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The Traditions and Cultures of the Southwest

Sharlene Cochrane and Martha McKenna

Teaching and Learning in Santa Fe, New Mexico

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
—T.S. Eliot*

As our bus rolls down the winding road to the College of St. John, students sense that they are in a different place. The wide-open sky, the parched brown earth, and the adobe homes sit in sharp contrast to the New England surroundings we left a few hours ago. If we are lucky on our first evening, we will be rewarded with a brilliant lightshow (the thunder and lightening of the monsoon season) and a glorious sunset. Unlocking the mysteries of this “land of enchantment” and its people will be our project for the next eight days. The excitement builds each time we begin to co-construct with the students, faculty and local experts our Lesley University Traditions and Cultures Institute in Santa Fe. Having led student groups for more than a decade, we know what lays ahead—the people, the places, and the possibilities for exploration—so our opening night is a special one. Our group comes together to create our itinerary, share our research interests, and plot our activities for the week. With so many choices, so many possibilities, so many resources, the opening of the Institute sets the agenda for the week ahead.

We return to Santa Fe every other summer to lead this Institute for a number of reasons: it is an opportunity to learn with our students more about the Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo cultures that have survived centuries of coexistence in the Southwest. It is an opportunity to explore the history of a thriving Native American culture, whose traditions and language continue to be carried on from generation to generation. It is also an opportunity to discover more about the first Colonial settlement; one that pre-dates the Plymouth Colonies in the Northeast. It is an opportunity to research the Anglo pioneers, in particular the westward traveling women who left the comfort of cities and familiar society to establish the schools, museums, and cultural institutions that have enriched the Southwest. It is also an opportunity to experience the “enchantment of the land,” with its glorious sunsets, brilliant shows of lightening and vast open spaces. It is all of these, plus the opportunity to work with the remarkable writers, historians, artists, and environmentalists who are our resources in the Institute.

We are not simply visitors to Santa Fe; but researchers. We visit the Corn Dance at Santa Domingo Pueblo, and we are invited into the home of Tessie Naranjo at Santa Clara Pueblo to learn more about the role of women in Native American society. We explore the Museum of Indian Art and Culture, and we meet with Greg Lomayesva, a celebrated young Hopi artist whose works provide new insights into contemporary Native American culture. When we examine Spanish Colonial history through the museum Los Golondrinas and the church Santuario de Chimayo, we are guided in our explorations by the ethnohistorian Adrian Bustamante and the leading santera, Marie Romero Cash. We read the biography *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds*, and are greeted at her home by her biographer, author Lois Rudnick. We study *New Mexico: An Interpretive History* by Marc Simmons to understand the history of the Native American, Hispanic and Anglo cultures in juxtaposition in New Mexico, and we are joined by Marc at the beginning of the Institute, when he suggests resources, both texts and experts in the field, to assist students in expanding their knowledge of particular topics. Marc often joins us at the end of the Institute to hear the progress the students have made, always delighting in their work and their increased understanding of the traditions and cultures of his beloved New Mexico.

In addition to the works of Marc Simmons and Lois Rudnick, students also read from the fields of literature, cultural history, the arts and anthropology and meet with the authors to discuss their research. While the lists change each year, a sample of the visiting authors includes William deBuys, (*Enchantment and Exploitation: the Life and Times of a New Mexican Mountain Range*); Sharon Udall, (*Modernist Painting in New Mexico 1913-1935*); Christine Mather, (*Santa Fe Style*; Fran Levine, *Understanding Cultural Landscapes*); and Rena Swentzell, (*Public Space, Form and Mythology*). We also meet with artists to discuss their work in relation to their cultural traditions, and among these are Pearl Sunrise, a Navajo weaver; Cathy Sanchez, a San Ildefonso potter and granddaughter of Maria Martinez; and Charlie Corrias, a santero or Spanish traditional artist. We climb the Anasazi cliff dwellings of Bandelier National Monument, visit the vaults of the Museum of Anthropology, explore the flora and fauna of New Mexico at the Randall Davey Audubon Environmental Center, and spend a day hiking at Ghost Ranch, once the home of Georgia O'Keefe. Everywhere we go we are armed with readings and visiting faculty or guides who take us beneath the surface to expose the history, the complexity, and the beauty of what lies before us.

