

Maria Głowacka

Hopivötskwani – The Way of Becoming the Model Person in Hopi Tradition = Hopivötskwani – droga stawania się osobą modelową w tradycji Hopi

Humanistyka i Przyrodoznawstwo 8, 153-159

2002

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Maria Głowacka

Institut Filozofii
Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski
w Olsztynie

Institute of Philosophy
University of Warmia and Mazury
in Olsztyn

HOPIVÖTSKWANI – THE WAY OF BECOMING THE MODEL PERSON IN HOPI TRADITION

Hopivötskwani – droga stawania się osobą modelową w tradycji Hopi

Słowa kluczowe: osoba modelowa,
etyka Hopi, *Hopivötskwani*, *unangwa*.

Key words: model person, Hopi ethics,
Hopivötskwani, *unangwa*.

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest próbą opisu modelowej osoby w tradycji Hopi za pomocą języka hopi jak również próbą analizy znaczenia koncepcji *unangwa* w etyce Hopi. Modelowa osoba jest tu rozumiana jako zbiór wyselekcjonowanych, częściowo empirycznych składników bytu ludzkiego z jednej strony i etycznych ideałów postulowanych i konstruowanych przez kulturę Hopi z drugiej strony, z wyraźnym akcentem na tę drugą stronę. Poprzez zastosowanie terminów językowych Hopi autorka artykułu próbuje pokazać ważność dokładnych lingwistycznych translacji dla międzykulturowego zrozumienia.

Abstract

This article attempts to present the Hopi model person in the light of the Hopi language and analyze the significance of the concept of *unangwa* in Hopi ethics. The Hopi model person is understood here as an assemblage of selected, partly empirical components of a human being on one hand and ethical ideals postulated and constructed by Hopi culture on the other hand with the emphasis on the latter. By applying native terms the author of this article attempts to show the importance of careful linguistic translations for intercultural understanding.

*We are not perfect yet
but through good behavior
we are trying to become Hopi¹*

The Hopi live in northeastern Arizona, about one hundred miles east of the Grand Canyon. They occupy pueblo villages located on the top of three mesas (table mountains) surrounded by rocks and the desert lands. The Hopi have never been dislocated from their homelands which they chose after their mythical emergence into the present world *Tuwaqatsi*. Their cultural distinctiveness is based on intricate kinship and clan systems and complex ceremonial cycle that serves to ensure fertility, abundance of the harvest and the sustaining of life. Hopi ritual knowledge is transmitted in the native language which belongs to UtoAztecan family of languages² and circulates according to strict rules within lines of inheritance. Practice of secrecy gives ritual knowledge a character of intellectual property and protects cultural integrity and essences of the native way of life³.

Their ancestors were *Anasazi* or *Hisatsinom* as the Hopi would prefer to say⁴. *Anasazi* is an anglicized form of a Navajo word which is interpreted as ancient enemies, enemy ancestors or enemy forefathers. In Hopi tradition, the ancestors are highly respected and cannot be referred to as ancient enemies. That is the reason why the Hopi reject this name. The indefiniteness of the term *Hisatsinom* (*hisat* means long ago, *sinom* means people) indicates that the Hopi recognize their descent from various groups of people now represented as clans. This suggests that one should be more attentive to the Hopi views that are deeply rooted in their traditional knowledge.

It is worth noting that the word *hopi* has been mistranslated for about one hundred years. In many publications, the word *hopi* is matched with the semantic idea of peace and is translated as peaceful, peaceable. From the linguistic point of view the word *hopi* is untranslatable⁵. This does not imply that the Hopi do

¹ H. COURLANDER, *Hopi Voices: Recollections, Traditions, and the Narratives of the Hopi Indians*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque 1982, s. 245.

² Emory Sekaquaptewa together with Hopi elders and a team of non-Hopi linguists developed a system of writing in Hopi. Hopi literacy may become an important strategy in language revitalization and preservation.

³ For further discussion on Hopi ritual knowledge, see M. GLOWACKA, *Ritual Knowledge in Hopi Tradition*, „American Indian Quarterly” 1998, vol. 22 (3).

⁴ The term *Anasazi* has been commonly used in the anthropological literature.

⁵ For a thorough discussion, see E. MALOTKI, *Language as a Key to Cultural Understanding: New Interpretation of Central Hopi Concepts*, Baessler-Archiv, Beitrage zur Volkerkunde, Neue Folge, Band XXXIX, Berlin 1991, pp. 45–46.

not have the category of peace in their language. For many centuries they lived in isolation in the remote desert area and until their first contact with the Spanish invaders they undoubtedly felt secure in their fortress-like villages⁶. The Hopi word *maqasqatsi* used with the particle *qa* (not) means life without feeling of threat or danger from the outside world and can be considered as the Hopi linguistic equivalent of the concept of peace. In cultural context the word hopi has ethical connotations. It means one who follows the Hopi path of life, *Hopivötskwani* and implies an ethical ideal to attain⁷.

