to the family, it is transmitted while everyone is consuming food. It is believed that words/breath are infused in the food particles consumed by the individual. Food in turn nourishes the mind, body, and soul with the words of wisdom and advice, keeping this knowledge forever locked in the body.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Spring

During the spring time, I can recall my grandmother NIyawin having me sit down at her kitchen table. I sat on the bench, and she took down my pony tail. She combed my hair out and then put it back up. After that, she gathered my hair in her palm and then she ran her hand down to the tip of my hair. She did this several times and then would say in our language, “Granddaughter, you have a head of hair like me. Beautiful, long, and thick!” I would just smile and nod at her comment. This was my grandmother’s way of showing affection and love towards her granddaughter. This connection between us was our way of bonding. As the years progressed, she continued to do this until she passed away when I was nineteen. Sometimes when I wet my hair and pat it a certain way, it transports me to the time and space that we shared. This feeling allows us to unite for a

moment, before we realize that we are both in different Puebloan worlds. I know she is always with me. I believe the reasoning for her caressing my hair as I grew up was that she was passing her prayers and knowledge onto me through her hands and placing them in my hair. Hair is sacred and significant in Santo Domingo Puebloan belief; it is our life force. The length of your hair demonstrates the wealth of knowledge one has. It not only is a symbolism of wealth, knowledge and health but also serves as a protecting agent for the individual. The concept of hair will be discussed later in this chapter.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Ditch Work

In Santo Domingo Pueblo, men are summoned to ditch work around the month of March. The Puebloan men are socially and culturally obligated to clean all communal irrigation ditch systems that deliver water to the fields within the Pueblo³⁰. The cleaning of the ditches helps in the preparation of the planting season. While men clean the ditches, women also play a role in this essential agricultural practice.

The role of the female is to prepare a big lunch for the male relations that live with her. The reason for this is her male relatives will be working intensely all day cleaning the communal irrigational ditch systems; removing excess dirt/sand from the ditches, making sure that the weeds, large rocks and trash are eliminated to ensure the

³⁰ Oral tradition associated with irrigation discloses the cultural obligation for males of the Pueblo to participate in the cleaning of the irrigation ditches within the Pueblo. The oral tradition will not be disclosed in this paper due to the sacredness of the text and restrictions on this particular oral tradition.

proper flow of the water. That is why the men need to be nourished so that they have continuous stamina throughout the day.

The evening preparations are to cook the lunch for the next day, pack the workers' ice coolers with water, cookies, freshly pulled green chili and pureed red chili, their main meal and snacks. Early in the morning a woman will make fresh tortillas and make sure everything is packed for her male relatives' lunch. While her male relatives are at ditch work she is busy making dinner for their return. Dinner is usually a Puebloan stew, a preferred dish for ditch workers.

During lunch "camp," the men will mingle with each other and share or exchange the food that was 'packed and prepared' for them. At this time, the male relatives offer other camps food from their lunch. This is their way of "showing off" their female relatives' expertise in cooking and nurturing. This act announces that their female relative is a wonderful cook, someone who cares and adores her male relatives, as she has prepared a wonderful lunch for them. The lunch demonstrates appreciation, respect, and thanks for her male relatives and appreciation of their hard work. This act showcases the female's ability to cook and that she shows affection and respect to her male relations through the act of preparing food. At the end of the day the men will go back to their households and talk about the food that was prepared by different women.

Why adult women cook for their male relatives is based on the relationship she has with her siblings. Sisters prepare their brother's lunches for these days. This is an unspoken bond that harkens back to oral tradition. In oral tradition the sister's duty and obligation is to look out for the well-being of her brothers and vice versa. Even if the

siblings are married, one's spouse is not as 'strong,' that is not an 'authoritative figure' as a spouse. Like in all unilinear kinship systems, it is the opposite gendered sibling that has the power to protect and empower his/her siblings in social and cultural situations. In Santo Domingo belief, it is your siblings that will always be there to care for you³¹.

After lunch, everyone returns to the ditch work. When the person in charge calls it a day, everyone returns home. The women await their brothers, uncles, husbands, fathers and grandfathers, whom they greet and take the shovels from them. They then escort the shovels to the fireplace and lay them down with the "spoon" facing upward before "feeding" (pray to) the shovel with cornmeal. This act acknowledges the shovel's hard work. A woman will ask 'him' to continue to be "strong" for the days to come.

Next she will bring in the cooler, anxious to open it. She hopes to find it empty; if it is, she is extremely happy. It reveals to her that her job was fulfilled and her work appreciated. She will then set the table and call her male relatives to dinner. All the same time, the secular officers of the community will be delivering a message to each household to notify the men where to meet the following day. After the message is delivered, the woman will give the officer something to eat³².

This cycle will be repeated until all the irrigation ditches within the pueblo are cleaned, which usually takes three to four days. When it is completed the community

³¹ This is associated to a detailed, intricate and complex understanding of 'authoritative figures', the paragraph gives a basic understanding of this concept.

³² In this case, food is used as a form of gratitude towards the secular and traditional government officers, for protecting the community. Food/eating is also a connecting agent from this world to the spirit world. Food is offered to acknowledge our ancestors.

rejoices as they anxiously wait for the water to meet the village fields and nourish the new growth, as well as make the blessings that are associated with agricultural practice.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Proper Entrance into the Corn Home

When I was a child, my grandfather Sh’Idyath, uncles, and father would actively take me and my siblings to the fields early in the morning to clean around the corn so that it would grow strong. He usually would come to my house around 5 o’clock in the morning; if we were still asleep he would say our names in a melody and then pinch our toes, so we would get up. Since he pinched hard, we made sure we were up. We would have a light breakfast and then go to the fields, leaving our house at 5:30 in the morning. Before we entered the corn’s home, the corn fields, we were told to offer cornmeal and our breath to it, and pray that it grow to be strong, to provide for the people. After we made our offerings we were told to pull out the weeds around the corn and to talk to it. Other plants that we weeded were chili, tomatoes, varieties of watermelon, squash and zucchini. Like the corn plants we talked to the other plants, encouraging them to be strong and to grow.

We were always paired to promote conversation and laughter as we tended the corn. However, we would rarely talk since we were busy concentrating on cleaning the corn and chili plants. We would also compete with each other to see who could clean the most rows of corn and chili. Although, it was quiet, we would sometimes start joking if it

remained quiet for long periods of time, but since our grandpa was with us he would usually be singing or telling us a story. Besides our grandpa being our entertainment, he would observe us to see if we were doing a good job cleaning around the plants.

By 10 or 11 o'clock, my grandfather Sh'Idyath would tell us to stop and go home, as the summer day was beginning to get hot. Before we left he would tell us he expected us back later in the afternoon to finish cleaning. When we would arrive back to our grandmother's house we would have lunch. The girls would help clean up after lunch and help with making dinner or tidy up the house. Most of the time, we would make art such as jewelry, pottery or embroidery work. After lunch, the boys would be outside with our uncles, cleaning the outside yard or doing art work. This was done throughout our teenage years. I believe our uncles, aunties, parents and grandparents wanted us to be grounded to the land and to the spirits of the art.

When the afternoon came, we were taken back to the field. Once we got there, it was back to pulling weeds. After all the weeds were eliminated, my brothers had to make sure the field irrigation ditches were clean, so that the water would flow easily to our field. It was always a good time for us to spend with our grandfather at the fields. We did this until it was dusk. Before we left to go home, we would all gather at the corner of the corn field, look at the corn, and offer prayers again.

I recall that every time I helped clean the corn and chili fields, I was always in a tranquil state of being. The exposure to the natural environment, connection with the plants, the Sun, Mother Earth and being in an environment of learning and family

bonding is significant to understanding the holistic Puebloan values of respect, life, and cultural knowledge.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Grandpa P’Arishan

My grandfather P’arIshan had a small store, which he operated in the little side room of his main house. Every day at noon, he would close his store for an hour and join the family for lunch. I remember one afternoon, a young man wanted to buy some bread. He asked if my grandfather would open the store so he could purchase a loaf. He replied, ‘No, come back in an hour. I am having lunch with my family.’ This clearly showed us the value of family interaction. The lesson was about proper timing and when certain activities can and should occur. I remember he was beginning to teach us the deeper level of responsibility in correlation to family. He said that we were all responsible for maintaining a cohesive family unit with one another. He stressed the importance of maintaining healthy relationships with our siblings and cousins, informing us to reframe from idle gossip, which could be potentially detrimental to the family unit. He went on to say that gossip would only destroy the bond of the family unit and we should have ‘strong minds’ and stay away from it. Grandpa P’arIshan continued by saying that our siblings and cousins are an integral part of a family, saying ‘your brothers and sisters will always be there to help you, they are your extended family, make sure to take care of one

another and respect each other.’ The importance and significance of family is admired and praised in Santo Domingo.

I recall during our meal times with him he would discuss with us (myself, my cousins, and siblings) what had happened during his day, and what he was going to do the rest of the day. He then would ask us what we had planned. These seemingly small questions made my cousins and me reflect on what we should be doing, building the notion of leadership skills within our family structure at a young age. I believe he was letting us understand the importance of planning, planning on what to do in the future. I believe this was a valuable leadership skill that was taught to us. Grandfather had us understand that using our time ‘wisely’ was beneficial to accomplishing our goals and to stay focused. Since we were young, we were taught to plan according to our level of understanding. Planning at that time was based on what we were going to do in the afternoon, evening or next day. As time progressed and we grew older we were asked to plan for the month ahead, then for a half year. Eventually, he led us to plan a year or so ahead. This was his way of having us think about our actions in a purposeful way, also about cycles, seasons, different units of time, and strategize how we were to obtain those specific goals we planned for. He always stressed that with planning; we must always pray for guidance and be strong minded so that we aren’t easily deterred from accomplishing our goals, also about commitment, patience to complete something and be focused.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Children Dancing

Another of my memories concerns games I played as a child with siblings and cousins. The one that particularly stands out is from a hot summer day when I was about seven years old. My grandmother had kept us inside until it was cool enough to play outdoors, not wishing to risk heat stroke, as she had previously lost three children to heat stroke and dehydration. As time passed and it began to cool down in the village, you could hear the children making noise, signaling it was okay to play outside. Then my grandmother let us go outside and play with her neighbor's children.

I remember one instance when we wanted to play but were searching for something fun to do. We could not agree on anything until one of the young boys suggested we dance. The kind of dance we began was not any popular western dance but the Pueblo Corn Dance. The Pueblo Corn Dance is danced during different times of the year to connect with the cosmos, Corn Mother, Mother Earth, Father Sun, Rain Deities and the spirit of the corn. The Corn Dance is danced by young and old alike, from elders to toddlers, men and women. Everyone that participates in this dance is silent while dancing. They are in a focused trance praying for the continued well-being of the people and the natural forces. The significance of the Corn Dance is to pray for all people, to have a good planting season—for the plants to grow strong, rain to 'feed' the plants and the land, and a continuance of balance and harmony. After we agreed on what we were going to do, we went into a nearby vacant field behind the neighbor's house and the girls began collecting a certain kind of weed that resembles evergreen branches. We needed them to dance with. In the Pueblo Corn Dance women hold a handful of the evergreen

branches in both hands as they dance. Each of us gathered enough of this weed for each hand before we went to ‘our’ dance. The boys huddled together, debating the songs they would sing for our dance. This went on for quite some time until one of the neighbor’s daughters suggested we hurry up before it got dark.

After coming to an unanimous decision one of the boys lined us up like it is done for the Corn Dance. Following this, the other boys asked if we were ready to dance. We all nodded our heads simultaneously in agreement. So the boys that were not dancing began to sing their version of a Corn Dance song, while we began dancing.

Reminiscing about this moment I laugh to myself in amazement that as children we were “playing” dance, yet we were actually learning and practicing our culture. By dancing we mimicked what we had seen at the village plaza when we watched corn dancers. The singing boys were practicing the songs they had memorized from hearing those drummed at the plaza every year.

I don’t recall any adults seeing us on this occasion, however, I can only imagine they did. They probably peeked out their window to see the commotion being created by the neighborhood children. They obviously didn’t disapprove because they would have stopped us. Reflecting on this now, I realized that our group had already acquired the Puebloan norms of proper ways of behavior and decision making, as well as gender roles. By separating into gender groups, we already knew through observation that girls are not allowed to be in the vicinity of the ‘boys’ who were selecting what songs to sing. That was reserved for the boys to decide. Both genders knew the function of how to stand in line. Since we all had already taken in part an actual Pueblo Corn Dance, we all knew

that a boy had to line up all the dancers, so one of the ‘singers’ came forth and lined us up, both boys and girls. After this was done, the boys began to sing. I remember that for the drum, one of the boys found a tin can to beat the rhythm and tempo. I can recall the setting of the sun and that it was almost night fall, when we danced down the road and turned around, and danced the opposite way. This went on for a while, before we were all called back home by our grandparents.

Within this small play group, one can see how as children we had been raised and immersed into Santo Domingo culture and language. We knew the physical and spiritual worlds at hand. We may not yet have been proficient, but we knew enough to understand how to interact appropriately in preparing for our dance. We were all under the age of ten when we ‘played’ this dance. I recall that as we danced we did not joke or make a mockery out of our dance. On the contrary, we danced as if we were actually dancing in the plaza. We danced respectfully, and when we finished, we made prayer offerings.

