

“No Laughter, No Healing”: Laughter and Hózhó in Navajo Social Life

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1-1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1) I was impressed how heartily the people laughed.

→Hypothesis: Laughter has a fundamental role in Din4 ideal life.

2) Earlier research:

1. H0zh0 is ideal condition for Navajo people.

2. H0zh0 as an abstract concept and these studies reflect the Western

philosophical idea (e.g. Lamphere 1969)

✘How Navajo people practically create and maintain an ideal life is

still unclear

→This study clarify how Navajo people create and maintain ideal

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1-2. RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Research Goal:

This study ethnographically describes and analyzes laughter as concrete practice to create and maintain H0zh0

Research Objectives:

Objectives of this study is clarification of the process that

- 1) People's laughter as a social and cultural behavior to create and maintain ideal relationships
- 2) harmonious relationship between Navajo people is constructed thorough laughing
- 3) what cultural ideas relate to laughter
- 4) how laughing adjusts and maintains human relationship, especially when a person struggles.

1-3. ABOUT RESEARCH

Implementation Strategies

- 1) Participant-Observation
- 2) Interviews
- 3) Focus Group Meeting
- 4) Survey ※ surveys were not used this period

Duration

Oct 20, 2015 – Present

Location

White Corn Chapter

Tsaile Chapter

1-4. BENEFIT OF THIS RESEARCH

Positive description will empower Navajo people

: This project doesn't "resolve" problem, but object to label Navajo people's life as problematic

Unique understanding about Navajo culture

: Provided to students

: Originality of Laughter of Navajo

※ It different from Western (Japanese) concept about laughter

Suggestion of "healthy" (or beautiful) condition

: This project identifies which resources people use to manage their problem
e.g.) kin network
religious practice (knowledge)
environment where people laugh with

2-1. PURPOSE THE PRESENTATION

Purpose

: How laughing adjusts and maintains human relationship, especially when a person struggle and suffers

Social Experience of Suffering (Kleinman *et al.* 1997)

1) Social Pattern

: How one lives under difficult condition

: How one reacts and expresses suffering

2) Social Relation

: Role of social relation in suffering experience

2-2. FOUR ASPECTS OF H0zh0

Control of Holistic Harmony/Beauty/Balance (Whitherspoon 1977; Calabrese 1994;
Pierce 1992; Wagner 1975; Garrity 2000)

- 1)Mental aspect
- 2)Spiritual aspect
- 3)Social aspect
- 4)Physical aspect

※ This presentation doesn't treat what H0zh0 is, but show how people maintain ideal condition (see Lewton 2000: 479)

3-1. EVERYDAY PRACTICE TO MAINTAIN HOLISTIC HARMONY

Mental/Spiritual Control

: Stay Positive

e.g.) Prayer, Cruising, Movie/Music, talking about, “leave it alone,” laughter

“A sick patient maybe sad”

“When they get too serious, they get sick too”

2) Social (Physical Relational) Control

: Avoidance of face to face expression of mad, anger, and complaint, etc

e.g.) grandma’s attitude

3-2. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Mental/Spiritual Control

: Not think too serious about some problem

Social/Physical Control

: Keep temporal or/and spatial distance from person in conflict physically

✧momentally

: Utilize kin network

e.g.) quarrel between husband and wife and so on

Ceremonial Treatment

3-4. PATTERN OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

渡辺浩平

Mental/Spiritual Control

- : Not think too serious about some problem
- : This World had been created by Holy People's "Thought" (Witherspoon 1977: 30)
- : "Thought" is realized (ibid: 28)

Social/Physical Control

- : Avoid expression of negativity
- : Avoid Negative Relation Physically through temporal/spatial distance

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渡辺浩平1 ※どれか一つがダメなら、他へ分配=まとめにもってく？

渡辺浩平, 10/13/2017

4-1. LAUGHTER AND MENTAL/SPIRITUAL CONTROL

50s Male

“When he (medicine man) is happy and and he is...laughing, then the patient is laughing too. Patient is alright”

