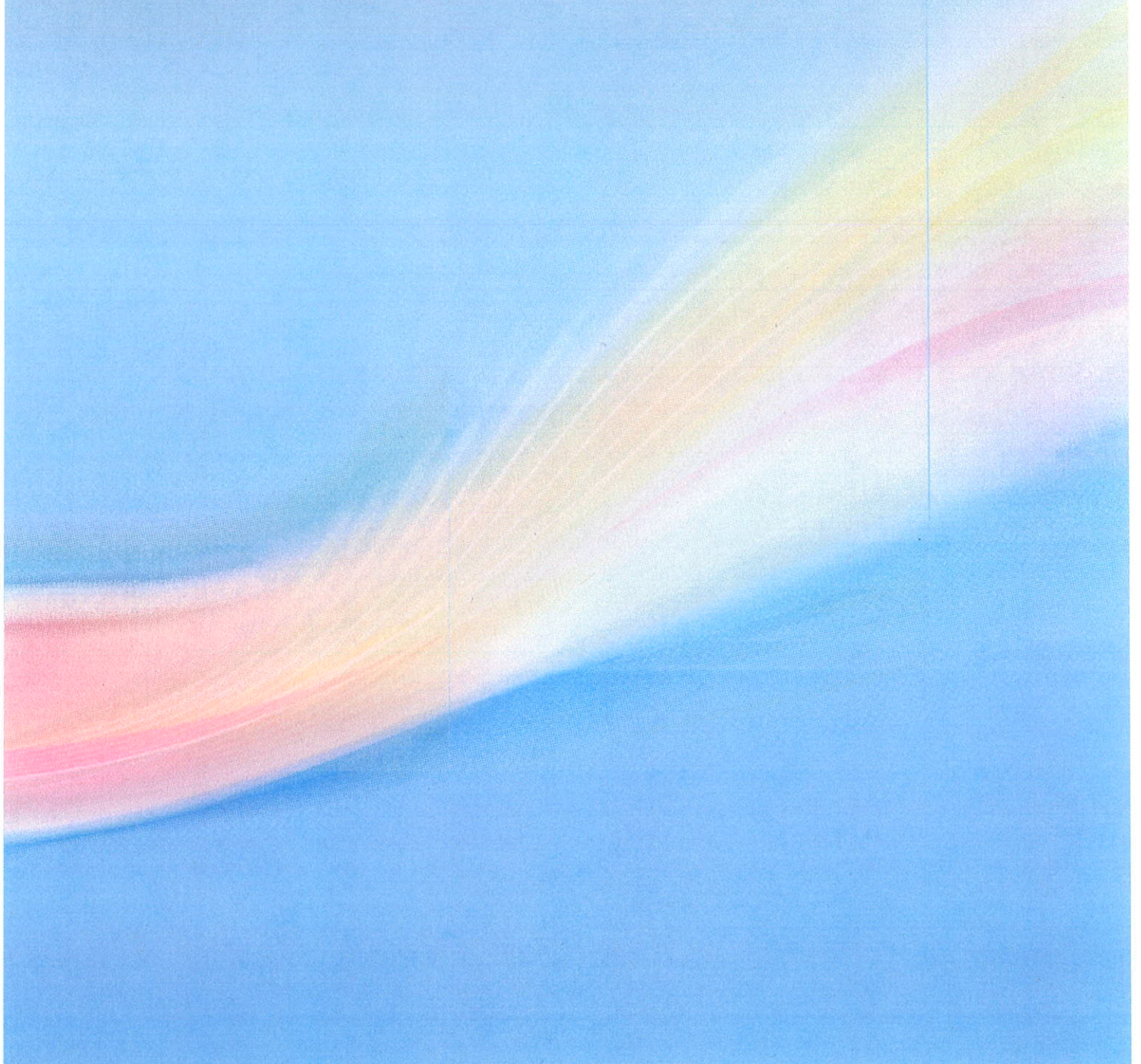


# The Union of the Listener and the Dreamer

written by

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Barber-Axthelm



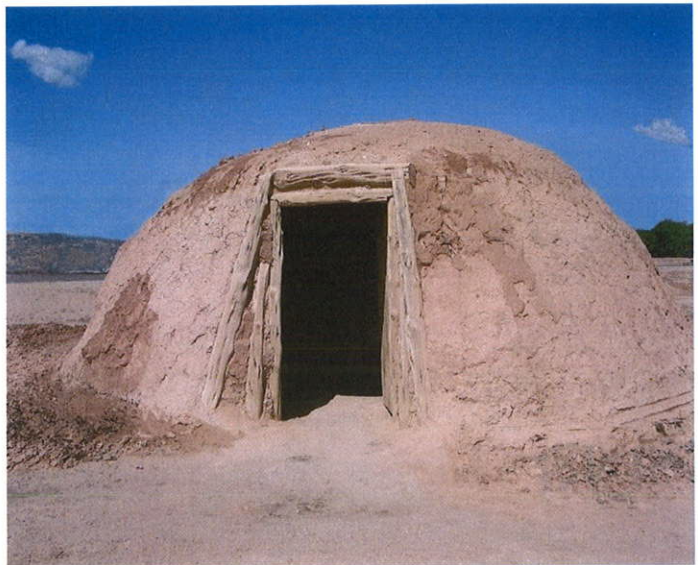


The Proposal  
By Juliette Feldman

The traditional Navajo culture is a long-standing Native American group, living mainly in the southwest of the current day United States. In their early history, they were hunters and gatherers for their subsistence. They also were farmers a little later in their history, cultivating beans, corn and squash. The Navajo place is important in the oral history, which is how stories are passed on from generation to generation, including creation stories and anything else. The people live in Hogans, homes made of wood and then covered in mud to protect from the sun and other elements.

Wedding ceremonies were times of celebrations and a great example of traditional Navajo life. This is the story of two families from two different clans coming together and celebrating life, union, and tradition. This is “The Union of the Listener and the Dreamer”.

It was an early spring day in the traditional times of the Navajo people. In what is now present day northwest New Mexico, there were two clans that each had children of marrying age: the Tsoodzil and the Sis Naajini clan. Both sets of parents are meeting up for the very first time to begin the arrangement of their children’s marriage. It is evening, in the young bride’s family Hogan, a traditional Navajo home.



The bride's father named Naalnish says to the other parents, "Yá'át'ééh. Please have a seat, make yourselves comfortable. We have some meal for you, of gah-chi-lé gah-chĩ-shé gah meat, and ǐlh-tsú si-tsín-nĩ pi-ji-né ná-ma-si, the best we could spare." He motions to some chairs and table where the food is, and leads the way.

The bridegroom's parents, Ashkii and Yanaba go and sit at the table, looking gratefully at the beautiful setting before them. There are lovely plates of the rabbit meat and the vegetables, all cooked perfectly and looking fresh to eat.

"Ahe'hee, Naalnish. This is much appreciated," said Ashkii. He notes the foods and the quality, knowing that this family he is visiting is of good stature, and would be a good coupling for his son, Aditsan.

Both sets of parents eat the rabbit and potatoes, and it was a good meal for both. There was little small talk between them, more time was spent enjoying the fresh dinner. After some time the bridegroom's parents begin to speak of the prospective marriage.

"We would like to present an offering to you, of ten horses for your daughter Sialea-lea. We think that this would be a fruitful marriage, and will be good for both of our clans," Ashkii says to the bride's parents. In traditional Navajo times, the bridegroom's parents would usually offer horses to initiate the marriage, which the bride's parents can either accept or decline.