I am astonished at the abilities of young Santo Domingan children to practice cultural maintenance through role-play. This revelation captures my thoughts and reinforces my joy in and hope for Puebloan cultural and linguistic survival. As children continue this kind of role playing, our ways of life will continue as they have since time immemorial.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Summer

One hot summer morning, I ran through the village to my grandmother's house. My great-grandmother, grandmother, aunt, and cousins were in the kitchen talking about their plans for the day. My great-grandmother, YaO, called me over and said, 'Granddaughter, aren't you hot?' I had my hair down, and replied, 'No.' She had me sit down on the bench, however, and told my grandmother to fill the small tin pot with water. My grandmother set the old dented tin pot on the table. YaO placed her hand in it and cupped some water into her hand. Then she softly clapped her hands together, and tapped the water onto my hair. She began at the top of my head and worked down to the end of my hair. I felt an overpowering peace. She then combed my hair and arranged it into a pony tail. I still was not hot, I just liked having my hair down. I believe she thought I was exhausted, as my hair was thick and it was a hot summer day. One thing I noticed was that my grandmothers and aunts always would comb my sister, my cousins and my hair. I believe this one way Santo Domingo women bond with their children and grandchildren. Even if our hair was nicely combed they seemed to enjoy undoing our hairstyle and brushing it. I think this goes back to what was previously mentioned—the gentle touch from a parent or loved one is a way blessings and prayer, are transmitted to us via our hair.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Around August 4TH

Every year, Santo Domingo Pueblo members feel the excitement of their annual feast coming. I remember as a child being so ecstatic that I would have a tingling feeling in my legs. My siblings were overjoyed as well. During our feast, family and friends come to visit and watch the Corn Dances all day and visit with their family/friends.

Two days before our annual feast day, when I was eight years old, I remember that my sister and cousin asked our grandmother NIyawin and great-grandmother YaO if we could go to a carnival located on the south side of the church. They both agreed that if we finished our chores they would allow us to go see the carnival.

My sister swept the floor and my cousin straightened the couches, making sure that the couch covers were folded properly, while I dusted the furniture in the living room. Finished, we sat outside with our great-grandmother and grandmother. I admired these women. They demonstrated the way a Puebloan women is to live, to work hard, be kind, loving and nurturing to one's family, to be optimistic and happy. I asked my grandmother how it was when she was young. She said that her mother made her special clothes that she would wear during the feast on August 4th. I was so impressed, I answered, "Really, grandmother? Your mother loved you!" She just looked down and smiled.

My cousin asked if we could go see the carnival. Our grandmothers said okay. So we walked up the street and neared the bridge at the church. I remember placing my left foot on the bridge, when a church official said, "What are you doing?" We replied simultaneously, "We're going to see the carnival." He responded, "No! Go home and

make tortillas. You're not supposed to be here." My younger cousin argued, "But we finished what our grandmothers told us to do." But the church official was adamant. "Nope, go home. Your uncles are probably coming home. They are going to be hungry." So we went back home. We were upset, but listened to him and obeyed his instructions. By the time we got to our grandmother's home we had let it pass, and once again sat outside with our grandmothers.

My cousin, Darva, immediately told them what the church official said. They responded, "Don't worry. On August 4th you will be able to go. And that's good you listened." They told us not to be upset as he probably had a good reason for not letting us go. In Pueblo society, elders or anyone older than you has the right to scold or advise you if they see that you are not behaving or not living in accordance to the Pueblo way of life, or if you have ventured off the 'good path.' The advice or admonition to us addressed the concept of responsibility, everyone being responsible for each other. Children are to always show respect to their elders even if their elders may be wrong. A child cannot talk back as this is a form of disrespect. In this case, my cousin was supplying the church official with information and did not show disrespect, as we went home after she told him.

The church official probably thought that we had chores at home that we abandoned to go to the carnival. In Santo Domingo whenever there is a social or cultural function, play and fun time is not allowed as there is much to do. In American communities if a grandmother gave permission to her grandchildren, the man would have allowed them to enter the carnival. Although we had permission from our grandparents,

we had to listen to the official regardless if he might have been wrong. Authority figures have the right to override familial permission. All elders are parents once a child leaves home. This same concept is applied to the school setting. When we would leave for school, our elders/parents would tell us, behave and listen to you teacher, he/she, is your parent. Teachers have the right to scold and correct you if you are doing wrong. In the case of the church warden, he was instructing us to note time and place, what was appropriate for that particular time and place. It was his duty to make sure that we understood that that specific time was considered a ‘delicate and fragile’ time since it was leading up to a big event. In our teaching, any time there is a big event, the days leading up to it are considered unstable, and it is during this period that one’s well-being is to be protected, due to the potential dangers that might happen. The church warden was protecting us.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

South: Red - Adolescence

“You must be disciplined and grounded in our ways to be successful in whatever you do.” –Santo Domingo Saying

Red Story

My grandfather Sh’Idyath was a hard worker. He took care of my great-grandmother, Rosa (his mother) until her death, when she was 107 years old. When I

reminisce about my grandfather, I have so many memories. The most significant to me are the ones I have of him singing and uttering his favorite words and sayings. Most of my visual memories are of him tending his corn and chili fields with my younger brother Co 'Win Kienath.

One recollection I have of my grandfather is a hilarious one. It involved my younger brother Co'win Kienath, who was about ten years old, and me, when I was about twelve years old. One evening, my brother was craving hot pickles, so he asked our grandpa if he would take us to the store. Our grandpa agreed. It was only about a 5 minute drive away from our home. We got into his single cab truck; my brother sat in the middle while I was on the passenger side. And boy, did grandpa drive slow! As we got to Rosetta's store, we jumped off and ran inside and bought our hot pickles. When we got into the truck my brother had a sneaky look and said, "Steffie, watch what I'm going to do....grandpa's going to drive fast!" I looked at him puzzled and didn't pay much attention.

Once we left the store and neared the road that turned into the road going towards our house, Co'Win Kienath whispered, "Watch!" He had cleverly and swiftly placed his foot on the gas pedal and stepped on it! Boy, did we go fast, and on a dirt road, which was bumpy. The truck was bouncing. Then Co'Win Kienath took his foot off, and my grandpa responded in Keres, "Whoa!" I wanted to laugh so hard but I didn't because my grandpa would have been puzzled as to why I would randomly laugh.

As we came near our driveway, my brother did it again! When my grandpa parked his truck, I just couldn't help but start laughing. In a laughing voice I said, "Oh,

Grandpa, you drive fast!” My grandpa responded and said, “I know, huh?” That just added to the joke. It didn’t help that my brother was laughing, but he was and I kept laughing. I was reacting to his laughter which was contagious. It made me laugh longer. Our grandfather just had a big smile on his face. Every time we reminisce on this shared memory we are in stitches. We know grandpa allowed my brother to step on the pedal and went along with the joke.

As I look back at my random memories of my grandpa, Co’Win Kienath is always present. My brother and grandpa were extremely close; their relationship was like that of best friends. My brother would joke around with him and sometimes make him mad. It was always the highlight of Co’Win Kienath’s day when he could annoy my grandpa. This is an acceptable Puebloan relationship dynamic that is shared between grandchildren and grandparents. However, there are still levels of respect that the child must follow while teasing or playfully annoying ones grandparents. This dynamic allows the relationship to remain healthy. Yelling or scolding are kept at a minimal, as both parties are able to respectfully express their annoyance with each other. This next memory provides a small glimpse of this dynamic.

We were at the field cleaning a border of chili when Co’Win Kienath said something funny to our grandfather who didn’t like it. Co’Win Kienath reacted to this by continuing to annoy Sh’Idyath until the old man got up from where he was cleaning the chili plants. He quickly and quietly went to the other end of the field, near the fence and ‘hooked,’ by pulling with his thumb and index finger, a finger full of sticker weeds. While he was doing this, Co’Win Kienath was laughing and I told him, “Shh,” placing

my index finger over my mouth. I told him grandpa was coming back this way with stickers in his hand. He disregarded my warning, and continued to tease our grandpa. Just then, grandpa came from behind him, and said a Keres phrase, whipping him with the stickers! Ouch, how that must have hurt!³³ As Co'Win Kienath was a little trickster, he still kept joking with my grandpa, until the latter uttered his infamous English 'bad' word, 'Some-bitches!' When we heard that I just couldn't help but laugh, but not where he could hear me. My brother's and grandpa's relationship was a healthy one, despite my brother not knowing when to stop. They were inseparable since the time my brother was a baby and until our grandfather's passing, when Co'Win Kienath was about 14 years old.

My more serious memory of my grandpa was of him spinning his own cotton string for the foundation of his necklaces. He would patiently spin his cotton near the fireplace, humming or singing Puebloan songs and engaging in small conversations with my mother or whoever came to visit. When my grandpa finished making his necklaces he would go to the Navajo reservation to market his nugget and turquoise creations. He would go with his friend and be gone for about a week. Oh, how our house was quiet when he was gone. We missed our grandpa's presence. Since at the time cell phones were non-existent our grandpa would tell us the day he left for the reservation what day he would return. He never used the pay public telephones either, so we relied on what he told us. The day he was to return home, the whole family would be patiently waiting. My mom, sister and I would prepare fresh tortillas and stew for him so that he would

³³Co'Win Kienath reassured me that it didn't really hurt since he was wearing his shirt. It was not a thrash, but more of a symbolized 'whip' to have him quit teasing and stop being overly annoying.

have a good meal to eat³⁴. We knew it might be a late night. Between the hours of 9 pm and midnight was when he would return. Once we heard his truck, all grew excited. We could hear his truck door open, then shut, and he walked to the house door, and opened it. He said, "I'm home!" All of us would embrace him, and then he would tell us about his trip to the Navajo Reservation while we had dinner with him.

I remember one story in particular. It was late in the afternoon, and my younger brothers (Co 'Win Kienath, Michael, Tyson, Andrew, and Deon), my sisters (Naomi and Darva), Uncle Joey, and Aunt Susie were at the field with our grandfather, irrigating the corn and chili. My grandfather's field is located across the Rio Grande River from the village. It was a beautiful, breezy, late afternoon. The sun was about to set; different shades of red hues painted the Pueblo sky. I recall the sound of the water flowing into the corn fields, and my uncle telling my brothers which borders to open for the water flow. My aunt and I were laughing because Co 'Win Kienath and my grandfather were playfully wrestling. It was funny to see them wrestle and stop and wave to the passers-by driving past the field. This went on for some time. Grandfather then chased my brother, shouting, "Co 'Win Kienath!" and Co 'Win Kienath yelled in a joking voice, "Okay, okay!"

That was a beautiful time being with my family and it was a most wonderful example of the Good Path. While we were irrigating the fields the hues of red slowly disappeared and began to turn blue. The rain was coming. After we finished irrigating,

³⁴ This is a customary act that Santo Domingans do when their family members return from marketing trips. As they have been away so long, they probably are craving chili, fresh tortillas and other Pueblo food.

we all walked back to the Pueblo. When we got home, it began to sprinkle and rain gently. This was a blessing as the rain gods provided us with moisture, nourishing our plants so they would grow strong. The power of having a good day begins with corn meal offerings to the Sun in the morning and going to the corn and chili fields and doing the same, acknowledging all life forces around you. In the summer months, having good thoughts and doing things correctly helps the community become blessed with moisture in the form of rain. Doing things in accordance to Puebloan ways of life is crucial for the well-being of the Pueblo and the crops planted.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Pinion Picking

Oral tradition and breath work together in the delivery of teachings and values. A winter memory I am most fond of is when my father, grandmother, uncle, and siblings went to the Pecos Mountain in New Mexico to pick piñons. I was an excited twelve-year-old because this was the first time I was being allowed to go.

When we arrived at the mountain, we began hiking to the first piñon tree we could find. Before we started we offered prayers through cornmeal and breath. After this, my uncle began shaking the pinion tree. And it was literally rained piñons! When he finished, we all knelt down and began picking the beans up. We were all very quiet, concentrating on picking quickly and trying to fill up our flour sacks. Only after we had finished filling up two flour sacks did we start engaging in small talk. After a while the

small talk turned into joking. We all were laughing. We had frequent silent periods, anticipating that after lunch we would hear stories told by my uncle and grandma.

When it was lunch time, we took a break and sat under a tree eating. However, I continued to think about piñons and how good they were going to taste when we roasted them, and how we would enjoy them while we watched the Christmas dances in the plaza and listened to our winter night stories. With all this coming to my mind, I quickly ate my lunch and was ready for another round of piñon picking.

After lunch, we decided to break into small groups. I went with my father, hiking even higher than before. Stopping at a large tree my father chose, he shook it and to my amazement there were very large piñon nuts. I hurried and picked as many as I could, racing against the setting sun. I picked so fast, I almost filled my flour sack. When it was getting close to dusk, we decided to return to our pickup truck, so that we could be home before it got late.

When we all met up at the pick-up truck, I remember my grandmother calling us to join her in prayer. We set our sacks of piñons on the ground. She gave all her grandchildren a pinch of cornmeal and told us to give thanks to the piñon trees, Mother Earth, and the Creator for providing us with piñon nuts that we would enjoy with our family.

Upon arriving home, we decided to return the next day to the Pecos Mountains. My grandmother and uncles were making plans to leave early in the morning; however, they decided to go the Cuba area, because one of their neighbors had visited there the night before and told them that there were a lot more and bigger piñons there. This day

was different from the previous one, for my grandmother shared stories of our people. After she finished with several stories, including trickster stories, she talked about how life was when she was growing up. She talked about how she would have to walk to the Rio Grande River early in the morning to haul water for the day. These stories usually led to cultural teachings referencing moisture. I began to recite a story that I had learned from my grandfathers. The story was about a baby boy who had been left in the mountains by his mother and how a deer came to rescue the baby. While I was telling the story we continued to pick piñons. It seemed as if I was transported to the time when the story took place. I could sense their spirits as I recited this story, almost as if they were glancing from behind the trees.

When I concluded my story we decided to leave the mountains because the weather was changing. It began to get really cold, and it seemed like snow clouds were coming. I remember looking up towards the sky and seeing small snowflakes falling through the evergreen branches. I believe the deer spirits and the boy were happy to hear their story being told and in appreciation they must have requested that we return home and recite more stories to our family. During this time of snow we could tell winter stories, which included stories about the animal beings. Other oral traditional stories such as some trickster stories have fewer restrictions on the time of year one can recite them.

My grandmother said the spirits were happy to hear a young child retell the story and as appreciation the spirits had summoned the cloud people to bless us with snow.

She told my siblings to continue to pass on our stories so that the next generation would be blessed to know the wonders of the Pueblo world.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Corn as Alarm Clock

I remember as a teenager sometimes getting up late during the beginning of my summer vacation. My parents and grandfather Sh’Idyath didn’t like this habit I, like many Anglo-American adolescents, had acquired. So, one early morning before the sun peeked over the horizon, my siblings and I were taken to our grandfather’s field. We made our offerings before entering the corn’s home. When we finished, we were taken to the corn, and my father told us to select a ‘corn being’ (corn stalk) and stand near it. Once we selected and stood near ‘our’ selected ‘corn being,’ we were told a story of how the corn stalk acts as our personal alarm clock.