The Hopi model person is postulated by *Hopivötskwani*⁸. *Hopivötskwani* is an unwritten traditional ethical code which – as Geertz has emphasized – remained unchanged despite cultural intrusions from the outside world⁹. The term *Hopivötskwani* is a combination of three words: *hopi*, *pöhu* and *tsiikwa* and a future tense marker *-ni*¹⁰. The noun *pöhu* (when combining with the word *hopi*, initial letter p changes into v) means „the path (of life)”, the verb *tsiikwa* means „to make something straight”. So literal meaning of *pötskwani* means „the path of (life) that will be (morally) straight”. The future tense marker *-ni* present in this word suggests that the Hopi have a task to fulfill – they strive for the ethical ideal which is difficult to actualize in real life. This task is enacted in ritual context during *katsina-tsuku* ceremonies¹¹.

Let us examine briefly the main characteristics of the Hopi ideal person by applying the Hopi linguistic terms. First of all, one should be *qa hovariwta* which means „pure of heart, or morally correct” (*qa* means „not”, *hovariwta* means „morally impure”)¹². On a ceremonial level, this state of being *qa hovariwta* can make a ceremony effective and bring rain which ensures fertility and

⁶ H. JAMES, *Pages from Hopi History*, The University of Arizona Press, Tucson 1990, p. 32.

⁷ E. SEKAQUAPTEWA, personal communication.

⁸ The Hopi term *sino* (pl. *sinom*) means both human being and person. According to Ostasz, a human being is becoming a person not only on the basis of her/his dispositions. Becoming a person is determined by her/his interactions with others, that is by assuming social and cultural roles. See L. OSTASZ, *Rozumienie bytu ludzkiego. Antropologia filozoficzna*, Wydawnictwo OSW, Olsztyn 1998, pp. 43–45.

⁹ A. GEERTZ, *Hopi Hermeneutics: Ritual Person Among the Hopi Indians of Arizona*, [in:] *Concept of Person in Religion and Thought*, H.G. Kippenberg, Y.B. Kuiper and A.F. Sanders (eds.), Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin 1990, p. 314.

¹⁰ E. SEKAQUAPTEWA, personal communication.

¹¹ *Tsuku* (clown) personifies weaknesses of human nature, *katsina* represents moral perfection. For additional information, see for example, E. SEKAQUAPTEWA, *Hopi Indian Ceremonies*, [in:] *Seeing with a Native Eye. Essays on Native American Religion*, W.H. Capps and E.F. Tonsing (eds.), Harper and Row Publisher, New York 1976, also see H.U. SANNER, *Another Home Run for the Black Sox. Humor and Creativity in Hopi Ritual Clown Songs*, [in:] *New Voices in Native American Literary Criticism*, A. Krupat (ed.), Smithsonian Institution, Washington 1993.

¹² E. SEKAQUAPTEWA, personal communication.

fruition symbolized by a perfect ear of corn (*tsotsmingwu*). On an individual level, it can bring a healthy and long life, which is a symbol of personal fulfillment for a Hopi.

The other significant characteristic of the model person is humbleness (*okiw'unangwa*). Humbleness brings positive results on a community level - the effectiveness of ritual performance. On an individual level, it can bring a lack of suffering. The Hopi model person is expected to be calm and patient in her/his heart (*paas unangwa'yta*) because aggressiveness and meanness (*a'ni unangwa'yta*) can ruin an entire ceremony or any other kind of collective or individual endeavor. She/he is obliged to concentrate on good thoughts (fem. *nukwangwuwuni*, mas. *lomawuwuni*) and have good intentions (fem. *nukwangwtunatya*, mas. *lomatumatya*), especially during ritual preparation and ritual performance. Those who participate in a ritual event are expected to think about rain, abundance of the harvest, longevity, i.e. those aspects of life that determine well-being of the Hopi community¹³.

The Hopi ethical statement: *Unangwpe* (*unangwa +ep wuuwa*) which means „Think with the heart” refers to an intellectual process felt from (at) the heart and suggests the close link between thoughts and the heart (*unangwa*). In the Hopi language there is no semantic equivalent for the concept of mind. The word *wuwuni* signifies thought, thinking, idea, notion or wisdom. This noun in its possessive form *wuwuni'at* literally means her/his thought and sometimes can be translated in English as mind for the purpose of semantic approximation of Hopi thought.

Please note that according to Wierzbicka, the concept of mind cannot be reasonably regarded as conceptual universal but rather a culture-specific notion - a characteristic feature of Anglo-Saxon culture - because it has no semantic equivalents in many European languages as well as non-European languages¹⁴.

All that has been ascribed to the mind in Western tradition, the Hopi attributed to the heart (*unangwa*). *Unangwa* is a center of the individual self, especially with regard to thoughts, intentions, wishes and feelings. It is source of ethical behavior and awareness. Ritual acts, tools and symbols are the means of person's communication with the immanent force of life pervading the surrounding world and manifesting on an individual level as *hikwsi* (literally: breath). In order to

¹³ As Talayesva has stated, „I knew that I was not dancing for pleasure but to help with crops. 'Think of rain while you dance' the old men advised”. D. TALAYESVA, *The Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*, L. Simmons (ed.), Yale University Press, New Haven 1942, p. 229.