"It is much appreciated. This would in fact be a good marriage, and good for our clans to have this tie together for future needs: resources and alliance," said Naalnish, seeming to be very interested in this proposition. He has a good use for the many horses being offered, and there is truth in having good alliance and a sharing of resources with the new clan.

“We will accept your offer, Naalnish. This would be a good marriage, and we will have to have it soon. Let us plan for this summer, when the sun is bright and warm and we can celebrate properly,” Ashkii said, standing in excitement. “This will give us ample time to plan and build the new Hogan, and gather food, and the people to witness this wondrous event.”

“Excellent! This is good.” The men shook their hands, and they all took a drink from their cups, in their own celebration of an agreement.

“Come,” said Ashkii, “let us have part in a Keshjee’!” And all four parents of the new union to come sat around in the Hogan and began to partake in the game. The Shoe Game, Keshjee’, is a traditional Navajo ceremony which is essentially a contest. In the ancient days, the Shoe Game represents how the cycle of day to night came to be. The story goes:

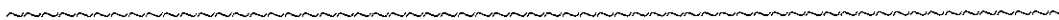
*Long ago in ancient days, the night creatures and the day creatures did not understand the importance of the cycles of the universe. Each group of creatures wanted it to be either day or night all the time. A contest was held to see which group had the most power and this was the first Shoe Game.*

*The two teams played through the night, trying to guess in which of four shoes the ball made of yucca root was hidden. As the game went on each team would gain or lose 102 yucca stems. At sunrise there was no winner and the animals had learned that all seasons and cycles are part of the grand plan.*

*Keshjee’, as a game of choices, represents life and the fact that the natural order of things cannot be changed. Not every choice can be correct, but the lessons are learned and experience is gained. Neither lying nor cheating can change the outcome and the payment of a fee of yucca stems is still required.*  
(<http://www.ausbcomp.com/redman/navajo.htm>)

The parents played a number of times, having a good time with each other and enjoying the time. There were not as many yucca stems as in the story, but they were ample still. Since the Keshjee' game represents life, it is a good game to play before the successful gathering of parents from different clans, to marry their children together. It is a natural and important part of life, and the Navajo can count on it to continue their people. The facet of honesty implied with the game is also important, since they are joining two clans together, it is important to know that trust is there.