Once our days in the field are completed, our real work begins. How do we make sense out of all that we have experienced? How do we bring this back to our work as teachers, counselors, artists or students? At this point participants create the story of the traditions and cultures of the Southwest on the cultural/historical frame that Marc Simmons provides. Various points on the timeline begin to radiate as students discuss the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad in 1880, and the impact of each on Southwestern societies. Students might seek to understand more fully the relationship between a people and their natural environment by exploring the symbolism of Native American pottery or Spanish Colonial weaving. Others might

explore the tensions between Native American spirituality and Spanish Catholicism, or seek to understand the battle over water rights among the Native American, Hispanic and Anglo communities. One might research the types of adobe architecture to gain a deeper understanding of the lifestyle of the builders: the Native American puddle style adobe constructions, the Spanish adobe brick constructions, or contemporary Anglos in their adobe -faced concrete constructions. There is so much to learn and so much to share that the week races by. We become scavengers seeking knowledge from every avenue, rewarded when we find a text, a work of art, a research collection or a local expert who is able to help us understand more about our topic in new and meaningful ways.

By the end of the week we have constructed an Institute, with each faculty member and student contributing to the shared understanding and deeper meaning of the traditions and cultures of the Southwest. As the bus winds back to the highway and we head home, the sky, the earth, and the adobe homes now look familiar, and the conversation inevitably turns to when each of us plans to return to this “land of enchantment.”

Part I: Philosophy/ Design

We designed the Institute with an ambitious goal. We wanted students to understand the cultural interactions in the place, to engage deeply with the varieties of people in the place, to see the dynamics of the different groups as they negotiated their relationships and to study and appreciate their verbal and visual expressions. This philosophy has been consistent throughout each Institute experience, and still guides our teaching and learning today. The Traditions and Cultures Institute provides us with an opportunity to practice our educational values, as constructivist, interdisciplinary, experiential teachers; to explore diversity and cultural awareness; and to encourage individualized research in order to create meaning.

Students in the Traditions and Cultures of the Southwest course travel to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for the eight-day intensive field-based experience. The syllabus requires reading before the travel begins. We have a packed itinerary of site visits, meetings with resource people, and individual research experiences. We learn together about the history, art, literature, and ecology of this unique region. The course ends a month later with the research paper or project presented at a closing celebration in Cambridge.

The structure of the course is replicated each year—that is, we revisit experts, stay at the same college, and visit many museums and cultural sites. At the same time, each Institute is unique. The chemistry of faculty and students is never the same. Since the course is interdisciplinary and ecological, it becomes the total of the interests and goals of a particular group of students. One year there may be more of a focus on the

history, another on literature and writers. One group may research the land and environmental issues, another the styles of painting in the various local traditions. While the entire group visits a field site, each member will bring a particular question or research topic, so the insights are always different. The papers and final projects, the journals, the discussions are ever changing. The cultural experiences students bring with them makes each group unique. After more than a decade of Institutes, we see several qualities that make the students' experiences especially meaningful.

First, the Institute is an interdisciplinary study of the Native American, Hispanic and Anglo cultures in New Mexico. Place becomes our text, and the heart of our learning community. This approach reflects the growing interest in bringing the study of specific disciplines into dialogue with one another, and studying topics, themes or issues from multiple points of view; a shift from a language of coverage, to a language of integration and boundary crossing. We create new knowledge from the "matrix of connections" that results from our experiences and our consideration of multiple disciplinary perspectives. (Klein) The Guidance of local experts, experiences and readings within this interdisciplinary framework of the arts, history, literature, and the land itself, lead to a "cohesive framework from which to effectively engage in authentic inquiry." (Filemyr, 8; Aram)

Secondly, cultural and social identity is a central theme. Students explore the variety of traditions in the place, and the ways in which they have clashed, melded or remained unchanged over time. Students also consider their own identities and what they bring to this experience. Finally, students engage in personal and group reflection, and complete individualized research projects as part of this community of learners. Completed projects and statements of are powerful indications of the personal and intellectual transformation that takes place in many students.