We were instructed by my father and grandfather to drink or lick the dew droplets that were present on one or two corn leaves. Once this was done we were told that when our ‘corn being’ woke up in the morning, so would we. ‘Our’ corn was said to instruct us to be alert, and would help us be ready for the day. One must be up before the sun rises to offer corn meal and prayer to the Sun. I was always told that in order to get things done, one must be up before the sun. If you get up after 8 o’clock in the morning your day is almost gone.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Being a Little Mother

Being one of the older siblings and cousins in my extended family, it was not only my responsibility to serve as a good example based on the teachings given to me as I grew, but also to be responsible for transmitting the stories I learned when I was about seven. I was encouraged to recite the stories that I had learned from my grandmother. This is a duty and obligation that I take very seriously. Being the oldest of my siblings and cousins, I am often referred to as, “tseyu” which means “first born.” The responsibility of a tseyu is to lead by example, living and practicing Pueblo philosophies, being knowledgeable of family relations, oral stories, Puebloan leadership, morals, and law. One must follow the Good Path daily.

My role is to advise and teach my younger siblings and cousins of our Puebloan rules, what one should and should not do, of our culture, making myself available if any of them should require my assistance. I share the responsibility of correcting their behaviors with our elders. When I became a teenager, whenever my parents would advise or correct a younger sibling, I was summoned to be present at the discussion. When my parents would finish advising, I had to inform my sibling that what they did strayed from the ‘good path’ and suggest possible solutions according to Puebloan customs and rules. Then I would encourage them to continue with the Puebloan concept

of the ‘good path.’ At these times I was taught to be objective and to incorporate my learning and understanding of Puebloan oral tradition into play.

The other added responsibility as the eldest child is that I have is to be a caretaker for my parents, aunts, and uncles. If anything were to change in my family unit makeup, I would be responsible for stepping into the role of a ‘sub-parent’ for my relations that are immediate extended family members. A first born, regardless of gender, has the same responsibility. My cousins who are first-borns have the same responsibility as I. However, since I’m the eldest of the ‘first-borns’ in my generation I am the one to help give advice or guidance as need be. The only training that I can think of that I was given to assume this role and responsibility was listening to oral narratives, stories and cultural knowledge on how to handle situations. Also understanding the concept of respect, responsibility, and having a strong mind which helps in walking the ‘good path.’

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

Kieya’s Story

I have chosen one humorous story to share in this section. It is a story that was told to me by my uncle Kieya. It contains dimensions of laughter, the recognition of important cultural norms, our inter-relatedness with non-human beings, and the need to maintain balance within one’s life.

On a hot summer day in Santo Domingo Pueblo, Kieya was hoeing the irrigation ditch located in his corn field. He had arrived earlier that morning to clear out the weeds so that he could irrigate later in the day.

It was about mid-morning when he noticed a little bird flying around. He didn't pay too much attention to this bird, because he was concentrating on the irrigation ditch. Meanwhile, the little bird kept flying up high and then swooping very low, almost hitting the ground. The entire time the little bird was trying to get Kieya's attention by flying carelessly. Kieya finally noticed this because he saw the little bird's shadow cast on the soil of the corn field. He turned and looked over his right shoulder and saw the little bird fly by and perch itself on the cottonwood tree that was in the corn field located near his summer hut. He still didn't pay much attention to the little bird until it started chirping and singing "Keiya ruku'ruq", in loose translation this means, "Keiya, you drunk".

Kieya at first didn't let it bother him because he was busy tending to his field. In the meantime the little bird sang its song again, each time louder than the last time. He finally got Keiya's attention. However that didn't stop Keiya from working on the ditch cleaning.

The little bird was determined to get Keiya's attention, so it sang louder and flew closer than before to where Keiya was working. Finally Keiya said to himself, "If that bird doesn't stop, I'm going home to get my slingshot!" The little bird flew back to the tree and continued singing, "Keiya ruku'ruq, Keiya ruku'ruq."

Keiya walked to his summer hut, placed his hoe near a chair, and began walking back to the village. It was 11 o'clock when he returned home and had lunch. Before he left again for the field, he went into his bedroom and retrieved his homemade slingshot.

While Keiya was walking back to his field, the little bird was flying around enjoying himself and had even gathered his friends to witness his name calling. The little bird told his friends that he had been teasing Keiya and had made him very angry. He also told them he was going to do it again so that they should stay and watch. They said okay, but just for a while.

When Keiya returned he picked up his hoe and went about his chores, noticing there were two more birds close to the original little bird. As Keiya started tending his field the little bird began chirping "Keiya ruku'ruq." Keiya became angry because this bird would not stop chirping the phrase, so he turned away from it³⁵. He reached into his pant pocket and took out the slingshot. The little bird didn't think anything about it and continued to sing while its friends grew curious then wary for they knew Keiya was up to something. They decided it would be best to leave, so they informed their friend and flew off.

In the meantime Keiya said, "I'll give him one more chance. If he sings it again; I'm going to kill him!" The little bird didn't say anything for about thirty minutes, then, all of a sudden out of nowhere it chirped quite fast, "Keiya ruku'ruq." Right then and there, Keiya turned around, reached into his pocket and drew his sling shot, pointing at

³⁵ I am not sure if he was mad at the bird because of the teasing or because the bird knew his secret.

the bird, and released the sling. The rock went at an incredible speed and killed the little bird immediately.

Keiya walked to the cottonwood tree and looked down at the ground and saw the little bird and said, “Ke’nu ruku’ruq” meaning, “You’re the one who is a drunk!”

There is a strong cultural interpretation for this story. In Anglo-American society Keiya would have been seen as displaying a lack of respect, arrogance, abusiveness, and impatience in his treatment of the bird. In American society Keiya should have been ashamed of his behavior and not told this story to his family members. The American interpretation of the bird’s behavior differs from a Santo Domingan interpretation as well; an Anglo-American might have suggested that the little bird was protecting a nest and that Keiya changed the dynamic of the bird’s family by killing it. However, in this particular story viewed through the Pueblo lens, the main storyline was of Keiya and his behavior as a drunk. It does not elaborate to include the bird as a male or female, or if the bird had a family or was protecting a nest of eggs. If this was important, these details would have been included in the storytelling.

It was not disrespectful for Keiya to share this story to his family as it was a way of having open dialogue of his ‘problem’ and how alcohol can negatively affect an individual in both physical and spiritual worlds. This story gave Keiya the opportunity to seek advice from others and to advise others not to be a part of this kind of behavior. The bird and Keiya both showed arrogance; the bird teasing him would have known the possible dangers of being killed. This is suggested by the flock of birds which retreated to safety. In the Pueblo lens it is acknowledged that the bird did die for its arrogance and

breaking boundary rules. However, in a Puebloan worldview it would be re-born and continue a new journey. In the Anglo-American worldview, it was simply dead and ceased to exist. The bird was a messenger sent to help Keiya walk the ‘Good Path.’

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

East: White – Early Adulthood

“You must always believe in our ways.”-Santo Domingo Saying

White Story

My Grandfather P’arIshan was a happy-go-lucky man, always making people laugh. He was an optimist.

I remember an instance when I was about seven and my younger brother Co ‘Win Kienath was about 2 years old. We were at the plaza watching the corn dances. It must have been at Easter time because it was a warm day and the sun was shining. I saw my grandfather P’arIshan walking towards the turquoise kiva, where we were watching, at his sister’s home. He came up and said, “Co’Win Kienath! Grandson, come with me.” And my aunt Margaret handed my brother to my grandfather. Concerned, I looked up at my grandfather, while a glaring white light from the sun was blocking my sight. I said, “But, he is not dressed to go in!” By this I meant that he was not wearing his Pueblo attire, which was needed to the dance. My grandfather said, with a comforting smile, “Don’t worry.” And he processed down the middle of the corn dance rows, with my little

brother in hand. I could see my brother's little hand in the distance, holding a small evergreen branch. He was mimicking the movements of my grandfather, who had been pointing and waving the evergreen branches, in accordance to the beat and words being sung by the singers. They were in the middle of the procession of the corn dancers, with my grandpa hollering in a Keres authoritative/encouragement voice to the dancers to dance hard. When the singers and dancers heard this admonition, they sang louder for the spirits of the natural elements surrounding them had entered their beings; the evergreen, the spiritual being of the corn and other Corn Dance associations were there with the People³⁶. As a child I could sense the power of the prayers radiating from the singers, dancers and the spectators watching the dance. Everyone was in tune with the spiritual world. Their belief in the Puebloan way of life and understanding allowed them to make a spiritual connection with our ancestral Puebloan world.

During Corn Dances if a grandmother, mother and/or aunt places a little girl in their laps, they position their hands on the little girl's wrists and guide her hands in a corn dancing movement as the dancers are in procession. This is to help the child learn the beats of the song and how to position her hands to the beat.

If women carry a little boy, the grandmothers, mothers and/or aunt will hum the melody of the song to the child, helping him hear the melody. Simultaneously, while they watch the dance, they would tip-toe, by lifting their feet towards the toes, lifting their lap, giving a bouncing-like affect for the child. This method, allows the boy to become familiar with how to 'step' dance in the Corn Dance, so he associates the song,

³⁶ I cannot elaborate more specifically on this.

beat and humming with the movement of the ‘bouncing’ made by the mother. These techniques are important ways Puebloan understanding of knowing is transmitted to a child; active participation helps them become accustomed to the cultural and social interactions associated with the Corn Dance. This is a Puebloan teaching method used for babies and young children so they learn and pleurably feel the basic levels of knowledge associated with the Corn Dance.

Reflecting on this now as an adult, I understand why my grandfather took my brother into the procession. It was for my brother to become familiarized with the vast elements associated with the Corn Dance. My brother was surrounded by the procession of the dancers, the drummer, the singers, and the ‘encourager’—my grandfather, as he made his way down the procession of the dancers.

My grandfather would not have been able to do this with his granddaughter since there are set restrictions on opposite gender associations in certain aspects of the Corn Dance. Had he danced as an ‘actual’ Corn Dancer, dressed in the male Corn Dance regalia, then his granddaughter could dance with him. She would be placed behind him, like others during the Corn Dance, a line position of male, and female, female, male. This too, would work for a grandmother and grandson. The grandson, however, would dance in front of his grandmother but behind her male dance partner. This is so that the child would observe and learn from the same gender, as he or she dances³⁷.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

³⁷ Puebloan teaching and learning involves a lot of observation and supervised participation and practice.

Zenith: Brown - Adulthood

“Understanding the foundational value nucleus helps one become fully aware of becoming Santo Domingan, helping in the development and awareness of the collective and core values of the family, clan, moiety, community and Santo Domingo worldview and epistemology.” –Estefanita L. Calabaza

Brown Story

My great-grandmother, YaO, was a strong Pueblo woman. She was always busy; even when she was 110 years of age she was still making fresh tortillas for her grandchildren. My great-grandmother made pottery with her daughter, NIyawin. When I was about eight, I recall running around outside with my cousins and stopping for an instant. I was looking up at my grandmother and great-grandmother in their small, shack. They both sat on stools, with shawls wrapped around their legs, sanding the brown pottery. Everything, including their soft rhythmic actions, looked so peaceful. My cousin Darva came towards me, and I asked her what they were doing. She said simply, “They’re making pottery.” I responded with a slow nod, saying ‘Oh.’ I observed them from afar awhile longer as they systematically sanded the pottery before I went back to play with my cousins. I recalled that the shapes of the pottery were beautifully proportioned and symmetrical. The designs depicted Santo Domingo figures such as birds and plants and geometric shapes. The process of creating the pottery was pleasing to the eye as they were creating art. While the pottery was still in the process of being

completed, however, we weren't allowed to admire the pottery's beauty until after the firing of the pots.

Years later, in my early adult years, I remembered this occasion. When I did, I mentioned to my relatives that I was interested in making pottery. So my father took me to the location where the sand and clay are obtained, places our family uses within the boundaries of Santo Domingo lands. When we got to the site to gather clay and sand for the pottery, we made corn meal offerings to the clay and sand, for we were extracting Mother Earth's flesh. Once we finished offering our thanks, we began to dig for the sand and clay, gathering only enough for pottery making. Once we finished gathering our materials, we went home. My dad told me that I had to sift the sand, removing small pebbles that could 'pop' in the firing process. I sifted the sand until it was fine, like flour, and only then was I able to mix my pottery mixture, sand and clay. Since this was my first time, I was told what to do and shown once by my father, Ca'Win how to mix my own clay. That is why observing is key; you listen to your surrounding and visualize what is happening in your environment. By having this skill, one instruction was suffice. Through trial and error, I mastered the consistency of my clay. Learning this new form of art, I also learned the taboos, rules, prayers, and stories associated with pottery making.

In our 'art' lessons, we were taught that one should not talk about the beauty of an unfinished pot as this may cause the ink of the paint to bleed or create smudges, or the pot might break during firing, or the firing wood would be wet and not ignite properly. This is one of many cultural rules set for the artist. Other taboos are associated with the

production of turquoise jewelry, paintings, weaving, and embroidery work, in short any artistic form. For example, Santo Domingans are not allowed to paint or draw human figures. If a Santo Domingo were to draw an individual's portrait or a specific human figure, the artist must illustrate the likeness of the subject. Basically the artist must draw the person exactly or direct harm will be placed on the artist³⁸. Other restrictions placed on Santo Domingans are known to all Santo Domingans through oral tradition and Puebloan law; for example, one must not depict sacred images of the Santo Domingo religion, culture or reptiles. These taboos and restrictions placed on art are for the continued continuity of the Puebloan belief therefore allowing individuals to remain in the state of humbleness. In addition, these parameters around art is intended to prevent waste, misuse, or mistreatment of materials used and to not take for granted the gifts given to us by our deities and the land. This prevents the artist becoming a know-it-all, bragger, attention-seeker, a show-off, arrogant or self-satisfied person, all characteristics unbecoming of a Puebloan who follows the Good Path.