Aditsan's parent's left late in the night from Sialea-lea's parent's house. The two to be wed have still never met, and they will not until a week before the wedding, at the Wedding Vase ceremony. There are still many months and much to do before they are wed, and both families and clans will be busy in preparation.



The Wedding Planner  
By Shannon Glinski

“Today is a beautiful day to plan my wedding,” said Sialea-lea as she put on her dress. The sun was shining and the birds were chirping. Sialea-lea walked outside to see her mother sewing on her wedding gown. She asked her mom, Yanaba, when she thinks they should start building the Hogan, where she and her new husband will be living once they marry, Sialea-lea thought to herself, “I am so nervous to marry Aditsan” She shivered in silence as she thought about how she has never met him before. Yanaba felt it was time to start the build on the Hogan, since this was the hardest thing that had to be done before the wedding.

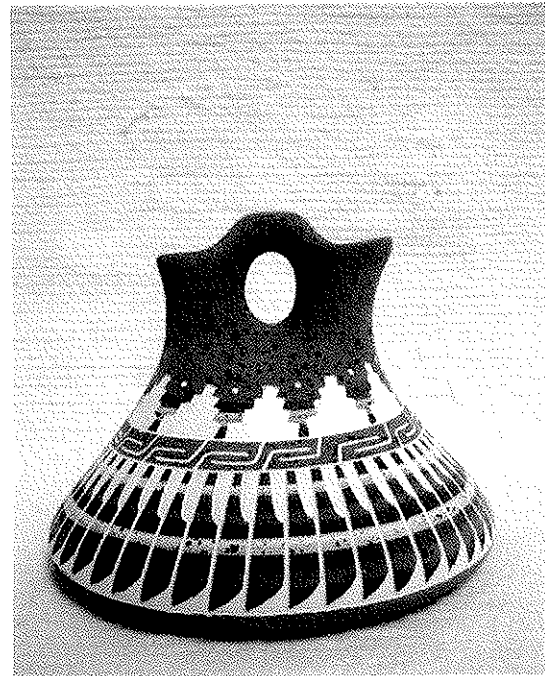
Across the river to the Sis Naajini clan... the water was still, and cool, for it was late spring. Aditsan was singing a tune while he was shaving on a tree to build his bow. His ketoh stuck to his arm, he was a ready archer. He talked to his father, wondering how his life will be after he marries Sialea-lea from the Tsoodził clan. His father told him, “Everything will be fine, we chose you a beautiful bride and she will treat you well.” This eased Aditsan’s nervousness as he started carving the riser of his bow.

Sialea-lea and her mother’s family decided it was time to build the Hogan where the wedding ceremony was going to take place. They cut trees to make the logs for the Hogan to be interlocked with each other in a special symbolic way. Mud to cover it was also gathered. It took them five days and six nights to build the Hogan, but it is complete now. During the build they faced some difficulties like when a log slipped off the side of the Hogan wall, almost nipping Sialea-lea’s sister’s toes. She happened to move quickly before she got hurt, that might have been a bad omen if she had squished her toes. The next sunrise, Yanaba sets out to beckon the Medicine Man to come bless her daughter’s Hogan before the wedding. This offers good luck

and prosperity to the newly married couple. The Medicine Man comes and blesses the Hogan Aditsan and her family built.

Aditsan's parents are getting excited for the wedding, so they head down to the river to gather clay for the vase that will be used in making the Wedding Vase Ceremony. This ceremony takes place a week before the wedding. They need cleansed ceremonial clay from the river to make this beautiful vessel. Aditsan's parents mold this wonderful vase out of clay using horsehair for temper. It is red, with blue and white colours painted on it. The spouts on the vase represent the couple. One side of the vase is the groom-to-be and the other side is the bride-to-be. They must sip from the vase carefully without spilling any, which would give

them bad luck in the marriage. The bride drinks from the vase first, then she turns it clockwise as she hands the vase over to her husband-to-be. He then drinks from the vase on opposite sides, then finally in the culmination of the ceremony, they will both drink from the wedding vase together. If they manage to drink from it without spilling a drop they will have a strong and cooperative marriage that will last forever.



The vase becomes a cherished piece of art in the new home that will last a lifetime.

Yanaba finally finished the gown it was gorgeous. It was made from elk and cow hides. It had red beads sewn to it to signify prosperity and good luck. The dress was also adorned with turquoise, mother of pearl, and coral. The dress also had long fringes along the neck, bottom, and

sleeves. There were designs everywhere, Yanaba spent days and weeks on it to make it look perfect.

The food needed to be finished before the wedding by Sialea-lea and family. Some of the food was served in a timely manner, at certain times of the day, before and on the wedding day. There will be yams, maize, beans, and other foods at the wedding. Corn meal, as an example, is served before the wedding. It is a mixture of white (for male) and yellow (for female). It is mashed together and put into a wedding basket before the traditional ceremony to be eaten by the parents to symbolize unity among the clans. The basket is designed in distinct pattern of representation. The edge of the basket, a lighter colour, represents the brightening skies as dawn is approaching. There is a center design; the center is made up of four mountains pointing upwards signifying an outlet for their thoughts. The bright red weave is the hallmark of sunshine and is blessing for Navajo health and spirituality. The darkness of the basket, which is represented in black, is to give a place and time to rest their bodies and mind. The lacing of the weave around the basket's edge represents the roots and human life. And the very center of the basket is representative of the emergence of the Navajo, the opening for the First Holy One to come into the first world.