The Traditions and Cultures Institute came out of a particularly rich and fertile period of Lesley's history, when several distinct and complementary academic influences came together. One important influence was the theory of constructivist knowledge and critical pedagogy which informs our goal as faculty supporting students as they came to be more critical, reflective, constructivist scholars. A decade ago, Lesley faculty were doing important work in defining and articulating these concepts, and this work continues to inform our design. (Hein, Belenky, et.al)

During the early 1990's, we recognized the value of students determining what they wanted to learn and how they would go about it, an important principle in the growing field of adult learning. (Brookfield, Mezirow) We worked with individuals coming back to school after years of work and life experience, to build on that experience as a part of the content of our courses. We encouraged students to make decisions about their reading, projects, and even degree focus, becoming researchers of topics of individual passion. This also led to a commitment to experiential student learning. Our goal was to link theory and practice. Students would identify theory and

test it in the real world of the student's professional life, through field study, observation, and internships.

A final important component of the early 1990's at Lesley was an increased awareness of and commitment to diversity, both within curriculum and among the students and faculty. A campus-wide Diversity Initiative, coordinated by a committee of staff, faculty, administrators and students, worked to keep the diversity mission and goals as a component of all aspects of life at Lesley. (Jerabek). Considering diverse elements of identity, multiple ways of knowing, and many styles of learning, we continued to apply these ideas in a rich and meaningful curriculum.

Combining constructivist intellectual development, theories of adult learning, experiential pedagogy, multiple ways of knowing, and varieties of diverse identities, we established a particular kind of travel/study program. This range of both content and critical goals shares much with the concept of the "critical pedagogy of place." (Gruenewald)

Part II. Culture, Identity, and Research

In Santa Fe we look closely at Native American, Hispanic and Anglo traditions and cultures. We support students in understanding each culture, through their readings, the events of history, and expressions in art and literature that resulted from the coming together or clash of these groups. We recognize that deep cultural understanding must begin with an exploration of our own culture (Adams). We ask students to consider their own cultural background, through exercises in which they name their own identity, and discuss the many labels and questions surrounding aspects of identity such as nationality, ethnicity, race, class, sexual orientation and gender, region, and age.

The Institute invites students to think and talk about cultural identity, especially the relationship of who we are to the work we do and the experiences we have in Santa Fe. (Palmer) This can be a rich discussion, since many areas of identity are socially constructed; discussions often turn to issues of power, and the way some elements of identity confer more power than others. Also, different groups express and handle power differently, so that a person's ethnic or regional or gender identity may have important implications for how he or she experiences and expresses power.

Exploring our own identity can reveal our differences and similarities, how we experience power and a lack of power, and how each part of us provides both strengths and challenges. Students begin to see that it isn't only the "other" who is cultural; that all of us are cultural, even multi-cultural, beings. Owning our assumptions, deconstructing them, allows us to build new awareness and we enter

into Institute experiences and relationships with others in a deeper, more authentic way, respecting and valuing all of our identities.

This exploration allows us to use the language of cultural and social identity as we go about our study and further appreciate those who live in the place. Students experience this study of culture in various ways. Some for whom gender is a significant part of their identity, may choose to look at gender relations in Native American life or the experiences of Anglo women who came as artists to this area. Others, who have European roots and have been taught a subtle race or class bias, can identify some of those biases and test out new ways of interpreting social dynamics.