Looking back at my grandmothers in their shack, I could tell by their mannerism and the movements of their mouths that they had engaged in conversation. It was a pleasant sight to see my grandmothers being respectful to one another. In retrospect their mother-daughter relationship was healthy. My grandmother was my great-grandmother's caretaker. She demonstrated another level of the concept of respect-- taking care of one's parent during old age. By witnessing this it had made me visualize what it would look like when I would become my parents' caretaker. It was inviting, the friendship,

³⁸ An example: if the artist does not draw the left side of the person's ear. The artist will lose his/her hearing on the left side. You must be an excellent and skilled artist if you want to paint human figures.

admiration, and affection radiated between those two that day. This caused me to look forward to my day as caretaker, however, I am not rushing this moment. But when it does come I will graciously accept the responsibility of being a caretaker to my parents/aunts/uncles. Since it is customary to care for ones parents or the person that raised you as a child, the child when he/she is older is honored to care for their parents/caretaker when they have reached old age. In Santo Domingo Pueblo, this is an indication of showing parental respect.

I was told of a case of disrespect that was shown to a mother from her adult son, who married and had his own children. This happened around the 1960s. He grew angry with his mother and disowned her. The mother, who was wise, said to her son. “Son, those are bold and strong words you’re using, I will honor your request. However, you must first...”, as she was completing her sentence she cupped her palm and presented it to her son and finished by saying, “fill my cupped palm with the breast milk that I fed you with as a child. Only then, will I grant you the separation you ask for.” Her son was shocked at the well thought-out response. He listened to those words carefully, and thought about what he had said to his mother. He realized that he had over stepped his right to speak to his mother in that fashion, demonstrating disrespect to her. He apologized to his mother and never uttered those angry words to her again. This man was in his late 40’s when he said this to his mother.

This personal narrative is about a man who was a couple years younger than my grandfather Sh’Idyath. My siblings and cousin knew this man. When we were told who the narrative was about we were shocked. Knowing made the lesson more personal,

making us realize that it really happened (in this world). It wasn't about a 'character' from our Pueblo oral stories. This narrative has and is still shared among community members when they advise their children on how to treat their parents, especially their mothers. We are taught that if it wasn't for our mother, we would not be here today, on this Earth, and as such we must give her the utmost respect. "...In Pueblo culture, these family stories are given equal recognition. There is no definite, preset pattern for the way one will hear the stories of one's own family [or other families], but it is a very critical part of one's childhood, and the storytelling continues throughout one's life" (Silko, Yellow Woman 51). We often hear stories like this where someone displays "bad behavior" and through Puebloan logic are brought back to the core of Puebloan understanding, that respect is to be valued and that one must view life as sacred. There are stories about two brothers and how one of them was extremely greedy, and then another of a lady who didn't want to recognize her brother's stepson as his son. These communal stories contribute to the vast Puebloan teaching systems by emphasizing respect, responsibility, proper behavior, and walking the 'good path.'

"Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?"

Foundational Values

The Puebloan path of life is created through the acknowledgment of the cosmos and spiritual entities making one a Santo Domingan. To understand the Puebloan worldview the following four generalizations are given as a Pueblo overview reference

from New Perspective on the Pueblos, edited by Alfonso Ortiz; who was Tewa. The first addresses space, order and boundaries.

The first generalization that can be made about the Pueblos is that they all set careful limits to the boundaries of their world and order everything within it. These boundaries are not the same but, more important, the principles of setting boundaries are since all use phenomena in the four cardinal directions, either mountains or bodies of water, usually both, to set them. ... All peoples try to bring their definitions of group space somehow into line with their cosmologies, but the Pueblos are unusually precise about it. (142)

The following discusses the understanding of the meticulous value of Puebloan space:

This precision has many, almost inexhaustible, implications because the Pueblos attempt to reproduce this mode of classifying space on a progressively smaller scale. Since all space is sacred and sacred space is inexhaustible, these models of the cosmos can be reproduced endlessly around them. (142)

Ortiz adds another dimension or generalization, the Pueblos understanding of the concept of center:

All the Pueblos also have a well-elaborated conception and symbolization of the middle or center of the cosmos, represented by a *sipapu*, an earth navel, or the entire village. Usually there are many different centers because sacred space can be recreated again and again without ever exhausting its reality. ... Among the Pueblos, the center is the point of intersection of the six directions, with a seventh being the center itself. (142)

In the following quote, Ortiz explains the interconnected relationships of a very active Puebloan cosmos composed of time and space and place:

...Pueblo conception of causality is that everything—animate and inanimate—counts and everything has its place in the cosmos. ... Thus everything in the cosmos is believed to be knowable and, being knowable, controllable. ... Among human beings the primary causal factors are

mental and psychological states; if these are harmonious, the supernaturals will dispense what is asked and expected of them. If they are not, untoward consequences will follow just as quickly, because within this relentlessly interconnected universal whole the part can affect the whole, just as like can come from like. (143)

One other aspect is the dimension of up and down also known as zenith and nadir, which was depicted in the model in Figure 1 (page 19). Pueblos see all directions including up and down as important. By understanding this general knowledge of the Puebloan worldview, one will understand the process of becoming Santo Domingan.

After a child is born they are presented to the sun. “The sun is everywhere the father and primary fertilizing agent in the cosmos while the earth is the [one of the many Puebloan] mother [s, in Santo Domingo belief system]” (A. Ortiz 144). Once presented to the Sun, the child offers his or her ‘breath’ to their father, the Sun. The Sun acknowledges the breath with his rays beaming, and embraces the child as his own. This is the establishment of an unbreakable bond, of one becoming a Santo Domingo individual. At this moment, the establishment of this bond and the child’s recognition by the cosmos and the community, the baby begins a lifelong obligation to the community and family. This foundational value is reflected in this ritual. Breath, Corn, Hair, and Family are actualized and made visible as the core value of belonging, which starts at the first greeting of the Sun with one’s breath, sealing one’s identity in both the physical and spiritual realms. As recognition of this bonding it is the responsibility of individuals to activate it daily. Upon awakening all individuals must greet the sun. This symbolizes the establishment of an animate and inanimate relationship between human and sun. In Anglo-American society the sun would be an inanimate object, non-living while humans

as animate, living and thinking beings. In Puebloan society the Sun and Humans are both animate. However, multi-layered understanding of this connection has an innate bond that was established before the child was born into this world. In the ancestral Puebloan world the inherent bond of Pueblo child and Sun already exist, and are now re-established in the physical world.

This naming ceremony for humans entering this world reconnects the existing abstract and individualized relationship, by having the child, give his/her breathe to their father. This then allows the Puebloan deities to reaffirm the intricate relationship they already share with humans. The Puebloan deities will then begin communication and teaching the child. The child's parents are responsible for teaching a new child the Puebloan life ways of each distinctive Puebloan community. Simultaneously the child too, will be taught as he/she is transported back to the ancestral Puebloan world, while he/she is asleep. It is said that deities teach one while dreaming. Usually when children are about to fall asleep, a parent or grandparent will sing to the child. This soothes and may help transport the child back to the ancestral world. While there the child may be taught through song, prayer and observation from the ancestral teachers/elders. This ebb and flow of training continues only for a short period of time, probably until the age of three or four. After this age, the child will rely on his/her parents as educators. This shift implies that the Puebloan deities, Corn Mother and Father Sun, have spiritually taught the child tools to survive in this world and has advised the child that he or she will eventually return 'home,' to the ancestral world, when they reach old age. It is also our deities' way of allowing the child's parents to guide the children in this world, just as the farmer cares

for his corn children, by reinforcing and helping them understand and comprehend Puebloan teachings, epistemological and philosophical thought. The shift is also a part of a physiological difference; children are believed to start practicing what they are taught after the age of three or four.

According to Puebloan belief, all Pueblos are to walk the ‘good path,’ relying on oral tradition, prayer and belief as expressed in each Pueblo religion. All these elements will help guide the individual through this world. In Puebloan belief an individual walking the ‘good path’ will be blessed with longevity. It is said that a healthy child should never pass away before his/her parents. If an accidental death occurs at a young age, the child was either emotionally abandoned by his/her parents or spiritual ailments may have transpired.³⁹

Breath

In Santo Domingo Pueblo culture our teachings demonstrate that one core of educational teachings is to become a good member of society and a person who knows and understands the culture and can function following its rules and moral dictates. This is a type of education that anthropologists term enculturation and it is conveyed through living, observation, peer pressure and direct instruction. For the Pueblos the essence of life itself is through one’s breath. The concept of breath, “consciously formed and activated through language, thought, prayer, chanting, ritual, dance, song, work, story, play and art—[comprise] the parameters of communication in Tribal education” (Cajete,

³⁹ It is hard to explain the nuances of this sensitive phenomenon. I will only say that the medicine men of the Puebloan community will explain the reason.

Mountain 43). It is through breath that relationships with the cosmos are established. Subsequently, the Puebloan deities will breathe back knowledge to an individual, sanctifying and allowing the person to begin to understand the dimensions of living and life as it relates to breath, which in turn promotes Puebloan education, later allowing the individual to learn western standards and concepts while maintaining the critical understanding of Puebloan life ways and philosophical paradigm.

When an individual understand that life is made up of both inanimate and animate objects/beings they will understand that living is comprised of both the physical and spiritual worlds. In life we apply and demonstrate Puebloan principles and beliefs that help in distinguishing the existence of Puebloan living. Combining the three aspects of breath, living, and life allows one to understand the multi-facets of Puebloan education/thought. Understanding the complexity of breath will then allow the learner to comprehend other higher levels of knowing and understanding. It is through comprehension of breath and belief that the individual can nourish his/her mind with information. Santo Domingo Philosophy encompasses the understanding of having a strong mind which helps an individual walk toward and on the good path. By doing so, the individual will maintain balance and harmony within their environments and within the cosmos. The end result is that everything will be in a harmonious and beautiful state. Belief in Santo Domingo stems from these key components. Once grounded one understands the Puebloan worldview, universe and cosmos and how all natural and cosmic focuses work to keep the individual in a constant state of harmony, balance and beauty. The example of the naming ceremony demonstrates a small aspect of a highly

developed understanding of the interconnected relationship of breath to life, living, animate and inanimate objects.

Many Anglo-Americans are detached from this concept of breath. They confuse “breath” with breathing—an automatic physical function, and think that as something that is done unthinkingly, it is not important to teaching. Many Americans believe that one’s own breath is just an involuntary human process that keeps one alive and as such can be taken for granted. Few would think of it as the critical essence of the life force of learning. Santo Domingan elders understand that “breath” is the core of our Indigenous knowledge that is translated through learning. The essence of breath is the foundation for a culture, a tradition, a people’s history, and way of life. Breath in Santo Domingo Pueblo is like words in the bible. Breath makes everything concrete. Once breath is included in a prayer it binds the individual to the prayer and makes the connection with the deity/spirit being prayed too. Breath is not just automatic. Some individuals in Western societies recognize this, but they tend to ignore it. To take a “deep breath” is to calm and center oneself, to be at peace and thoughtful. But too many people speak and breathe without thinking. They multitask and do not concentrate on what is important and should be done with critical thought.

How can “breath” carry so much meaning? I believe there are two forms of breath. One is that which keeps us alive and the other is the notion that the entity of breath keeps an individual’s spirit thriving in a rich, complex culture which is intertwined with knowledge and wisdom, dating back to time immemorial. It is one’s own being of where one is from and where one came from. Breath is your past, your present, and your

future. It is a force of life, and therefore, sacred. By understanding this, it seems natural to a Santo Domingan to, by extension, understand life and its teachings.

Breath and the Spoken Word

One form of communication is language which stems from breath. Each language is a vehicle of communication and from the sacredness, in the sense that each language is alive---animate, of each language comes forth different modules and possibilities of teaching. This is the reason Indigenous language maintenance programs emphasize that “language is sacred because it is an expression of the Holy Wind that exists as the breath of life in each person” (Cajete, Mountain 53). In Santo Domingo language is an expression and gift from our creator.⁴⁰ To most Americans, certain words and concepts may be sacred and should be spoken or breathed life into with care, but there is no idea that all of language is sacred and full of life because of giving breathe. Because of this different understanding, Indigenous people respect the life force of breath, which gives them hope of language and cultural survival in modern times, especially when languages are conscientiously and actively maintained.

Learning and understanding the importance of breath enables Pueblo children to understand its power to heal and center, and to create action and personal responsibility, to activate respect, as well as reinforce their Puebloan identity. Breath then provides a foundation for understanding the complexity of words situated in moving air that are galvanized by the individual through speech as it relates to language, belief systems,

⁴⁰ The story or creator’s name will not be divulged here since it is only to be told under certain conditions and at certain times of year which cannot be honored here.

identity and other Puebloan core values, relationships and behaviors. When a Puebloan does not understand the context of breath it becomes difficult for that individual to grasp the ideologies comprising Pueblo worldviews. Individuals that do not understand this context cannot fully understand the essence of the cosmos, and the relationships made through oral tradition, such as song, dance, stories, art, and even joking, word play and teasing. Individuals who lack this knowledge are generally those who have attended middle and/or high school out of state or away from the Pueblo. In these cases their parents were not given the time and proper setting to pass on fundamental knowledge. In other cases some individuals unfortunately simply do not want to learn from their parents/elders while growing up, resulting in a lack of understanding of this fundamental teaching. For example, cornmeal is used for prayers, while corn pollen is reserved for other ceremonial practices.⁴¹ The comprehension of core concept understandings comes over time as individuals mature and learn through living, including making mistakes and learning from them.

Between the ages of four and twelve, children are taught stories and songs and actively encouraged to participate in cultural dances and functions, that range from communal hunting, to communal services such as cleaning ditches, sweeping the village grounds, and dancing. By the time of adolescence Puebloans should have a deeper understanding of the culture. At this time, they are given more independence. Adolescents begin to help other community members or participate in cultural events

⁴¹ Further information will not be shared.

without being told to. During these years they are being taught more sophisticated knowledge from everyday knowledge to specialized knowledge.