The wedding was coming near and there were still lots to do. Sialea-lea thought to herself the things that needed to be completed. Flowers to be picked, headdress to be made, cornmeal to be grounded, cleanse and other things she could not think of at the moment. So she decided to make her headdress. She had feathers for her headdress, white and red. She took them and pieced them together to make an even flow of feathers across the top of the headdress. She dangled beads along the sides and back. After she finished the headdress, her "Ama' Sa' ni" came to get her to head to the sweathouse. "Ama' Sa' ni," asked Sialea-lea to collect the other women.



She gathered the women of the clan to go to the sweathouse by “The Knob”. The Navajo Knob is the sacred spot everyone visited to do rituals and sweating. “The Knob is Nizhoni” said Sialea-lea to everyone. Once they were done with the sweatbath, the clan women went back to the village to make supper.



The next morning, the morning before the wedding, Sialea-lea woke to a busy day. She ground cornmeal, gathered flowers, and swept the Hogan all in preparations for the wedding. She was singing a wonderful tune, as she danced around her families Hogan, she was about to be married.

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The Wedding  
By: Sara Galbraith

In the summer of that year, after moving to their summer Hogans in the canyon, the marriage between Sialea-lea and Aditsan began. On the evening of the wedding Aditsan and his parents walked to the Hogan of Sialea-lea and her family, where the wedding ceremony is being held. This union is a joyous occasion for both families and while walking over Aditsan's family sings songs of happiness and of the great things the marriage will bring their family. As they get closer and closer to the Sialea-lea's family Hogan, laughter and singing emanate from the open door of the dwelling. In the background the sheep 'bah' in increasing excitement as Aditsan and his parents approach and are greeted by the dogs of the Sialea-lea's family.

They reach the open door of the Hogan and are quickly greeted by Sialea-lea and her family.

"Welcome!!" Her parents say with outstretched arms, as the smell of cornmeal wafts through the open doorway, greeting them warmly. Aditsan's family presents gifts to the bride's family as a token of gratitude. These gifts are smaller though than the ones presented at the initial engagement.

A large feast greets the visitors outside the home in the yard, where several different dishes are being served, such as fried bread, squash, beans, and beef. The celebrations continue throughout the meal as songs were sung by every member of the family commemorating the special event. As the food was devoured and the sun was beginning to set, it was time for the nights ceremony to begin.

The medicine man emerged from the Hogan dressed in his ceremonial regalia, and the crowd quickly quieted to hear the old speak. The families and the couple then joined each other inside the wife's family's Hogan to start the ceremony.

“Friends, family we come together today so join in the union of these two families and in the marriage of Sialea-lea and Aditsan as they start their journey together.” The medicine man then sat Sialea-lea and Aditsan next to each other in preparation for the first ceremony of the evening, the water cleansing ceremony. The medicine man grabbed a wooden bowl filled with water and handed it to the groom. The groom then took a ladle of water and poured it over the bride’s outstretched hands. He then washed Sialea-lea’s hands as a symbol of purification and cleansing. This act also symbolized the washing away of past evils and the memories of past loves. After Sialea-lea’s hands were washed, she grabbed a ladle of water and washed Aditsan’s hands and purified him from evils and past lovers. Their purification now allowed them to enter the ceremony and Hózhó was restored.

“Hózhó has been restored and the spirits are with us here tonight, let us sing the Blessingway now”, spoke the medicine man. All the family members listened intently as he sang the song of the Blessingway The Blessingway Twelve Word Song

(Hozhoogi)...

Haiya naiya yana,  
 I have come upon it, *yo*, I have come upon  
 blessing, *wo*,  
 People, my relatives, *yowa lana*, I have come  
 upon blessing,  
 People, my relatives, *ya*, blessed, *na'eye lana*  
*heya 'eye*,  
 I have come upon it, *yo*, I have come upon  
 blessing, *wo*,  
 People, my relatives, *yowa lana*, I have come  
 upon blessing,  
 People, my relatives, *ya*, blessed, *na'eye lana*  
*heya 'eye, holaghei*.

[1.] *Neya*, now, Darkness, *'iya*,  
 He comes upon me with blessing, *wo*,  
 Behind him, from there, *ye*, *S'ah naaghéi*,  
 He comes upon me with blessing, *wo*,

Before him, from there, *ye, Bik'eh hózhǫǫ*,  
 He comes upon me with blessing, *wo*,  
 Before him, it is blessed,  
 Behind him, it is blessed, *neya 'eye, lana*  
*heya 'eye, holaghei*.