During one of the Institutes, a student from Massachusetts identified herself as having Mexican heritage. She had come to Santa Fe in part because of this background, though she had not planned to focus on it in any direct way. As the days went by and she considered her own identity in light of the cultures of those around her, she became more curious about her background and the very real connection she experienced between what she was learning and her sense of self. Her final project (and reflection, in the student section below) including an art component, is a rich exploration of this connection.

The final element for creating our learning community is the way in which we structure reflection and research. Each student is required to pursue a research project, using the resources of people, place and texts. Participants who are not taking this course for credit, also focus on topics they want to study, curriculum resources they plan to identify, or personal passions that bring them to the Institute. Everyone presents their final research at a reunion a month after we return to Cambridge.

The Institute is designed to provide times for reflection, including journal-keeping and on-going study groups. Based on initial research interests, we form these small study groups soon after arrival who meet several times during the eight days, to allow students to refine their research topics and provide peer review and suggestions. Each participant is able to talk through her ideas, get feedback, and have support in finding resources. As each research plan is refined, the study group members explore resources, keeping one another's ideas and questions in mind. The student group also provides encouragement if students uncover conflicting information.

Students also create a journal to document and process their experience. The journal includes reactions to presentations, visits, and conversations, as well as drawing, poetry, maps, and reminders of significant sights and learning. Many of these evolve from field notes to artistic creations, with colored pencil drawings, maps, and flora and fauna samples. Others are full of reactions, questions, and ideas to explore. In gathering them the final day for review and response by the faculty, we are amazed at

all the students have learned and integrated into their focused project. A community of learners develops as faculty, students/researchers, and experts work together.

One of our additions to the process of student reflection was taken from one of our favorite experts, Mark Simmons. At the end of his book, *History of New Mexico*, he added an “Epilogue” about his experience as a young person on Cochiti Pueblo and how he came to study and write about New Mexico history. Students value this personal statement, which adds another dimension to the historical work they have read. Based on Simmons' model, we invite students to write their own epilogues, or reflections, to capture the context of their own research and their experiences of the Institute. The student reflections included here were written as epilogues to their research papers.

Part III. Student Response

Students are drawn to the Traditions and Cultures of the Southwest from various programs within Lesley University as well as from colleges and universities across the country. Usually the course fulfills an elective in a graduate program or an upper-level undergraduate program. The range of research projects reflects the diversity of the students' backgrounds and interests. We work with students to ensure their research informs their academic program requirements. We have also discovered that true learning is often personally transformative and unexpected. The examples that follow indicate both the range of students and the variety of rich research projects that characterize the Institute.

I. A candidate for a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology at Lesley University, Cathy Madsen pursued in her research a cross-cultural comparison of traditional and Western models of healing. In addition to her extensive research of the literature on cross-cultural counseling and healing, Cathy interviewed native healers in New Mexico to inform her study of Western, Native American, and Mexican American models of healing. In her epilogue, Cathy describes her experience in Santa Fe, which far exceeded her expectations, and expanded beyond her clinical practice to personal transformation.

It is hard to know where to begin in describing my experiences in New Mexico. As Marc Simmons states in his own epilogue, “New Mexico has meant many things to many people” It has certainly meant many things to me, and as each day passes I seem to discover a new meaning, or a new insight, that I can trace back to my short time in the Land of Enchantment. To encapsulate my experiences in New Mexico would be impossible, for the influence of the land's history and culture has permeated much of my existence, making the distinction between my experiences “then” and my experiences “now” nebulous indeed.

People often ask me about my trip to New Mexico. What did you do? Where did you go? What did you see? I show them my pictures and maybe they are intrigued. I explain the history and perhaps they are fascinated. But what catches them most by surprise is when I try to explain what it was I felt—what couldn't be captured in a photograph or in a book. Sometimes I am asked to clarify but I am at a loss of words, for the experience of New Mexico goes beyond human language. New Mexico communicates through a language that is spiritual, a language that cannot be learned but only experienced. A language that is devoid of words, but communicates more about who we are and where we belong than any words could touch upon. It communicates that we are part of something majestic, something universal, something timeless. It communicates that the core of life is a mystery, and that this unknowing is to be embraced for its completeness and holiness rather than feared for its silence and power.