Breath and Cornmeal

The different Pueblos of New Mexico have belief systems that center on the ideology of their Corn Mothers. All Pueblo people pray with corn meal, placing their own breath upon the meal to give it power through unspoken prayer. This activity insures that Corn Mother and other deities recognize and acknowledge the individual when he/she is praying to them. The corn meal is a vehicle that transmits the breath of the individual and its prayer to the spirits/deities prayed to. The spirits/deities are not infused in the cornmeal.

Keeping in mind my desire to help convey the importance of foundational values that strengthen Puebloan identity, by creating and implementing a linguistic and culturally sound program, I should note that before any instruction happens, a requirement would be that all individuals, both students and instructors, understand the importance and sacredness of the complexity of breath. By accomplishing this, the intended language and culture program will have the blessing and help of the entire Puebloan world, including that of deities, who will help with the teachings when addressed appropriately through breathe, prayer and offerings of cornmeal. By acknowledging this world of the supernatural as well as the help of community elders and the keepers/practitioners of the language, an instructor will acknowledge and convey how to respect the power of breath. By creating this foundational base, Puebloan education

will then be understood in the three core realms of learning--physical, mental, and spiritual. After learning, recognizing, understanding, and respecting the complexity of 'breath,' the curriculum subjects of art, science, agriculture, and music, songs, history and other important topics will engage the learners in the richness of Puebloan education and they will see each topic's integration with and reinforcement of the others. For example, understanding weather patterns via landscapes, draws upon specialized knowledge. This knowledge has the student understand the interconnectedness of science as it relates to geography. Furthermore, by understand this, a student will understand planting patterns, which is agriculture, all the while incorporating language and music and songs. This will then become an elaborated subject as oral history will be used to teach history of time immoral all the way to present Santo Domingo Pueblo history.

If individuals understand the concept of breath in the Keresan school setting—as a place where breath can be properly used and understood—it will be easier for children to learn to respect and understand the surrounding environment, see the atmosphere, animal and plant worlds, and inanimate and animate objects as a unification of the cosmos held together by breath. Reinforcement and repetition in Puebloan teachings is done to assure that listeners are consistently active in retaining the pertinent information that is given each time knowledge is disclosed. Also, repetition occurs to see if the listener is respectful enough to gain more knowledge. It may become redundant to the listener but the listener must remain attentive. If the listener answers or suggests he or she knows the information already, the teacher then will refuse to teach or give more advanced knowledge to the individual. This will also be detrimental to the listener as other teachers

will withhold from offering any information to the listener. In essence, repetition and reinforcement serve as dual processes in addition to ensuring that information importance is understood. It demonstrates respect and humility on the part of an active learner.

Corn

In Santo Domingo Pueblo, corn is one of the most revered agricultural crops. It has been planted each year since time immemorial, from the time of emergence into this world and well into the 21st century. Great care is taken when planting, cultivating, nurturing, and harvesting the corn; in short, dedicated carefulness is required in all steps of the growth process in which humans take an active part. This carefulness constitutes respect and paying homage to their Corn Mother. Both men and women partake in ceremonial rituals to insure the prosperity and well-being of the corn kernels as they are carefully and successfully planted. Their prayers and breath are as important as physically planting the seed, watering and weeding.

Some of these human activities are gender specific, reflecting the established cultural and communal obligations outlined in the Santo Domingo worldview. These include the preparation of the irrigation ditches, discussed in the ‘West: Blue – Childhood’ section where I mentioned the interplay of gender specific activities associated with planting, an example of the power of the female and male beings. The power of each gender’s breath actively helps in the nourishment of the corn crops thereby helping in the maturing phases of the corn being. People of both genders, young and old, alike, offer prayers for the rain clouds to nourish the plants.

Since human beings are Corn Mother's children, she relies on her human children to care for her and her corn children during each planting season. Both genders share specialized roles in the blessing and preparation of the planting season. The males' role is to serve as a parental figure to the corn, which 'now' become the cultivator's corn children. His role is to care for 'his corn children'—his plants—by singing and talking to them. Male breath is powerful in the sense that it awakens the 'corn children,' motivating and inspiring them to grow strong so that they may feed 'their' brother and sisters. As the plants listen to their 'dad' and grow up strong they demonstrate respect towards him.

This human and plant dynamic is another indication of the Pueblo philosophy that everything is related. This interconnected relationship shifts from the plant being the parental figure to the plant becoming the child. The role reversal is due in part to the role of the women. Before the corn kernels are planted, the farmer takes the seeds to a female relative who has the power to bless the corn kernels by 'spiritually fertilizing' them in a particular Santo Domingan ritual. The woman is 'birthing' the corn children⁴². The farmer then plants the 'corn children' symbolizing their birth. Once the farmer has planted the seeds, their relationship dynamic shifts slightly. These human gendered relationships and moving from activity in the female to male roles parallel the roles of Mother Earth and Father Sun in agriculture and fertility; the shift allows Mother Earth and Father Sun to physically fertilize and birth the corn. By placing the corn kernels in the 'womb' of Mother Earth, Father Sun is able to bless the ground and complete the

⁴² I will not disclose more about the 'ritual' as this is restricted information.

‘physical fertilization’ of the ‘corn children.’ The ‘corn children’ are blessed and fertilized both in the physical and spiritual realms. Now the children will ‘grow’, relying heavily on prayers from male and female breath as well as water and sunshine.

The female breath, like the male, encourages the ‘corn children’ to grow. However, women pray for them from the village because they might not be able to be at the corn fields every day during germination. The female relies on the father, the Sun, to send her prayers to the proper deities so that the ‘corn children’ will be blessed with nourishment. This elaborate relationship, composed of physical and spiritual beings, is significant for the well-being of the corn beings and Corn Deities. As the corn matures the dynamics then reverts back to the children becoming the Mothers. As the corn ages, it becomes fertile and capable of nourishing her children.

Boys are taught from childhood through their adolescent years by observation and hands-on activities how to plant and care for these crops. They are also instructed in making fertilizer (an organic protecting agent), how to determine when the crops need to be irrigated, and the time of germination of the various types of corn. Girls are also educated about the concepts of corn, their roles as female beings and their connection to the corn sacrament. They are taught and trained how to perform certain specialized planting rituals to ensure that the corn is properly fertilized and also how to make various dishes from corn. Like boys, this takes lots of practice.

Each Puebloan child is duty-bound by the ancient Puebloan law of identity and values to learn about corn. “In Pueblo tradition, corn is a symbolic representation of a whole complex of agricultural [practices] and gathered foods that have been a part of

pueblo adaptation to the southwestern environment” (Cajete, Ecology 95). By gaining a watchful eye and an attentive ear, children begin to acquire ancestral knowledge through observation and stories told to them by their extended family members. These are all uttered in the presence of the corn entity. Since children are taught at the corn fields, they come to understand the complexity and interconnectedness of agriculture as a process and suite of activities that includes prayer, proper roles, corn, and breath. In turn, this stands for the interrelatedness of all of life.

In Puebloan culture, corn also functions as a mnemonic device by instructing and reinforcing Puebloan identity, foundational and core values through the process of planting and caring of the crop, which is similar to an individual’s life cycle. Each year, a new generation of kernels is planted, and each year children are taught the continued importance of corn, and each year the people are fed. This also enforces that all of life is a repeating cycle.

The life force of corn is interwoven with the concept of breath. To comprehend the notion that corn and breathe connect the spirit of the Pueblos to their past, present and future, one must understand corn’s connection to breath. This can be illustrated by Hopi philosophy. The “Hopi [have] through understanding [...] life and breath of corn, [...] established an elemental spiritual connection between themselves and this sacramental plant” (Cajete, Mountain 103). This is demonstrated in the life cycles of corn and the human being. According to Hopi culture, corn depicts and mirrors human life cycles. For that reason, Hopis integrate corn in all stages of their lives. All other Pueblo cultures do likewise. At birth, “cornmeal, the most precious substance to the

Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, is rubbed on newborns. Among the Hopi in Arizona, maize rituals preceded the naming of a new baby” (Berzok 132). Corn remains vital during all stages of one’s life, through every day prayer to the coming of age ceremony, from marriage to passing to the next realm. For example, “[at] Hopi, the girls had to grind maize ceremonially for four days” (Berzok 132) and make a large baked cake for their families to demonstrate they know how to prepare and cook corn. This notion demonstrates the importance of the female connection to corn mother as a nurturer.

Corn is the body that infuses all breath to carry blessings to the Pueblo people. It is the medium that allows Puebloans to communicate between this world and the next, also to the past and ancestors. Like other food offerings, corn, cornmeal, and corn pollen act as the mediator of natural and spiritual forces. For example, “a token gift of food to the spirits was a ritual requirement in most tribes as a sign of reciprocity and respect. Among the Zuni, before eating a meal, diners took a piece of food from the pot with their fingers and breathed on it. Then they recited in union, “Receive! [Oh, souls of] my ancestry and eat” (Berzok 153). This same concept is seen in cornmeal offerings at Santo Domingo.

Corn is heavily incorporated in all Puebloan observances, and is “celebrated in pueblo [sic] planting, harvesting, and rain-bringing dances...” (Cajete, Ecology 95). Corn Dances are held at specific times during the Puebloan calendar year: “these dances [relate] to germination, maturation and the harvesting of crops as well as praying for the New Year” (Berzok 167). If one observes a Corn Dance closely, one notices that the shadow cast by a Puebloan maiden dancer is actually a mirror of the corn’s silhouette as

as a silhouette of a woman dancing in the shadow of her kin female. The Puebloan maiden dancer and her shadow are thus a dual symbol. Important oral teachings including how to recognize and interpret Puebloan symbolic imagery, is thus revealed through the Puebloan corn maiden dancers' regalia which depicts the abstract image of the corn maiden as seen in the shadow silhouette. This duplication and mirroring reinforces Puebloan identity and foundational values of breath and corn.

Corn is vital to the sustainability of the Puebloan worldview; it is the element that connects all Pueblos to their ancestral, spiritual, and cultural worlds. It is "a symbolic entity that [cradles] the entire psyche and spiritual orientation of Pueblo people" (Cajete, Mountain 103). Farmers prize each corn plant that is grown and each color of each corn ear. To a farmer corn and colors are like gold; the beauty of white, blue, red, yellow, multi-colored and miniature corn brings joy to a farmer. These colors are pure and right because the farmer's mother has blessed the crop with beauty. Farmers decorate their homes by tying together each corn color that incorporates the six sacred directions since each corn represents each color and direction. This beautifies the farmer's home.

Hair

After an understanding of the combined concept of corn and hair is reached, the next foundation value, hair, can be understood. In Santo Domingo Pueblo, hair is regarded as a sacred element, a representation of life, affluence, strength, rain, and beauty. Understanding breath and corn helps reveal the structured dimensions of hair

because it links the understanding of growth in the thematic insight of life and living.

This is parallel to the conceptual knowledge of breath, corn and hair.

The concept of breath emphasized the comprehension of spiritual growth and the ability to understand increasingly complex and layered knowledge. Similarly, corn was the representation of spiritual and physical development demonstrating the intimate relationship of life. Both worlds relied on one another in the process of creating, protecting and nourishing life symbolized by corn and its life cycle. On top of these two layers, hair is the physical and personal connection to oneself that infuses the intellectual capacity of the collective awareness of life.

Hair is representative of life; for example, the length of one's hair demonstrates an individual's acquired wealth, the knowledge one has acquired, or advice that has been given to one through oral tradition. When advice or wisdom is transmitted to individuals, the 'spoken words' or 'entity of breath' spiritually infuses the knowledge, blessings, and/or advice into each strain of hair. This process allows the individual to become spiritually and knowledgeably in tune with Puebloan instruction.

The connection between corn and hair is actualized through oral performance. In the Puebloan corn dance, both men and women let down their hair; this is a call for rain that the deities recognize, just as people are recognized through their breath. The hair during this ritual represents the elements of water and beauty. Long, free flowing hair sways with the beat of the drum and movements of the dancer. If one looks closely, one will see the resemblance of hair to water, an essential fluidity. When one looks at water and sees the sun beams touching the waves of the water, one can visualize the same

smooth caress on the hair of the dancers. The gleaming sun rays strokes a person's shiny, long, black hair, paralleling the sun rays on the water in abstract form.

Because hair is considered sacred, it is also protected. Within families, there will be members that consistently make sure hair cutting or altering of any kind is kept to a minimum. While I was growing up, my great-grandmother, YaO, made sure that my siblings' and cousins' hair was not cut too short or dyed. I remember when I was a teenager, I had put my hair in a ponytail and she thought I had cut my hair. My aunts suggested I take down my ponytail and demonstrate to her that I had not cut it. I did just that. After I showed her that I hadn't cut my hair, she was content.

In the different Pueblos, there are culturally specific ways to style one's hair; there are also differences based on gender, marital status, age and situation. In Corn Dances the hair is let down, in other dances it is put up in a "chongo," the Puebloan term for the style where the hair is held in place at the nape of the neck, folded up and then tied with yarn or a small sash belt. Hair styles also visualize identity within a specific Pueblo territory. While each Pueblo may use the 'chongo,' the style in how it is worn and tied identifies residence and citizenship. Hair styles may also demonstrate social status. For example, in Hopi, when a young girl is coming of age, her "hair is up in two whorls at each side of her head" (Hays-Gilpin 200). The various hairstyles of each Pueblo community have culturally specific meanings as well. As an example of identity, the Hopi coming-of-age hair style represents "the butterfly [, these] hair whorls are the key symbol of maidenhood" (Hays-Gilpin 201).

In Santo Domingo Pueblo there are several oral teachings and stories centered on the concept of hair. These stories depict hair as a protecting agent, a speaker of life and beauty. Hair is also used as a protector in scenarios that can cause shielding or hiding of weapons while in war. Since hair is viewed as a living entity, it is crucial for a person to care for it. Your hair shows self-respect and giving respect to the family. There are families in Santo Domingo who have daughters, all with long, black hair. Community members admire their hair and encourage their family members to grow and have healthy hair. Hair, as speaker of life, demonstrates that one's hair is like a personal journal; it retains and holds all information, teachings, stories and advice acquired while maturing.