[2.] *Neya*, behind her, from  
 there, *ye*, Dawn, *'iye*,  
 She comes upon me with blessing, *wo*,  
 Before her, from there, *ye, Bik'eh hózhǫǫ*,  
 She comes upon me with  
 blessing, *wo*, Behind her, from there, *ye, Sʔ*  
*'ah naaghéi*,  
 She comes upon me with blessing, *wo*,  
 Behind her, it is blessed, Before her, it is  
 blessed, *neya 'eye, lana heya 'eye*,  
 I have come upon it, *yo*, I have come upon  
 blessing, *wo*,  
 People, my relatives, *yowa lana*, I have come  
 up on blessing,  
 People, my relatives, *ya*, blessed, *na'eye l ana*  
*heya 'eye, holaghei*.

And he continued singing the rest of the Blessingway Twelve Word song, while repeating the phrase Sa'ah Nah'gi Bik'eh Hózhó throughout to ensure the continual harmony and balance of the ceremony. "Hózhó is here with us now and it bring peace to the start of this new relationship". The medicine man said.

A basket of cornmeal paste was then brought out and presented to the Sialea-lea and Aditsan. Sialea-lea dipped her fingers in the cornmeal and ate some, and Aditsan followed. The sharing of the cornmeal paste helped unify the pair and allowed them to enter their new life as one. The cornmeal past was then passed around the room and shared amongst the family. More songs and chants were expressed among the family members and Sialea-lea and Aditsan were joined as a new couple, and their two clans were brought together.



Life After the Wedding  
Isaac Barber-Axthelm

After the wedding ceremony, Sialea-lea and Aditsan settled in to a life together. Aditsan had few sheep at this point, having given many to clan uncles at give-aways. He did still have a substantial amount to survive and show some wealth. With the southwest summer here, the couple went about sheering the sheep. Sialea-lea was able to use the wool to spin elegant blankets and garbs, having been taught by her mother Yanaba. Yanaba is a very well known weaver in her clan, and in the area. While Sialea-lea does not yet carry the prestige and skill of her mother, in time it will blossom.

The couple worked to develop the land around the new home to their needs. Although late to be starting, Aditsan worked to prepare a field to plant corn. Normally this would be done earlier in the spring but with wedding planning it was pushed off to the side. Corn is an important part in multiple area of the Dine' lifestyle and the new family needed to establish their own. Aditsan hooks the two horses up to the wood plow he had constructed a few years ago, and begins to run the plow across the fallow land, preparing it for planting. Sialea-lea follows behind the plow, walking along carefully planting the corn seeds equally spaced to allow for best possible growth. She learned the spacing from years of helping her parent's plant corn in their field. Hopefully the *Yei* will look over them and give a longer summer to allow the little corn they will plant ample time to grow. What corn they lack in will hopefully be available through the extended family and the clan. Next spring they will be prepared with their field and will have a bounty of corn that can be shared with many.

In addition to planting the maize; a corral needs to be constructed for the sheep and the horses, as well as a sweat lodge. The heat of the summer sun high in the sky is scorching the land, but work must go on. Aditsan works for many days to construct the sweat lodge, digging out the earth to make an internal, cave-like structure suitable for prayer and cleansing. He goes



out with the horses and a small cart that was brought from Sialea-lea's clan to find tree limbs suitable for the opening to the lodge. After searching the area he manages to find some dried limbs in a brush pile that will hold up to the task of constructing an opening and supporting the earthen roof. The lodge was not complete yet, as it still required a door. A leather mat of dried sheep skins would need to be used for this. Unfortunately, the couple could not spare their sheep at this time for the sake of a door. Fortunately they received dried skin from Sialea-lea's parent that could fulfill this purpose. The lodge was completed and a prayer was given with corn pollen as an offering before the first sweat. The stones were heated on a fire and placed in the lodge, and Aditsan crawled in and began his songs in the blackness, cleansing himself and maintaining *hozho*. After quite some time in the dwelling, and Aditsan is very at home within a sweat lodge, he emerges and begins to wipe himself of with dirt from a nearby patch, as the Dine' are "From the earth."

Summer turns to Fall, and the couples small field of corn is ready to be harvested. Fortunately it is only the two of them, so the amount should be enough to sustain them through the winter. This would be a problem in the coming years though when children will come. The winter is harsh, thick layers of snow blanket the ground. Fortunately the Hogan that was built by their relatives holds up to the task of keeping the winter cold out. At the start of the first snow, A *Singer* with a *Tyro* local to the tribe came in to aid in performing a Blessingway ceremony to protect the couples livestock from the harshness of the approaching winter, which proceeded to completion for two nights and one day. The winter is harsh, taking two of the sheep. However Sialea-lea and Aditsan are able to make it through to spring. They now start the cycle again, this time getting a good start on the field to have a robust supply of corn for next fall.

The couple is also stricken with grief in mid-spring. The mother of Sialea-lea, Yanaba, is ill. She is bed ridden, overheated, and has not been showing signs of recovery for several days.