My time in New Mexico confirmed what I have long felt in my heart—that the presence of the past continues to exist within us today, that the knowledge of those who have come before us is there to guide us and assist us as we navigate through the waters of our current lives. So many of us are crying desperately for healing in our lives and communities—for meaning, understanding, connection, and continuity. So many of us look to contemporary culture for answers in healing, perhaps unaware that many of the answers are already in existence. The traditions of ritual, community, folklore, and spirituality that are so endemic to the American Southwest hold immeasurable value for us today. As I watched the Santo Domingo Corn Dance, I imagined what it would be like if our own communities engaged in such tradition, if one thousand of our closest neighbors came together in prayer and gratitude. If in our own communities we were able to come together as a unit with the shared goal of finding meaning in our existence, finding connection with one another, and seeking connection with something greater. Perhaps thoughts of isolation and futility would vanish. Perhaps feelings of powerlessness and disconnection would dissolve. And just maybe, perhaps our healing as a community could begin.

There is much for us to learn from the evolution of cultures in the Southwest. How is it that three cultures have been able to merge as one, yet retain their uniqueness? Integration is not easy, and the history of the Southwest will attest that it can be exceptionally painful as well. But the cultures have evolved and influenced each other in many ways that have benefited the communities—from housing structures to spiritual beliefs to herbal remedies. As our own communities become more diverse, perhaps we should look to New Mexico to see not only the potential perils of a changing culture, but also the many gifts. My own research on traditional healing systems of the Southwest has illustrated this possibility. While the initial intention of the project was to compare the systems, it soon evolved into something much greater. As my worldview of healing expanded, so did my conceptions on the process of healing—and my role as a healer. My writing evolved from a simple comparison of cultures to my thoughts and beliefs of the great potential such ancient traditions have

for us today. I began to see that the integration of healing systems was not necessarily additive, but a new calculation in its own right. I began to see that as our cultures evolve, so do we; and not only does evolution involve the presence of the future, but also the presence of the past.

I have often made the joke to others that I have found my home in New Mexico, that my time here in Massachusetts has just been a visit. But in my heart I truly do feel as if I found a place where I belong. As I wrote in another writing, in New Mexico I found a place where "my spirit soars and my soul can bear itself without shame;" a place where I could create from my heart, where my passions were nourished and cultivated. Often I long to return to New Mexico, and at other times I find comfort in my home here as well. At these latter times I see that perhaps my home is not in the land of New Mexico per se, but what it embodies—beauty, tradition, wisdom, timelessness, faith, creation, and mysticism. And then I know that I did not find my home in New Mexico, but in New Mexico I found my home within myself.

II. Kathy Duran was a student in the Adult Baccalaureate College of Lesley University pursuing a major in Early Childhood Education. Kathy explored the nature of home and homelessness in her research to inform her teaching in Cape Cod with young children from families experiencing economic hardships. Kathy reflects on the creative transformation within herself that her experiences of the land and the people inspired.

Now I embrace the silence. With eyes closed, I breathe slowly and deep to call up the scents and scenes of this "Land of Enchantment." Majestic mountains, like ancient faces, assemble to whisper the stories of this land to whomever dares to listen. Whistling winds work with magnetic force drawing the seeker into the bosom of the mountains, unearthing the past. Pinon and Ponderosa Pine intermingle to create a fragrant flavor that can only be described as the incense of nymphs. The magnetism of the place pulsates like a beating heart, summoning me, a tugging that cannot be ignored.

Once again the west is staking its claim on me. Always for me there has existed conflict between my east and west, mother and father, duty and desire.