By understanding breath, corn and hair together, one can appreciate family and personhood. Unfortunately, today with the constant stream of trendy hair fashions, younger Puebloans tend to ignore the concept of long natural hair (not tampered with unnecessarily) and stray from the community's foundational value. This is a sign of disrespect for these individuals are not taking notice of their life force, the personal element that 'houses' all one's knowledge is in each strand of hair. Your hair is like a library—a depository of the vast, sophisticated Puebloan knowledge collected throughout the years of 'research'/learning from Puebloan teachers. To cut one's hair is to say that these teachings are no longer as important as being fashionable. There are certain instances that one may cut their hair. These instances include cutting your hair as a sign of mourning, or when one begins a renewed start from a negative experience one experience such as being in prison, coming home from the military, or after having cancer treatment. Trimming the hair purges the negative credence that averted the

individual from Puebloan teachings. And another reason would be if one's hair causes tension on the individual's head, as long thick hair may become heavy. In Santo Domingo, hair demonstrates respect to Santo Domingo culture, philosophy and rules by the way an individual reveres his or her own head of hair. The maintenance and length of the hair suggests a Puebloan has a personal connection and respect to Corn Mother and other Puebloan deities. It also associates the individual to the collective group.

Hair is a critical element for understanding Puebloan identity, the maintenance of identity and the need for a person to work at or look after that identity daily; with hair you are identifiable within your community and within the Puebloan world. Remember what happened when I wore my ponytail? Breath, corn, and hair help one to understand the strict discipline of Puebloan authority, what an individual must constantly do to maintain balance and way of life.

After understanding and respecting these first three foundational values, one can gain foundational understanding of the next concepts, family and personhood.

Family

In Puebloan cultures, the concept of family not only encompasses one's nuclear or extended family, but extends outward and includes the clan, moiety, community, animals, birds, and everything that stems from breath, including oral tradition relations that tie people to Grandmother Spider, Father Sun, and Corn Mother. An understanding of the combined concepts of breath, corn, and hair enables one to understand the interconnected

dimensions of family in Pueblo society, as well as its importance to the maintenance of Puebloan identity and the understanding of the holistic foundational values.

As stated above, the concept of hair teaches one to protect and care for oneself by adhering to a strict discipline with constant awareness and thoughtfulness. This is similar to the thoughtfulness and awareness one develops by respecting breath. This same attention to, concentration on and responsibility to thoughtful awareness and care is seen in interactions in the immediate family. To respect and live with discipline helps one to respect and strengthen the family unit. It includes constant attention to performing one's gendered and age specific duties and exercising responsibility to care for and nurture the family and by extension all relatives. From this center care extends outward to the entire community, the deities and all beings in the Santo Domingo world. The following stories are examples of community input to ensure that necessary respectful care is demonstrated and that individuals are centered in Puebloan values. Discussed earlier in this chapter, under 'West: Blue –Childhood,' was the story about the church warden telling us to go home and the stories about doing 'home' work verses school homework. In Chapter 2, the story under the title 'My Day' exemplified communal responsibility for correcting or advising children, irrespective of whether they are your immediate family members. It is one that elders take seriously. As the eldest in my family, I am continually instructed to be a responsible care taker to my younger siblings and cousins. This training includes being objective when dealing with situations, and incorporating Puebloan knowledge, especially Santo Domingo philosophy, values and oral tradition to remedy or help guide my siblings in situation that may arise. The collective whole or family unit's obligation

is to help reassure by aiding family and community members in their continuous journey of walking the ‘good path’ and maintaining a strong mind.

Although one is born into a family and placed in the cradle this doesn’t necessarily mean that the individual automatically is born or becomes respectful. One is taught the foundational values in order to understand what respect is and how it is to be expressed through the various concepts and collective values I have discussed earlier. Understanding this, individuals view the family, clan, moiety, and community unit as a whole. That which is integrated with all of life and the cosmos through the understanding of Pueblo worldview, helps one walk the ‘good path,’ know intimately the foundation values, and act in accordance with them.

Family interaction in intergenerational groups is important to the continued transmission of Puebloan knowledge. Santo Domingo Puebloans cherish mealtime with the whole family. This is a time to come together and enjoy the company of the family. At each meal different people sit at the dinner table; a neighbor or a friend from the nearby Pueblos could stop by and visit. During meal time nothing should interfere with...—not the harried schedule of sports practice, going to the mall, or other activities that seem to now run and overrun Anglo-American lives. There are also no distractions. No reading the newspaper, no TV or iPods or texting is allowed at the dinner table when we are having our meals. Food is served in several bowls, having everyone “[consuming] out of a communal bowl. People talk a little, but [focus] on [the] fairness of the process” (Berzok 131). Santo Domingo is known for this practice and was sometimes referred to as “SD one dish” in the past. This was by no means considered a disrespectful or

disparaging designation, but demonstrated that when a family eats and shares together so will their family bond. It will be strengthened, and certain values such as fairness, working as a single unit for the betterment of all will be daily reinforced. People also recognize the importance of communally consuming food, as mealtime is valued by the family as a time to share personal information and discuss issues important to the family or community, as well as advising and sharing cultural knowledge. This was discussed in a previous story.

Nadir: Black - Elders

“The core of life is breath. To understand it and value it will help one grasp the importance and sacredness of an ancient understanding that encompasses respect, beauty, balance and harmony in this world and the multi-dimensional world of the Santo Domingans.” –Estefanita L. Calabaza

Black Story

In each Pueblo, color is associated with each direction, part of an elaborate association system that includes an animal, bird, and corn maiden as well⁴³. This thesis mentions color but I will not elaborate on the underlying meanings and associations of each color, due to the request of my elders who feel the information is not to be shared with those who have not been trained in Santo Domingo philosophy and cosmology. Sacred geography has aspects that depict the importance of oral history/tradition as heard

⁴³ There are more associations, but this information will not be disclosed due to cultural restriction.

in dimensional particular songs and stories. It is important to note, however, that although color in this thesis was not the main focus, it was the structure of color that guided my writing and organization, bringing balance to my Pueblo voice, and honoring the associated direction.

The following story is about my grandmother Niyawin's eldest child, 'estefanita.' In this story I purposely spelled 'estefanita' using a lower case 'e' to demonstrate that she is a little girl. Reflecting on color and tying all the color stories together, I will share the last conversation I had with my grandmother about her little girl, estefanita. When I was younger she would tell me of the day estefanita 'went to sleep'. She would always tell me that she remembered that day. Grandmother said that before estefanita 'went' she glanced and saw her looking at a small brook that the ditch created. My grandmother recalls that it was a hot day and that estefanita was not outside too long. She remembers estefanita holding a small stick and playing with it, placing the stick in the water as she bent her knees. In a squatting position and looking at the water. estefanita tilted her small head and glanced at the water trickling down. My grandmother said that estefanita looked so peaceful. A short amount of time had elapsed when my grandmother went to check on estefanita. My grandmother saw estefanita lying down near the water. She had gone to sleep.

Throughout the years, my grandmother would feel this story. With each rendition, she would share a few more details each time. When I was a young adolescent, she shared with me that estefanita had heat stroke. When she told me this I felt so hurt,

hearing the pain in my grandmother's voice. I would always look at her and we would share a certain glance that assured her that it was okay.

Years passed and I didn't hear any more stories about estefanita. However, while growing up, I always felt a connection to her. I was always told that I resembled her, having the same mannerisms, quietness, fair complexion and brunette hair. When my grandmother became ill, about a month or two before her passing, she shared some last information about estefanita. This time she started with how beautiful that summer Pueblo day had been, and how happy estefanita had been. She was going to wear the new dress her mother had made and her new shoes. On the day that my grandmother told me this story, it too was a beautiful, sunny day in Santo Domingo, and we were at the kitchen table in my house. My mother joined us, and she shared with me hearing about the day little estefanita went home. Grandmother went on to tell of estefanita getting dressed in her pretty yellow dress and new black shoes before going outside. My grandmother remembered telling her to be careful. And in her little voice, estefanita answered, "Okay." My grandmother retold the part of the story about the ditch breaking and creating a little stream of water flowing down the road. After my grandmother told me that story, she looked up at me, and I smiled and told my grandmother, "Grandma, you know my favorite color is the pretty yellow (between the shades of pastel yellow, canary yellow and sunshine)." I was surprised to learn of how estefanita had passed away in yellow, my favorite color! My grandmother's eyes filled with a sense of peace and glee. It was as if her estefanita was truly with her. I believe she knew she had to finish estefanita's story.

This story reinforces the value of the elder's voice. The inter-generational relationship between grandchild and grandparent establishes a connection that helps a person deal with what can be expected in life. Storytelling can also help the narrator deal with difficult issues, when they are ready to talk about and deal with issues they are not yet at peace with.

By establishing this personal relationship as expressed through learning, listening, interacting with the speaker appropriately, and observing, I was able to understand the spoken and unspoken details of this story and also learn about the different levels of the afterlife and its world. By listening to the story and thinking about other Pueblo teachings, I was taught that estefanita was still living; she was in the ancestral Puebloan world. By acknowledging and listening each time my grandmother retold the story of her little girl, I gained invaluable information of her personal stories, her feelings, how to deal with grief, as expressed in the additional details added with each rendition. Another important element of the elder's voice, oral tradition, and one-on-one teachings permitted me to observe my natural environments and understand the spiritual world that was part of these environments, times and places. This helped me to create and re-create the images and imagery of the oral tradition worlds, the Puebloan world of the deities, and the ancestral world from which we emerged and to which we would return. This method of teaching is beneficial to the continuance of oral tradition transmission because it builds upon each telling and recognizes when the listener is ready to know and think about/reflect upon new details. Learning to understand is a personal process and the teller helps the listener to incorporate new dimensions found in deeper layers of a story,

to recognize and make connections with each new layer of detail. The way that the story of estefanita progressed through the years demonstrates the repetitive yet continually newly nuanced nature of Santo Domingo teaching techniques. Through oral narratives, oral tradition, personal stories, laughter, and cultural examples, I understood and learned from my grandmother that I had some traits from my aunt, estefanita. The Santo Domingo believe if a baby is named after a departed loved one, that ancestor came back home (to this world). The new born is his/her own being, although the child will possess physical features, characteristics or personal traits of the departed loved one⁴⁴. This is not reincarnation; Santo Domingo does not believe in this concept.

“Now, it is your turn to interpret this story. What lesson or lessons did you learn or gain from this story?”

My Reflections on These Concepts

Each personal experience in my journey represents the footprints of Puebloan teachings that have influenced my understanding of foundational values: Breath, Corn, Hair, and Family. These foundational values also revealed other values or important cultural concepts such as the ‘good path,’ respect, responsibility, observation, food, authoritative voice, and oral tradition. After reflecting on each personal story, it was easy for me to use a Santo Domingo lens and the foundational values that I was taught growing up to analyze my thoughts and feelings. Each story is connected by Puebloan beliefs and their relationship with oral tradition, breath, corn, hair, and family. The

⁴⁴ Due to cultural restrictions I will not elaborate on this subject.

stories are all connected to each other; it is the repetition that reinforces the Puebloan ideology of the Spider web, mentioned earlier.

The significance of breath is that it interlocks the other foundational values by enabling their connection to all elements: physical, spiritual, living, and non-living entities. The sacred fluidity of breath means it is the establishing foundational value. Its activation of energy and movement makes breath contribute to transport the individual through the spiritual realms so that Puebloan knowledge is respectfully transmitted and gained. This feature also makes breath the first phase of establishing relationships with Puebloan elements, like the naming ceremony mentioned in ‘Foundational Values’ in this chapter. Understanding this significance helped me gain comprehension, awareness, appreciation, realization, and recognition of the intimacy that breath has in the Pueblo worldview. While strengthening and conserving the Puebloan core values and identity as an individual is exposed to different external influences, each breath in theory will keep the individual connected, actively grounded in the Pueblo ways of life. Without the understanding of the concept of breath it would be difficult to understand the next foundational value of corn and how breathe connects with the cycle of life. Like storytelling itself, these two values build upon each other and when one starts to learn new values later, one learns new nuances of the most foundational values.

Identity and breath in Santo Domingo Pueblo create the bond between the individual and Puebloan ways of life. By becoming Santo Domingo through ‘breath,’ one unites with and links into the shared values and dimensions of Puebloan identity and life ways. It is like a heishi necklace, which symbolizes the collective whole, while each

heishi bead represents each individual who acknowledge being Santo Domingo by breath. The string secures each heishi bead in the necklace. Like breath, it connects each bead to the collective whole, creating a beautiful necklace that is worn by our Corn Mother and other Pueblo deities, demonstrating the collective whole to be respectful of one another, and be united. Identity in this sense is different from simply holding membership in a Pueblo; it is not based on the degree of Puebloan blood one has. It is rooted in a formal identification ceremony, when an infant and the Sun exchange breath, acknowledging each other's presence. This is the defining moment of becoming Santo Domingo from a cultural perspective.

Art, the creation of beauty in its broadest sense, is another key element needed to understand value within Puebloan identity. "The creative act of making something with spiritual intent what today is called art, has its own quality and spiritual power that needs to be understood and respected" (Cajete, Mountain 44). This relates back to the basic understanding of breath and how breath helps one understand and respect the spiritual aspects of art. As an artist, creating art and infusing my breath and prayer into each piece, keeps me grounded in Puebloan understanding and helps me maintain a humble and thoughtful state in Puebloan life ways. When I was two years old my parents/grandparents had me 'play' with turquoise heishi. I believe this was done so that I had a relationship with the turquoise entity. Becoming familiar with turquoise, I was gradually taught prayers, stories, taboos and songs associated with creating art, with the understanding that creating art work will bring happiness to one's spirit.