She started showing signs of illness during the last snow storm, but she has always been sturdy, able to withstand anything. A singer is brought in with his healing bundle and corn pollen to perform an Enemyway ceremony. The ceremony will hopefully help Yanaba fight the ghosts that have wounded her. It was originally for warriors to protect them from the ghosts of slain enemies, but is also utilized to protect the ill from ghosts that are ailing them. The ceremony traditionally goes for three to five nights. Unfortunately, the ceremony does not succeed, and Yanaba passes on to the other side of the camp, two days into the ceremony.

With the passing of Yanaba, Sialea-lea inherits a large amount of her livestock. The couple must now expand their corrals and grazing areas. With the new wealth also brings a new burden of insuring all the sheep and goats are getting enough food to survive. They begin to discuss plans of building a second Hogan that they can move between, and the one built for their wedding. This will allow time for the earth to recover, and provide nutrients for their livestock. At the closing of the spring and the beginning of the burning summer, it will be difficult work to construct a second homestead, including necessary enclosures for animals. However it is opportune when looking at the length of time until the harshness of winter sets in. The plan is established to build a second Hogan several miles away on an elevated mountain region. The hope is to live at their original homestead at the middle of spring and through the summer. Then move to the new location in the fall and winter, leaving shortly after corn harvest. The rotation should allow for the earth to be rejuvenated and provide sustenance for the livestock. This undertaking will require the aide of siblings and clan nieces and nephews to successfully build the new Hogan. Lots of timber was needed; the three interlocking forked posts, as well as support logs, and packing dirt in to help seal it. By the end of the summer the new dwelling was complete. A band singer was brought in again to perform a Blessingway ceremony to bless the new dwelling, insuring it will safely protect Sialea-lea and Aditsan from the winter cold. In

addition a feast of mutton and a small giveaway was held to thank everyone who collectively helped to build the new dwelling.

As time progresses, Sialea-lea will give birth to a child, a daughter named “Nizhoni”, meaning “Beautiful.” At the birth the camp singer comes in again to perform the Blessingway ceremony to insure a healthy birth. As time passes she will grow up to be very avid in her mother’s techniques of cooking and sewing. At this point her mother has become one of the best in the camp, from years of taking care of herself and Aditsan, as well as clan Aunts and Uncles that pass through. At thirteen Nizhoni will receive the *Kinaalda* rite. In time Aditsan and Sialea-lea will have to find a strong, young man to marry her. Much like their own marriage they will meet with the parents and agree on the marriage, the Hogan will need to be constructed and all the preparation need to be made, and once again a couple will be formed.

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Juliette Feldman

Reflection

The entire story is compiled together from four different people, our family. The Union of the Listener and the Dreamer is a story about a traditional Navajo wedding, primarily in a pre-contact time. We realized that after we started working on the story, however, that we tried to incorporate more modern customs. Our story was able to stay in the pre-contact time frame, which is where we really wanted.

The name of the story's name was really thought out because we wanted it to mean something. When looking for names for our characters, we thought of what would be a good combination. When we came across the names Sialea-lea, meaning dreamer, and Aditsan, meaning listener, we thought that a dreamer and a listener would be a good pair. It seems that a lot of Native American stories place a lot of care in the details and symbolism of the story. The name of the story is an important component, for what it means and what people want to get from it. The actual story may not mention the "dreamer" and the "listener" in a literal sense, but the context and significance of the two coming together in marriage is a good solid lesson.

My part of the story was the marriage proposal, which I found pretty easy to write. I feel like I have a somewhat creative background already, so I was able to be imaginative with it. The only hard part for me was trying to incorporate some Navajo words that we came across, like the words for beans and rabbit meat. It was important for me to figure out how to integrate these words because they bring in the culture in a way that just talking about it can't do. In my opinion saying that they ate rabbit meat for dinner is less effective than writing the actual word, which we found was "gah-chi-lé gah-chĩ-shé gah."

The progression of the story is set in a way that really tells it well. It starts with my marriage proposal between the two sets of parents. This is because the couple would not meet until closer to the wedding, as marriages then were arranged by the parents. Then the story goes into the planning of the wedding, written by Shannon. This is an important step in the story because they build the Hogan where the couple would live together, as well as have the Wedding Vase Ceremony. The next part is written by Sara, the actual wedding. Of course this is an important part of the story, since it is the whole climax and the ceremony. The ceremony holds an imperative ritual that the medicine man initiates, bringing the couple together through hozho. The Blessingway song is what brings this hozho, and parts of this song are used for many different rituals depending on the event. The next part is entitled Life after the Wedding, and was written by Isaac. This part was more of an overlook of everyday life in the traditional Navajo culture. We thought it would be good to put at the end, kind of as a life after marriage part, focusing on the couple and what happens.

Another part that Isaac touches on in his part of the story is the matrilineal descent pattern. The Navajo practice matrilineal descent and matrilocal residence. This is important to talk about in the story, because it explains why the son's parents would go to the daughter's parent's house to propose the marriage, and not the other way around. In a lot of other societies, this would be opposite because of a patrilocal and patrilineal practice.