My old sense of longing is stirred. Perhaps that is why I came, to check in. I am confirmed. Wait for me, I will return. Sandstone murals etched and painted by the winds of time stand tall and wait for me. I will return. Until that moment, I exist knowing that such beauty awaits me, owns me. My memories are the strands that connect us.

So many experiences in such a short period of time. I am still working to decipher the multitude of impressions made on my being. As I sift through the montage of images that emerge in my mind's eye, I see most clearly the faces.

Pueblo Indians demonstrating their spiritual connection to the land through the sacred corn dance was a deeply moving experience. So many stories reflected in the faces. To bear witness to an ancient ceremony carried on with such reverence, strength, and conviction, renewed my own system of belief. Reflections of ancient civilizations shone clearly upon their faces. It was community in the truest sense. Individual egos were put aside while a spirit of community took form as an entity unto itself. The Pueblo buildings of Santo Domingo appeared a living, breathing member of the community structure. Like a mother with arms outstretched, the pueblo buildings encircled and protected its people. I never dreamed I would be a part of such an experience, and yet it has been allowed to me. I do not take this lightly, over time I will make use of this experience. I will enlighten others.

Faces of women: Rina Swentzell writer and architect; Navajo weaver and Santo Domingo tamale maker at El Rancho de las Golondrinas; Taos Pueblo grandmother and granddaughter artisans; Taos Pueblo potter and painter; all resonate in my mind. Women who welcomed my wondering, with warmth. It's no wonder earth is called Mother. Each of these women took a moment to connect with me, to look me in the eye and share with me what they could. I treasure these moments in time, I remember the faces.

The words of Rina Swentzell have made a lifelong impression on me. She invited me to look at creativity without ego. I'm still not sure what it is in this area that arouses the creative spirit, all I know is that it does. On my second night in Santa Fe, prior to my meeting Rina, I wrote in my journal:

"Art abounds in this town. Creative energy spirals, atom to atom, in a feverish pitch. It catches my spirit in its cyclone and I am ego no longer, but a piece, an active component of a greater energy. At one with the creative spirit, I am welcomed back to the oversoul. Folk art allows, or invites, plain folks to share their ideas, creations, energy and spirit. Human beings communicate using artistic means they just do. It's an innate ability. This community feeds the creative soul. I'm mainlining creative energy. Surge with the force."

The following night Rina gave her talk. I was mesmerized. Never before has a speaker laid out so many pearls in so short a time. I scrambled to capture her airborne wisdom, with the rhythmic movement of my pen. Although I could not preserve every word, the essence of her shared knowledge is a gift I savor. . . In the words of Rina Swentzell:

"I am an expression of the Universe because I breathe it in. If I say I am not creative, then I am denying the expression of the Universe. Every time I take a breath, I breathe in the Universe. The world is sacred. If I can breathe in the Universe, then you can too. A danger is when human groups see themselves as something separate, then you

don't breathe it in as easily. Everybody has creativity. How can anyone be possessive of sacredness? ... Art is what it is, that which comes through you, and you give birth to, but it is not your own."

Later that evening, I reflected on my notes and realized that I had tapped into the vitality of this mountainous nirvana. Art in the absence of ego. Rina confirmed the connection that I felt. I was here for a reason, if only to hear those words. My interest was sparked; I desired to learn more about the Pueblo Indian culture, about their life ways. Rena went on to share her understanding of the Pueblo as a living entity. She spoke of balance, and earth and sky.

In the work that I do, educating young souls, I stress cultural sensitivity. As a student myself, I am always open to learning new approaches to multicultural education. This past year I proposed a diversity workshop for the teaching staff of the elementary school where I work. It was long overdue. The diversity trainer emphasized the importance of self-identity as a primary, yet vital, step in the work of understanding and appreciating other cultures.