The importance of corn to Pueblos is the interconnected relationship it has to the Puebloan worldview, identity, and foundational values. However, it is the elements of cornmeal and breath together that begins the journey of understanding. These two components working together are the establishing factor that sends prayers to the spiritual world. Cornmeal is the vehicle which breath relies on to have the individual's prayers be sent into the sky atmosphere. Without each other, it would be hard to connect fully to the Puebloan deities or to fully comprehend the importance of why these two components must accompany one another for prayer to be effective or to acquire knowledge. Corn is a literal nourishing in the sense of sustenance and the symbolic glue that connects and holds all aspects of Puebloan culture together. Together breath and corn constitute Puebloan identity and the strength of all Pueblos. Both enable life and give meaning to life. They also symbolize fertility and continuance of life enabling life to continue. Corn helps in the maintenance of identity just as eating it enables a human being to continue living. It feeds the culture and the individual and the family. Simultaneously it feeds the ancestors, spirits and deities and through this feeding which is activated by breathed prayer enables the worlds to be together.

Hair contributes to Puebloan identity as an important element in oral stories and helps one understand the core values of a pueblo. Hair has an interconnected relationship with breath and corn as interpreted through cultural knowledge. Since corn is sustenance, like my grandmother's brushing my hair, it feeds the hair and keeps it healthy. Her breath used in telling appropriate stories also keeps it healthy. Hair may also represent our health in a physical and spiritual sense; glossy hair is a mirror for the health of the

entire body. Limp hair signals a sick body. Well-kept hair signals respect; cropped and dirty hair signals disrespect. Together, these established foundations are also protecting agents for the individual. One's breath accompanies corn as the individual asks the Puebloan deities for protection; this is the spiritual side, the physical side, is that hair, although it a part of your person, it is in one way or another a separate being from you. The 'hair' serves as a protector, since it holds all the knowledge one has acquired or been exposed to. By carrying for one's hair through proper grooming, hair as a 'separate' being from oneself protects the individual from spiritual and physical harm. This interactive understanding is not taught to a person; one must think about, reflect, evaluate and analyze oral and cultural teachings to comprehend the sacred importance. This must be undertaken in a specific environmental and social setting including how hair relates to our understanding of the importance of animate and inanimate objects. To understand these three values is to understand by extension the importance of family. To show discipline in protecting one's hair, maintaining it through grooming—a good diet (corn), and breath (carefully thinking about words and those that are spoken and not spoken) -- demonstrates the ability to extend the same dedication and care to family. An analogy would be, when hair gets tangled, people do not cut it off. A person patiently combs the knots out, preventing split ends and pulling out small knots before they become tangled, thus preventing crises. By doing so, the individual maintains healthy hair. By understanding the basic concepts about hair, we place the same emphasize on family. If a family member is causing trouble or is not walking the good path we must 'patiently comb out the knots' by helping our fellow member obtain a 'healthy hair.' Keith Basso's

Wisdom Sits In Place: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache puts into perspective the importance of such cultural knowledge:

Because none of these conditions is given at birth, each must be cultivated [like the Puebloan concept of Corn,] in a conscientious manner by acquiring relevant bodies of knowledge [such as the understanding of breath and hair,] and applying them critically to the workings of one's mind. Knowledge of places [, both physical and spiritual,] and their cultural significance is crucial in this regard because it illustrates the numerous examples the mental condition needed for wisdom as well as the practical advantages that wisdom confers on persons who possess it. (130)

Like Western Apaches, Puebloans learn from their physical surroundings, how to understand their environments through observation, in both spiritual and physical worlds. In a Puebloan lens, the concept of hair is a key component in the maintenance and strengthening of identity and core values as changes occur over a life time. Many will wonder about having short hair and maintaining a Puebloan identity. I would say, if the individual understands the concept of hair they will find clever ways to maintain this value within his/her life. "On the one hand, it is the responsibility of individuals to critically assess their own minds and prepare them for wisdom by cultivating the qualities of smoothness, resilience and steadiness [in Puebloan ways of knowing]" (Basso 133).

Stories that speak to such positive personal qualities help in understanding the Puebloan framework of the family structure, and the complex roles some individuals have within each family unit. Family units strengthen Puebloan identity through teachings. It is within the family that cultural knowledge is first transmitted. Later this is reinforced by community actions and reactions to an individual behavior.

The story that my uncle told me demonstrates the notion of one acquiring balance within one's life through the transmission of oral text and laughter. As Angela Wilson

mentions in “Power of the Spoken Word,” ‘native peoples’ life histories, for example, often incorporated the experience of other both human and nonhuman beings, as well as the experience of their ancestors” (Wilson 103). Uncle Keiyea’s story clearly demonstrates the qualities that Wilson mentions.

When it comes to oral tradition, family narratives share important life lessons, as exemplified in Keiyea’s story. In Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today, Leslie Marmon Silko articulates the importance of these narratives:

Family accounts include negative stories, too; perhaps an uncle did something unacceptable. It is very important that one keep track of all these stories—both positive and not so positive—about one’s own family and other families. (52)

Keiyea knew this dynamic of family account narratives, and used the cultural knowledge he had created and told his story to his nieces and nephews. Although the speaker was one of the main characters, the listeners, who all knew the story had drawn upon both worlds, made this story almost equivalent to a ‘long ago’ story, because of the incorporation of a the bird talking. Animals spoke during the time of ‘long ago’ and humans understood them. Because of this narrative twist of incorporating a talking bird, the listener could visualize the activity in a different time and space, although we knew that the time of the event took place in this world.

Another Puebloan oral trait he demonstrated was the willingness to laugh at his own mistake by creating a storyline that revolved around himself and the bird. This was a tale of rejuvenating one’s spirit, teaching others to restore balance in one’s self through laughter. This story enabled Keiyea to undergo a new beginning, a sense of rebirth. But it

also meant killing another being! I believe both the bird and Keiya strayed away from following the ‘good path.’ However, it was the bird that sacrificed his life to make Keiya aware of his behavior. Another reason could be that the bird and spiritual beings wanted this story to be created and told to his family and community members, so that they would not wander from Puebloan thought/teachings and ways of life. This story allows the younger generation to understand that regardless of the external influences that we are surrounded by our spiritual beings, whom are alive and watching over us. We understood through the story that if we don’t walk in accordance to Pueblo ways of life, that they may send us a message like they did to Keiya.

Silko, in Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today, details Puebloan story dynamics of strength, family relationships, understanding and promoting healthy relations that are underlined in Keiya’s story:

The stories are always bringing us together, keeping this whole together, keeping this family together, keeping this clan together. “Don’t go away, don’t isolate yourself, but come here, because we have all had these kinds of experiences.” And so there is this constant pulling together to resist the tendency to run or hide or separate oneself during a traumatic emotional experience. This separation not only endangers the group but the individual as well—one does not recover by oneself. (52)

Puebloan understanding of the importance of personal, collective, oral and traditional stories is significant in the path of balance and harmony for the individual and collective whole. The stories that were selected for this work were intended to demonstrate the multidimensionality of breath, and how breath is important to all areas of Puebloan life. These stories should help in understanding the foundational value for others wanting to understand its dimensions in Puebloan society. As “breath-consciously

formed and activated through language, thought, prayer, chanting, ritual, dance, sport, work, story, play and art”(Cajete, Mountain 43).

CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSION
PUMPKIN MOIETY

“SRU HAI’KUMII KATYAMA nu”te”kani”kuyase sutrusa “kuuwa ‘yuwesra hanu ‘koname “te’emi “kuu rawa hiyaani “te”kuyani. Sru hai’kumii hotyinu”te”k’ani”kuyase sutrusa ‘kaasrka ‘kayatyuni. “Tueu hanu tsaiwaamaatsani. Tsatsi nuue niuwaatyumishe sr”kusa, esr”ku n’un’atsa sr”kune ewanu”te”kuya’a”ta sutrusa, “kuu ewa hanu “tiuwahimashe ewa nu”te”kuya’a”ta sutrusa. Srue “taawa nishaatsi sutrusa “kuu n’un’atsa sutrusa.” -Simon Ortiz, The Good Rainbow Road 3

[Translation:] *“We must always look back at the good way our people have lived and the good road they have traveled. We must always look upon the sacred knowledge that has helped our people. Not only must we remember but we must live the healthy, good way of tradition and culture. In this way, we will always continue as a strong and healthy people.” -Simon Ortiz, The Good Rainbow Road 2*

Personal Reflection

My personal experiences growing up with my nuclear and extended family who reside in a vibrant Pueblo community helped me understand and embody the foundational values of Santo Domingo Pueblo. As I reflected on my experiences I was able to pinpoint the underlying themes of Santo Domingo’s foundational values as they are

expressed in a number of overlapping or building blocks. It should be noted that foundational values are expressed in Breath, Corn, Hair, Laughter and Family, not directly described and explained to me when I was growing up. I believe the reason why I and other children weren't directly told the values is that our Puebloan teachers wanted us to exercise analytical thought, re-evaluating each oral text and then discover these concepts and their possible meanings. Our elders would after a while ask what we thought were the Puebloan values and concepts. They would first ask, "Did you understand it?" Following this question you begin a dialogue of what the main points were, what you learned, what the values and concepts were. When we would tell them, they would nod as a response. However, if we didn't quite get it, they would give and share with us another story or lesson, until we understood the specific lesson, concepts and values.

As a child, I was taught through observation to acquire the acute skill of studying and examining information that was taught to me. Puebloan education from elders, family members, and parents contributes to the understanding of Puebloan oral tradition, identity, and worldview through these skills. These skills have helped me assess and interpret new information and understand new situations in multiple environments. The experiences and how to interpret them in my life have helped reveal to me important information that mirrors and builds on Puebloan knowledge found in oral text, law, and history.

The Puebloan trait of attentive and thoughtful observation is critically important in this process. Puebloan observation skill requires an individual to be attentive to the

knowledge that is exhibited through social, natural and cultural environments the individual is part of. By gaining comprehension by using the senses of sight, hearing, feeling, touch, stillness and spiritual awareness, allows the individual to be involved in observation awareness that requires being quiet and only answering when spoken too, especially during the formative years of learning Puebloan knowledge, which begins around the age of three. By acquiring these skills one will begin to articulate and perceive the Puebloan worldview as an active face and the intricate relations it has to the creation and continuity of Puebloan knowledge. By becoming observant an individual will become alert, watching and observing, all the while articulating cultural custom, religion, law, principles of laughter, foundational and collective values. This eventually leads to the ‘good path’ which then leads to obtaining a strong mind, eventually obtaining wisdom. Keith Basso said, “[that] knowledge on which wisdom depends is gained from observation [of] different places [places could be physical or spiritual]...” (134).

By striving to obtain this skill, one’s willingness to learn the complex teachings of Santo Domingo Pueblo is demonstrated. It also proves to elders or teachers that one has the sophisticated skill of retaining the formal Puebloan education and thought that has been carefully transmitted from time immemorial.

Once one acquires this skill—one that takes a lot of instruction and practice—one will be able to understand the encoded messages that have multi-dimensional Puebloan meanings for a particular concept, value or notion. Sometimes it may take a lifetime to fully understand or acquire this or it may be acquired as young as the age of five years

old. Since people are constantly learning and relearning as they age they gain new understanding from life experiences.

Having understood the foundational values of breath, corn, hair, and family, an individual will be able to understand the collective and core values of Santo Domingo Pueblo. The following are valued by the collective whole; the Keresan language, Santo Domingo religion, Pueblo worldview, 'good path,' observation, agricultural practices, natural environment, art, respect, responsibility, water, land, and family. During my walk in this life, my journey has always been influenced by Puebloan teachings. Although I have been tempted to steer away from my Puebloan way of life, I am consistently reminded through oral tradition of the importance of maintaining one's identity. I believe understanding the dynamics of Indigenous knowledge helps one to start grounded in Puebloan life ways. "Indigenous knowledges are grounded in the human realization that the life that surrounds us can teach us valuable lifeway lessons, if we pay attention to our relationship and interactions with the land, air, water, and other-than-human living beings" [will we be grounded in our belief system that will help us not get sidetracked or go away from Puebloan teachings] (Wildcat 74).

I was always told by my parents and grandparents that in order to be recognized in this physical world and the world of my ancestors, I had to adhere to the protocols of Puebloan teachings and daily demonstrate my understanding. Although they may be strict when compared today's western standards, I continuously inform my younger siblings and cousins that this is our way of knowing, our identity, and our being. And, that we must continue to walk this path, even though the 'other side,' or western way of

life offers a life unlike the Puebloan way, which may be initially tempting. Some standards included discipline: curfew, asking for permission to go to town, not cutting or dying one's hair, not acquiring body tattoos, and even obtaining higher education. I will elaborate on this a little below. In American society when a young teenager reaches the age of 18 years old, he/she is expected to leave his/her family home and support him or herself unless one goes to college. In essence, with adulthood, one is expected to break the family apart and start a new family. At this age, you may come and go as you please at least theoretically and according to the law. You are old enough to make decisions about your own life. You can alter your appearance as this promotes the ideology of individualism. However, this is very different from how the Puebloan worldview conceptualized adulthood, the family structure and individualism.

In Santo Domingo, regardless of one's age, as long as your parents are still on this earth, you must obtain permission to go out at night. The reason for this is, your parents are still responsible for the well-being of their children until they depart this world. This is a cultural distinction from Anglo-American roles and duties where, the person can leave when they like. It is believed that individuals must be cautious during the night, as this is the time that 'nothing is as it seems'⁴⁵. I recall even in my adult years, asking my father if I could go to town in the evening. This is by no means, demeaning or 'old school,' this simple yet highly sophisticated Pueblo way of life demonstrates the concept of respect. The strictness of my parents is merely to protect my well-being and Puebloan identity, to assure that the family is protected from all forces, physically and spiritually.

⁴⁵ The teaching is that everything looks different at night.

In Anglo-America, a cultural norm is that when children become 18 they can do what they choose and move out of their parent's home. In Santo Domingo, there is no simple age where one automatically becomes an independent social unit. This is not to imply that Puebloans are not independent, independence is expressed differently than living by oneself. Pueblo independence is like Anglo- American, the individual can express and do whatever they want, however, there are boundaries that the individual must not cross, as it will become unacceptable Puebloan behavior. Such unacceptable behavior includes smoking by both males and females; a female is not allowed to smoke as she is not serving in the capacity of a leader of her people. This same restriction is applied to males, however, if a male is appointed to a leadership position, then is it okay for him to smoke in specific settings and on certain occasions. He may only smoke when he is among other male leaders or in a sacred dwelling. Smoking serves as a medium to the spiritual world, by allowing a female to smoke shows disrespect as she is elevating herself to be superiority of an elder. Smoking is viewed as a sacrament, a means of communication with our Puebloan entities, and is not to be abused.