Overall, this story writing experience was pretty decent, in that it was a good creative outlet that you don't normally get in college, and a good way to work together on a pretty lengthy project. Our group worked together on it very well, and had a good solid story worked out. The process wasn't too demanding, and since it was more creative, it was more fun than anything.



Sara Galbraith

## Reflection

The Union of the Listener and the Dreamer is an important story to be told because in many cultures marriages serve as the background for social organization. They are the beginning, and sometimes the end, of economic and social ties between different groups. Marriages also work to preserve cultural traditions through ceremony and ritual.

The wedding process was chosen as our storyline because it allowed for discussion of multiple aspects of Navajo family life. We were able to discuss seasonal movement, kinship, and different ceremonial practices. Despite the wedding ceremony itself, the most important part of the wedding is what leads up to it. Many preparations and negotiations are made in order to assure that the union is beneficial to both parties.

It was a very educational experience writing a Navajo story about a wedding ceremony. I first of all learned that I am not the best at creative writing and my story quickly turned into a research paper. It was fun though to learn the different Navajo words and to examine how marriage ceremonies are set up. I chose to write about the actual wedding ceremony itself because I saw it as the height of the story, even though my actual writing may be less than climatic. I felt the structure of the wedding ceremony was the most difficult to write in a story format because so much detail was involved, while all of it being rooted in historical facts.

The union of Sialea-lea and Aditsan is a happy occasion for the two families; however, it is very nerve-wracking for the two getting married. The wedding ceremony will be the first time that the two have really met each other and it will be the first time that the parents get to join their two families as well.

The story starts off at Sialea-lea family's spring Hogan and then progresses to their summer Hogan for the wedding ceremony, and then to the new Hogan of Sialea-lea and Aditsan.

This progression best represents the seasonal movement of the Navajo, as ties in with our story. This aspect of movement is also represented in the movement of the new couple into their new home and the significance that this portrays of new beginnings and a new place of harmony.

Centered within this story is the construction of the Hogan and the sweatlodge. These two structures are very important to the Navajo, and they symbolize the harmony and balance that are central to their people. Therefore, the Hogan and the sweatlodge are at the heart of the story of the Union of the Listener and the Dreamer.

The most important aspect to include in this story is that of Hózhó. This balance and harmony are seeped into every nook of Navajo life. The phrase Sa'ah Nah'gi Bik'eh Hózhó is spoken repeatedly throughout the ceremony to ensure that balance and harmony is restored and that the new couple can continue on into their new life happily. Hocho is not even mentioned in the story for the uneasiness that it might bring bad luck to the storyteller.

In this matrilineal society, the passing of Yanaba is difficult for her family and they do everything they can to save her, because she has always been a strong member of the family. An Enemyway ceremony is performed to help bring the balance and harmony that is so important in Navajo culture. For Yanaba the Enemyway was performed to help heal her from her illness, yet it did not work and she soon after passed away. Yanaba's death also left the couple with the more cattle to look after, but with this came greater wealth for their small family.

Shannon Glinski

## Reflections

The story overall was educational for me, I learned a lot about Navajo marriage ceremonies. The story we wrote, "The Union of the Listener and the Dreamer" is about an arranged marriage between two clans. The purpose of the arrangement was to better the resources and unity between the two. We tried to write a story about a marriage as it were in the traditional times but we ended up incorporated things that were modern. Such as when I referred Sailea-lea's dress she would marry in as a wedding gown. I was not sure of what else they might have called during the traditional times and I wanted to get my point across so I went with 20<sup>th</sup> century common knowledge.

I have not done a lot of group projects before, so I am glad this one went smoothly. I enjoyed writing about planning a wedding between Aditson and Sailea-lea. I have been married for 15 years and thought it would be neat to write about planning a wedding. Interesting enough their wedding rituals before the marriage are not like Americans do it today. The bride wealth is something not offered today, usually there are prenuptial agreements between couples before they marry to keep possessions separated. The Wedding Vase Ceremony is something we don't do. It is very romantic considering they were not marrying for love.

I enjoyed incorporating the Navajo words into the story to make it seem authentic at times. The rest of the group enjoyed learning the Navajo words for things. It would have been nicer if I could have found an English-Navajo dictionary on campus to find more words. Unfortunately, the only dictionary they had was Navajo-English Dictionary, very helpful if you are Navajo.

If I ever did this project again, I would find a different topic it was hard to fill the page requirements with little information. There was some information that was easy to find and use in the story. We found information about the Blessingway, which is used in a lot of different reasons; reasons like cleansing rituals. We used that in our story to restore Hózhó among the couple as they were marrying. There was information about kinship, that we found and incorporated it in. The matrilineal kinship the Navajo practice was used in this story. When we talk about it in the building of the Hogan, which is completed by the daughters family. Matrilineal was also used when they went to the sweathouse at the Knob. The Knob is a sacred place the Navajo use for prayers, rituals, and other sacred reasons.