III. A student at Georgetown University, Brigid Barry McKenna was completing her undergraduate degree in Psychology and took the Institute for elective credit. She noticed during our fieldwork that very little seemed to be known about Native American soldiers' experiences during Vietnam. She was able, through the support of two of our resource people, to talk directly with two Pueblo men who had very different reactions coming back to New Mexico after service in Vietnam. Her interviews led to her analysis, "Today's American Warrior." Brigid talks about the many further questions she now has, because of her experience, and the growing appreciation she has for the complexity of the cultural interactions she experienced.

The white man does not understand the Indian for the reason that he does not understand America. He is too far removed from its formative processes. The roots of the tree of his life have not grasped the rock and soil. The white man is troubled by primitive fears.

--Standing Bear, Lakota Chief, 1877

When I first visited Santa Fe and the Southwest at the age of eleven, I was fascinated by the entirely different world that existed there. But at the time I saw it as more of a large scale Sturbridge Village or Plymouth Rock and not as a living, breathing culture that had survived thousands of years growing with the environment while at the same time maintaining ancient traditions and rituals.

Returning to Santa Fe this summer, I envisioned myself to be ten years smarter and thought I would suddenly be able to put it all together now that I have almost a college degree behind me. However, instead I found myself so much more confused. Whereas ten years ago I looked at the cultures of the Southwest as a history of the

past, I was now seeing it as a way of life in today's society. This provoked dozens of questions in me. How can the Native Americans practice the Catholic religion today when they battled for years against it being 'forced' upon them? Why do the American Indians allow outsiders or the 'white man' to come to their sacred feasts after years of mistreatment by outsiders? Do the Hispanics feel that their story has been forgotten in all the emphasis on Native Americans? Why don't the American Indians just get running water?

John Berkenfeld at one point told our class that the more you learn the less you know. Over the course of the week, I was able to answer some of these questions. But more important than finding the answers, I realized that this quest for concrete answers which had been bogging me down was of little importance. It is not an issue of running water or electricity, but rather one of community and refusal of technological advances that disturb a belief system and a way of life. I still cannot answer many of these questions, but I also no longer feel the need to find out the answers. I have learned to seek an understanding rather than a knowledge.

When I started researching my project on the involvement of Native Americans in the Vietnam War, I thought that it must have been difficult to join and to fight with the United States Military, which had caused so much destruction for the Native American people. Since so few Native American males between the ages of 18 and 24 were in school at that time, I imagined they would have been terribly affected by the draft just as the African American males had been. I wondered if the war created a deep seed of resentment among the American Indians, in particular those of the Vietnam War generation.

By far the most memorable experience I had was the half-hour I spent speaking with John Mondragon, an American Indian Vietnam veteran. John was wearing a gray T-shirt with 'ARMY' printed across his chest and came down from repairing the roof of the adobe church to speak with me. In such a chance meeting while on a tour at the Taos Pueblo, I had no questions prepared and knew so little about the American Indian involvement in general. But I did not need to ask him any questions. He spoke so honestly and so freely. Although I can never truly know what it was like as an American Indian to fight in Vietnam or how the rest of his life has been affected, John allowed me in and now I understood.

In my paper I was able to quote John throughout and share many of the stories he shared with me. But there is no way to convey what it was like as I stood there listening. He kept his head down the entire time pulling tar off of his work gloves. We only made eye contact a few times. He said how he liked talking about it, but how difficult it was to look into someone's eyes as he told his story. I had never before felt so instantly close to someone as I did that afternoon with John.

John is obviously affected by his experiences in Vietnam and he told me he still thinks about it often. But he seemed to have such a sense of peace. It was almost as if he knew why things happened. He spoke of the 'Indian way' something I cannot even attempt to convey to another person. But for me John lives the 'Indian way.' I wanted to start my epilogue with the quote by Standing Bear because I feel that I was that white man when I first visited Santa Fe only looking at the end product and seeking out the final answer. In my experiences this week though, I feel as though I am now free to look at things differently and not always be so limited by the typical Western way of learning and thinking.