Independence is expressed differently in Santo Domingo, however there are restrictions. The restrictions include; a child cannot move out of his/her parent's home unless they are married or going to school⁴⁶. If a female wants to go to town in the evening, she must be accompanied by a male, for both spiritual and physical protection from the elements that may want to harm her well-being. The night time is a scary time

⁴⁶ When a student is finished with school, it is recommended that he/she move back to his/her parent's home. This is a cultural norm and is not frowned upon. In Anglo-American society it is frowned upon if children are still living with their parents after the age of 18 or 22 or 25. Each member in the Pueblo home contributes to the upkeep of the household.

and females are not 'strong,' meaning their heart (soul) may not be able to handle frightful situations. If a woman sees something at night, and becomes frightened she may be mentally or even spiritually traumatized. This is why a male is to accompany a female.

One may wonder, do Puebloans leave their household to establish a new one? The answer is yes. A new household is established when the husband of the newly married couple builds an adobe home for his wife, so that he may 'house' his children. When a new household is created the married couple will invite one of their parents or grandparents or an aunt or uncle to live with them, creating a multi-generational extended family within the home. The individual that moves in with the couple will help in child rearing and will teach and serve as a guardian to the couple. The older person makes sure that balance is within the home and teachings of the Puebloan way of life are transmitted to the children.

As I mentioned earlier, even when acquiring knowledge, a person must seek permission. For example, I remember talking to my father about attending college after graduating from high school. He sat me down and asked several questions, including if I was serious about getting a degree. I had to articulate and demonstrate that I was serious about school and how I was going to 'help' the people. My responses determined whether I would be allowed to go to college. One question he asked was, "What are you going to go to school for?" My response was to be a neurosurgeon, as brain surgery was fascinating. I remember preparing myself for college admission, taking science and math classes and attending summer programs at the University of New Mexico that introduce

students to the medical field. However, after speaking with my dad, he said, “I encourage you to go to school and be successful, but to become a neurosurgeon would not be advisable due the Puebloan restrictions that govern our lives.” He continued to tell me about the sacredness of life. He said I would be overextending my ‘authority’ since I would be elevating myself to that of a medicine man. A medicine man has a highly elaborate and sophisticated understanding of holistic Puebloan healing in spiritual and physical senses. Although, I would obtain the understanding of physical healing in school, I would not know what to do in the spiritual sense of healing, as I would not be privileged to this knowledge. I was disappointed. However, I have respect for my upbringing in the Puebloan worldview, and I humbly accepted his advice and turned my interests to another field of study. But what was I interested in? I thought about it and for some odd reason, I started observing my community and our language. That is when my attention was directed to the maintenance of language and culture. I remember speaking to one of my great-extended aunt, Mrs. Atencio, who told me that when she wanted to go to school, her father had to ask permission from the governor of the village if it was okay that she attended nursing school out of state. To hear her dynamics and mine I was surprise as to how time had changed the shift of authority. Before, it was the governor who gave permission and not the child’s biological father, reflecting the idea of responsibility for all beings. The governor was and still is responsible for the well-being of his ‘community’ children. This included protecting the community from external institutions that may negatively affect the collective whole. He needed to know where each ‘child’ was. His analyzing decision about school demonstrates the ideal of family.

Today, the governor has no authority over or knowledge as to who is attending school. This is one dynamic that has been lost, the interrelationship with “parent/child or at best leader/constituent.”

When I went home during school breaks, I was constantly tested on my Puebloan knowledge by my elders and parents. This assured them that I still had the critical and analytic thought of Puebloan teachings, and had not been corrupted by Western education. I have utilized western education to help reaffirm that Indigenous/Pueblo education is on the same, if not higher level, in my academic field. My father’s responsibility to me is to continually instill Puebloan ways of thought in order to maintain Puebloan ways and in no way to be disrespectful. I believe the reason for constantly testing and retesting my Puebloan understanding and comprehension of respect, responsibility, living the ‘good path,’ having a ‘strong mind’ was for me to be able to solve situations or give advice to my siblings if need be as I am the eldest and have special responsibilities to my nuclear and extended family.

As I reflect on this, it demonstrates the concept of responsibility, the strengthening and maintenance of Puebloan identity through the foundational values that are taught to Santo Domingo people. Santo Domingo foundational values help one to adhere to the ways of the Pueblo. This has been clearly demonstrated throughout Pueblo history, we must maintain our Puebloan identity. It is our Puebloan understanding that allowed us to maintain our ways of life, religion and language from the contact of the Spanish, the interference from Mexico and the constant pressures of American ideologies, not to mention inter-tribal and globalization pressures.

Each Santo Domingo member is responsible and obligated by ancient Puebloan law to uphold the Santo Domingo way of life. The collective community is also responsible for promoting a healthy Puebloan relationship with belief, values, concepts, and worldview with our youth. It is important to constantly refer back to the concepts of belief and prayer, which are associated with the foundational nucleus of breath, corn, hair, and family. “It is just really listening to what our elders, our culture, our stories have been trying to reinforce, even in the face of all those other things” (Cajete, Ecology 171).

Poetry

Finally, I will demonstrate the Puebloan expression of appreciation by reflecting on ideas of what it means to be Pueblo. The following poems illustrate the Puebloan voice of the interconnected relationships and connections one shares with the physical and spiritual beings/worlds. The language used conjures the Puebloan emotion of verbal thought, expressing underlying emotions such as happiness, optimism, fulfillment, and self-awareness to the complex dynamics of Puebloan ways of knowing and belief.

Following each poem will be an explanation.

Corn Sisters

We come to the edge of the cornfield
 Looking ahead
 We see the life around us
 From the ground to the heavens

All the way from Khewa
 Cornstalks at a distance

Remind you of corn maidens
Dancing for rain and prayers

Corn stalks symbolize life
Appear like Pueblo women
Representing the journeys
Happiness of the Pueblo People

We are mesmerized by their beauty
The life they represent
They beam upon us
We are a reflection of their beauty

Sisters together with knowledge and beauty
Instructing us about our life way and duty

I wrote this poem in memory of my grandmothers. The first stanza is about the daily life of the Pueblo people going to their fields and being surrounded by the life force. Life comes from Corn Mother; it is her sacrifice of herself that grants us the blessing of life. Each seedling plant grows strong, raising its leaves towards the heavens, so it may grow strong. This reminds me of when I go to my father's corn fields and look at the corn stalks and offer my prayers to them, thanking them for the life they bestow on my people for nourishing us. I also encourage them to grow strong and maintain their beauty by offering cornmeal to them.

The second stanza reflects on the people of Santo Domingo and their view of corn in a cultural context. Looking from the village to the east where the corn fields lay, we see the Corn Maidens dancing in the peaceful breeze that surrounds them in the late afternoon, with their swaying "arms" and beautiful hair flowing in the direction of the breeze.

When one looks toward the ground and sees the shadows of the corn stalks, one can see the reflection of Pueblo maidens dancing. It is the same when you observe the Pueblo Corn Dances. Seeing the women dancers' shadows cast on the ground, you can also see the image of Corn Maidens dancing. The same swaying movements are made when the spirit of breeze visits them at the corn fields.

The Corn Dance gives the Pueblo people a direct connection to the spirit world. When the dancers are dancing, they are simultaneously praying to our Corn Mother and other deities to bless the corn fields with abundant nutrients, in the form of rainfall. It is during these prayers and dances, either in the plaza or corn fields, that our prayers are being sent to Creator to be answered.

Stanzas three and four talk about the corn and Pueblo maidens being beautiful. They are to be respected, as they are the givers of life. The Corn Maidens give life to all the children in the pueblo and the pueblo women give life to their children. And both should be respected by all, both by the female and male population.

The last stanza discusses the importance life. Each Puebloan is to seek the Corn Mother for guidance on proper child rearing. This ensures that the pueblo culture continues to survive for centuries to come. When Corn Mother is acknowledged, she will bless the Pueblo women with traditional and ancient knowledge.

The following poem, K'ochin-nak' is a reflection of the Puebloan female. K'ochin-nak' is a term given to women, if no one knows the females' Keresan name. Leslie Marmon Silko, in Yellow Women and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native

American Life Today, gives a good description of the entity of ‘Kochininako’ in the following passage⁴⁷:

“Kochininako, Yellow Woman, represents all women in the old stories Her deeds span the spectrum of human behavior and are mostly heroic acts...Pueblo cosmology features a female Creator, the status of women is equal with the status of men, and women appear as often as men in the old stories as hero figures. (70)

K’Ochin-Nak’

I am a heshi in a necklace
I am a water droplet in a storm cloud
I am K’ochin-nak’, this is me

I am the twinkle of my grandmothers' eye
I am the daughter of corn mother
I am the warmth of the sunbeam
I am a graceful butterfly
I am a blue jay soaring in the sky
I am a coral of the sea
I am a beautiful macaw
I am the dream of my ancestors

This is me, I am Khewame, I am K’ochin-nak’
I am alive
I live in harmony with corn mother
I represent the beauty of corn mother
I am the beauty of all the people before me
This is me, I am K’ochin-nak’

The K’ochin-nak’ poem reflects the interconnectedness of animate and inanimate objects, and the past, present and future generations. This poem is talking about a female Puebloan giving thanks that she is Pueblo and is connected to the multiple facets of

⁴⁷ Kochininako (Laguna Pueblo) is the spelling used by Silko. I use the spelling K’ochin-nak’ (Santo Domingo Pueblo). They represent the same being/name, but are written* in the dialect of our represented Keres language, indicated in parentheses.

*Keres is an oral non-written language.

Puebloan relationships through inanimate and animate objects. In general, this poem could also be about the author. My idea was to transport the reader to a different time, space and place, by having the Puebloan world speak to the reader. This poem is a reflection of the shared relationship a Puebloan has in this world and the natural environment that surrounds them, appreciating all life forces. In Red Alert! Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge Daniel R. Wildcat, best describes the sense of place:

Around the planet, many tribal peoples possess a sense of place in landscapes and seascapes that remains palpable and very real in a spiritual and physical way. They dwell in a sense of place, beauty, and belonging that remains centered in the same world that besets humankind in modern societies with frustration and trouble. (77)

The first stanza establishes the importance of the natural environment, indicating the importance of water/moisture to the Puebloan world. The heishi represents the beauty created by individuals. The beauty being created and moisture shows a relationship dynamic; beauty is not based on physical beauty but beauty is projected to an individual through creating and wearing art as well as being ‘blessed’ with the essence of beauty through rain.

The second stanza reflects on the relations and the inter-related dynamics of the spiritual and physical beings, Puebloan worlds and the significance of incorporating animate and inanimate objects. This stanza acknowledges the ‘parental’ relationship with the Sun and Corn Mother. It also reveals the relationship that was established in the previous world and has continued in this world, as indicated in the naming ceremony discussed in Chapter 3. This stanza also demonstrates that a human-being had already been a ‘dream of our ancestors,’ before we journeyed into this world, validating the

Puebloan belief of planning ahead through the concept of strong mind and the concept of prayer in relation to breath. For instance the ancestors had breathed life and prayers for their future descendants to live in harmony according to the Puebloan ways of life.

The last stanza states and expresses the parallel understanding of the ancestral Puebloan world and this world, and how an individual has maintained balance in a world of constant change and external influences. By being grounded in the Puebloan worldview, K'ochin-nak' is able to represent beauty and respect to her deities, family and the collective whole. She also acknowledges the relationship with ones ancestors, thanking them for the appreciation of life and blessing they had prayed for her when she was still in the ancestral Puebloan world. This establishment of caring for one another, even the ones that have yet to walk this Earth, is an intriguing component in Puebloan belief.

These poems I have written are reflective of my view of Pueblo life. I particularly enjoyed bridging the ancient ways of life with the contemporary settings. “In place of measuring the good life in terms of products, many indigenous traditions recognize and express the good life as a process—active and complementary participation in natural processes not of our design” (Wildcat 77).

Conclusion

Growing up my grandparents always told me and my siblings to be respectful, to care and love one another and most importantly, to ‘be good.’ This will help “reclaim and reintegrate traditional knowledge into a context that will allow survival in these

trying times” (Cajete, Mountain 79). Each subject is significant and will be given the same respect, such as the core of breath, as all are related and intertwined with the emphasis of educating the youth in a culturally-appropriate way. This will strengthen Puebloan values and the continued maintenance of Puebloan identity.

Although my world has had its positive and negative events one thing is constant—the knowledge of how to interpret life in a meaningful way based on Puebloan teachings and philosophy. By understanding the basic foundational values one can understand the collective core values of one’s community. Everyone in the community has a shared responsibility to assure that everyone is on the ‘good path’ and to maintain the core values of the Pueblo. I leave with this memory of collective responsibility, to ensure that all, not just some, live a good respectful life.

As Pueblo communities encounter the vast and ever-changing dynamics facing our communities, concerns of how we can balance the adaptive transition of transmitting oral tradition to the next generation arise. I have always enjoyed the teachings of oral traditions and agree with this statement by Greg Cajete: “celebrate your life, be happy with what you have, care for one another, be of good thoughts and words, help each other, share with one another the life you have been given. This is the way our People continue to live—through you and in you, be glad—you are one of the People” (Cajete, Mountain 173)! What a profound and bold statement of life, and the respect for life. This is the essence of our oral tradition; it is a people’s way of survival and growth.

As for the future, I am optimistic that my journey will be blessed with a continually expanding family. I anxiously await my future family, which includes nieces,

nephews, children, and grandchildren, so that I may have the honor to bless them with the vast knowledge that has been bestowed upon me by my parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, Ancestral Puebloans, Puebloan deities, and Corn Mother.

I leave with a saying that has always been told to everyone in the village, ‘pashrami.’ It is said that this one phrase sums everything up. The loose translation is, ‘to behave, be careful in what you do and/or do it correctly.’

Hina pashrami

‘Okay, be careful’/ ‘Go about carefully’

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