I wrote about the part were they were planning the wedding. It is amazing how little information is discussed about wedding plans. I tried to compensate by using my own experience into the story. The picking of the fresh flowers, is very similar to my carnations I used at my wedding. I also did the headdress in place of a veil.

I liked how our group worked together to accomplish this project. It was neat how the division of the story worked out. Each of us took part in a different ritual to lead up the marriage and the matrilocal and matrilineal life afterwards. The story is definitely a good story to tell a kid, not sure how exciting it is for an adult it has its times that it reads more like a research paper. It is amazing how you forget to write creatively when you are in college analyzing and researching everything. So this was a fun way to break away from the monotony and do something fun!!

Isaac Barber-Axthelm

## Reflections

The context of the story was based in the time frame when Native Americans were in early stages of contact with Europeans, which is shown by the utilization of the horse plowing the field. The setting was, however, before the moving in of settlers and confining the native people to reservation. The horse illustrates the malleability of the Dine' culture, as discussed in class, and their able to incorporate change to improve their livelihood. The story, specifically focusing on the plot after the wedding, incorporates various traditional aspects of the Dine'.

There is a strong emphasis on corn throughout the story, as it is an important staple to the Dine'. It is a main source of subsistence and the pollen is used in many rituals. The symbolic importance of corn emerges during the wedding, with the mixing of the yellow and white cornmeal used to represent the joining of the man and the women. Corn pollen appeared in many different ceremonies and appears to be a universal component in all Dine' ceremonies and not just the few highlighted in the story. Also, there is an emphasis on preparing the field to insure they will have plenty of corn to last until the next harvest. Corn, along with livestock, appeared to be a center of focus of the Dine', because of their dependence on these as food sources. We tried to recreate this in the story: the livestock is used as sources for wool, occasional meat, and wealth, while corn is the main foundation of meals. There was also the use of these in a giveaway, a common theme that seemed to span all of the native groups we studied.

The ceremonial emphasis highlighted the Dine' view of medicine, specific ceremonies for specific situations, with a focus on the individual rather than the group. We see ceremonies being used in specific circumstances, instead of general medicine being presented as a gift that can be used in many instances. The biggest ceremony we looked at was the "Blessingway," which appeared to be an all-encompassing ceremony meant to maintain wellness and *Hozho*



during various events. Readings indicated it was used in wedding ceremonies, at the completion of new Hogans, childbirth, and protecting livestock and crops. The other important ceremony of the Dine' was the "Enemyway" ceremony, which we explained was utilized to defend people from evil (people and spirits). Another interesting aspect of ceremonies was the length. Both the Blessingway and the Enemyway span multiple nights. This was very different from what we saw in the other ceremonies that mostly lasted several hours, the exceptions being fasting, vision questing, and the Sun Dance. Aside from these two ceremonies, *Kinaalda* was briefly highlighted and is a specific Blessingway ceremony to signify a girls passing into adulthood. This was briefly mentioned, but was indicated to be an important ceremony to the Dine'.

Another traditional aspect was the structure of the wedding, from the proposal all the way through the ceremony. While the entire wedding was difficult to construct, we attempted to incorporate as many traditional details as possible. Pre-contact weddings were commonly arranged, with the groom's parents going to the Hogan of the bride's parents and offering a gift commonly of livestock. The parents agree on the marriage and the terms. After an agreement is reached there are various traditional acts that occur, such as the construction of the Hogan and mixing of the cornmeal. The Hogan is constructed specifically for the ceremony and will also serve as the home for the new couple afterwards. As stated above, the mixing of the yellow and white cornmeal symbolizes the union of the man and the women.

The physical structures and life style was an attempt at mimicking the lives of the pre-contact Navajo. At the same time trying to model it off what was shown on the video, and adjusting for what we would predict to be prior to wagons, cars, etc. The couple is living in the Hogan that was constructed for the wedding, accompanied with some additional outdoor covering and corrals for the livestock. In addition to the Hogan, the newly formed household had to begin the process of constructing an earthen sweat lodge. We also illustrated a

## Appendix I

## Navajo to English Translations

Ahe'hee	Thank You
Gah-chi-lé gah-chí-shé gah	Rabbit, cottontail
Hogan	Home
ĩlh-tsú si-tsín-nĩ pi-ji-né ná-ma-si	Potatoes, wild
Keshjee	Shoe Game
bés-tsoz ná-o-hlě-tsos-tět nú-o-hlĩ,	Beans, native
Nah-toh	Tobacco
Hah-tah'lih	Medicine Man
Yá'át'ééh	Hello
Ketoh	Arm guard
Ama' Sa' ni	Grandmother
Nizhoni	Beautiful
Yei	Holy People
Hozho	Goodness, Normality
A Singer	Individuals who lead specialized ceremonies
Tyro	Novice Singer; Apprentice
Kinaalda	Female rite of passage ceremony

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