50s Male

“It’s coming from your inner soul. You have no negative thinking no negative thoughts in you

30s Male

“I feel that laughter bring you back to h0zh0ji. When some bad happens and being upset, mad or something but then someone can tell you joke and make you laugh and makes you happy so steals you back up to path, corrects you”

4-2. LAUGHTER AND MENTAL/SPIRITUAL CONTROL

Laughter and Spirit

: This World had been created by Holy People's "Thought" (Witherspoon 1977: 30)

: "Thought" is realized (ibid: 28)

: Inner soul (ni[ch'i bi'siz7nii) which dwells in one's body control one's "thought" (ibid: 30)

: Air is source of h0zh0 (ibid: 61)

: First Laugh (Encyclopedia of World Cultures, Vol.1: 253)

When inner soul connect outside air (inner form of world) baby laugh

4-3. LAUGHTER AND SOCIAL/PHYSICAL CONTROL

50s Male

“If they are happy, people come to them, and they visit, and they talk”

80s Male

“Your gestures, your movement, your energy, when your physical when you’re physically motivated, and you go. That means your physical image your physical attitude, behave personality, they laugh. And that’s how you got the motivation”

50s Male

“Laughter is one way to express inner beauty”

4-4. LAUGHTER AND CEREMONY

50s Male

“Holy People there they do the ceremony. It’s too much serious, too much seriousness. All controlled by laws. And it didn’t work. The patient just got bad, kind a like, the patient wasn’t get in heal (08:05). So it was coyote and they coming here, said, let’s got be humor”

“No laugh, no healing”

80s Male

“Holy People designed this spiritual laughter (...) When you are the ceremony the sometime, there is laughter to enjoy”

4-5. LAUGHTER AFTER SERIOUS EVENT

20s Male

Lost of an uncle and a brother within one month

One day talk about how they did stupid stuff

Laugh so hard and feel relief

30s Male

Depression after surgery

Participated Peyote Meeting and medicine up

Made a mistake

“We just laugh for thirty minutes, but after that she felt so much better. She remembers she has family” who laugh with her

4-6. SUMMARY

Mental/Spiritual Control

: Make one's mind and spirit positive/happy/beautiful

Social/Physical Control

: Expression of Inner Beauty

Make People Close

⇒ Negative attitude such as mad, anger makes people separate

: People who laugh with

e.g.) 20s Male

“You can't really enjoy or laugh in front of people” whom “you don't feel safe”

e.g.2) 50s Male

“When they go to the own place, that's where they find something funny”

5-1. ANALYSIS FOR BENEFIT TO THE NAVAJO NATION: HARMONIOUS ORIENTATION

Salutogenic Orientation (Antonovsky 1979)

: How people can stay healthy side on ease-disease continuum even in stressful setting
⇒ Not all or nothing/dualistic approach; Whether one is disease or health

Sense of Coherence (SOC)

: The extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic, feeling of confidence

- 1) Comprehensibility
- 2) Manageability
- 3) Meaningfulness

Way to raise the extent of health

: Being flexible in thinking what kind of domain of life is important and what is not.
: Not attaching importance to the occurrences that occur outside the boundary

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渡辺浩平2 その連続体における位置はどうやって測る？=SOC尺度である、くらいの説明はある

渡辺浩平, 10/14/2017

5-2. ANALYSIS FOR BENEFIT TO THE NAVAJO NATION: HARMONIOUS ORIENTATION

Attitude to stay positive side even in problematic situation

- : Even if one has some problem, one doesn't take it serious mentally/spiritually and avoid to stay close with negativity physically/socially.
- : Using kin network, religious source, and laughter

Way to raise the extent of "health"

- I still can still laugh with people (more important domain of life) even in the problematic situation such as loss or disease.
→ Keeping balance

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Ahéhee'

Thank you very much for your attention