Part IV. Conclusion/Epilogue

Having recently returned from our eighth Traditions and Cultures Institute in Santa Fe, we conclude this article with reflections on the aspects of this teaching and learning experience that sets it apart. The powerful images that we carry with us are many:

*Standing in the brilliant sun, heat beating through our straw hats, watching hundreds of Pueblo dancers, men, women and children, drums pounding, men's chorus chanting.

*Visiting the tiny rooms of a two hundred year old Spanish colonial ranch, while in the dusty courtyard Hispanic women make dough.

*Walking, mesmerized, through the International Folk Art Museum, with case after case of traditional scenes created from miniature objects.

*Talking with artists, historians, writers, and community leaders.

It is the people that make this such a unique learning experience, both the students who come with their questions and the faculty in Cambridge and Santa Fe who bring their generous spirit to construct this learning community. As Adrian Bustamente pointed out in his introduction to the group, what sets this institute apart is the desire of the faculty to share their passion and knowledge of the three cultures of Santa Fe and to engage students on a deeper level in understanding the traditions and cultures of the Southwest. We do this as a community of learners who share responsibility for increasing understanding and constructing meaning. Books, art works, and resources are discovered and eagerly shared among the group by both students and faculty, and the enthusiasm for learning becomes contagious.

Adrien Bustamente

The transformation from tourist to researcher is an impressive one. Students grow into their role as scholars each day as they articulate their progress on their research

projects and more clearly define their research questions. The learning community of students and faculty from Cambridge and Santa Fe plays a critical role in supporting each researcher. As students grow more competent in their understanding of the culture of the Southwest, they become more confident in defining their projects. This is evidenced in students' journals, which begin with descriptions of experiences and end in reflections on learning with deeper insights into cultural identity.

The range of backgrounds of the participants in our group adds to the richness as well as the complexity of leading this learning community. Undergraduate students in the arts, graduate students in education and the social sciences, experienced classroom teachers, librarians, administrators and artists work together to construct our learning community. Each participant comes to the Institute with a project idea, and by the end of the experience, returns to New England with the resources to complete the project. Just a sampling of the projects this year include: a study of the pottery of three pueblos; a study of myth and legend as a way to construct identity; a photographic essay of the land using 19th century development techniques; a study of medicinal herbs, with samples and a visual directory; a study of the affects of geography on three different Native American tribes. Like so many pioneers who have traveled to the Southwest before us, to explore this "land of enchantment," we seek to understand more fully how three distinct cultures can still exist and co-exist in harmony and respect. It took the group to move us to this new understanding.

We return to Santa Fe and the Institute because the teaching and learning that we value offers such possibilities for us and for our students, and for us by extension. In as much as our students learn more than they expected, and are often transformed by this learning community, we too are transformed. Each of us finds a special quality in the experience—whether it's the exhilaration of reaching the top of Chimney Rock and looking out over a broad valley that stretches for miles in shades of tan and rose; or the satisfaction of learning in the studios of artists and the homes of art collectors; or the images and insights gained at the Corn Dance or Los Golondrinas. Each of us finds special memories and ideas we carry with us until we return again, and continue to know this place "for the first time."

Perhaps this unique Institute is best summed up in the words of the leading historian and author of New Mexico, Marc Simmons, who recently wrote to us about his experience with the Santa Fe course:

In the years that I have been associated with the Lesley University program in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I have had the opportunity to observe closely its content and the performance of staff and student participants. The structure of the Santa Fe Institute is superbly designed, providing one of the best in-depth introductions to this multi-cultural area that I have seen. Its originators hit upon a comprehensive and intelligent formula at the beginning and have managed to preserve it, while adding occasional refinements.

All students in the program that I have met are well-grounded, enthusiastic and able to take advantage of a schedule crowded with unusual, even rare experiences. Every one of them seems to come away with an enlarged appreciation for the unique cultural traditions preserved in New Mexico.

I remain a strong supporter of Lesley's peerless Santa Fe Institute.

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