¹⁴ A. WIERZBICKA, *Soul and Mind: Linguistic Evidence for Ethnopsychology and Cultural American History*, „American Anthropologist” 1989, nr 91, pp. 46-48

communicate with this power which is not acknowledged or clearly perceived in Western culture, a Hopi has to focus on her/his own heart – *unangwa* where a symbolic site of communication is located¹⁵. In ritual context, the human heart can communicate with the force of life in which human beings are rooted and the world is embedded, and affect forms and processes of being¹⁶. The Hopi believe that rain is generated first in people's thoughts, in their hearts then it becomes manifested in the environment¹⁷. This implies personal responsibility not only for results of one's physical acts but also for one's mental states.

The concept of *unangwa* provides a ground that links thoughts and feelings with the individual and community well-being. Negative thoughts and feelings may induce passivity, reluctance to cooperate within social network and cause social alienation. They may also disturb ritual concentration and effectiveness¹⁸ and cause sickness or even death. In the Hopi language one can find the term *wuwantuya* meaning „burdensome thoughts, worries that can cause sickness and even death”, and *wuwanmokta* which means „to going along filled with bad thoughts” (*mok-* is a stem meaning „to suffer, to die”). In Hopi tradition sickness and even death can be described as consequences of maintaining bad thoughts at person's heart. Bad thoughts can weaken the body and discourage the will to live. „People often get sick from worries. They say this kills more people than anything else. So people tell you not to worry. [...] Sometimes death is regarded as a form of suicide – as a result of wanting to die because of some disappointments or shame or perhaps because one wants to hurt other people”¹⁹.

Please note that the Hopi recognize personal responsibility of an individual for her/his own health condition. Human beings have a certain power of their own (by controlling their internal states) to protect themselves from illness and death. In study on epilepsy among Navajos, Hopis, Tewas, Zunis conducted by Levy only Hopis considered as a sign of personal weakness to rely only on anti-epileptic medications to prevent seizures²⁰.

¹⁵ As Rosaldo nicely put it, in regard to Ilongots, the heart with focus knows what to do and how to be effective. M. ROSALDO, *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1980, p. 50.

¹⁶ In Whiteley's view, Hopi ontology grants agency via conscious thought and deliberate action. P. WHITELEY, *Rethinking Hopi Ethnography*. Smithsonian Institution Press. Washington 1998.

¹⁷ E. SEKAQUAPTEWA, personal communication.

¹⁸ As Parsons noted, „In announcing of a Hopi ceremony, the Crier [Chief] reminds people to be good to one another and live in kindness because worries, sorrow, anger, quarrels can interfere with the efficacy of a ceremony”. E.C. PARSONS, *Pueblo Indian Religion*, Chicago University Press, Chicago 1939, p. 83.

¹⁹ R. BRANDT, *Hopi Ethics. A Theoretical Analysis*, Chicago University Press, Chicago 1954, p. 3.

²⁰ J. LEVY, *Psychological and Social Problems of Epileptic Children in Four Southwestern Indian Tribes*, „Community Psychology” 1987, vol. 15.

The ideal of Hopi behavior has its antithesis designated by the term *qa hopi* (literally: „not Hopi”). The term *qa hopi* describes a person whose qualities are antisocial and stand in contradiction with the ethical values of *Hopivötskwani* (for example, aggressiveness, meanness, vanity etc.) This type of person is also linked to the Hopi concept of a *powaqa* (*powa-*, a stem of the word means transform, *-qa*, relativizing suffix means one who). A *powaqa* (this term is loosely translated in English as „witch”) is an individual who transforms, or uses her/his knowledge/power for negative purposes and is said to weaken people's will to live. This individual personifies negative behavioral patterns which bring social disruption and interfere with the effectiveness of ritual action.

It is worth noting that *powa* has been considered as a word for supernatural power²¹. However, *powa* does not exist in the Hopi language by itself. *Powa-* is a stem of some Hopi words such as *powa'iwta* („be back to normal, transformed, purified, discharmed”), *powalawu* („be curing, undertaking purification) and refers to the concept of transition, transformation. During the Powamuy ceremony the initiation into *Katsina* society occurs. For young girls and boys, this initiation is a symbolic transition into maturity. Please note that the verb *powata* means also „to change bad habits, to fix, put in order, make right”.

The Hopi model person is represented by a *wimmongwi* who possesses the most detailed ritual knowledge and is responsible for its activation within the customary practice. He acquires ritual knowledge during a lifetime training including inculcation of ethical values and practice of ethical behavior according to teachings of *Hopivötskwani*. The effectiveness of ritual action depends on the proper conduct of all the participants, however, if a ritual event is not successful a *wimmongwi* may be blamed for not living up to moral requirements. As Geertz rightly points out, „The Hopi ritual institution gives the opportunity to test and reconfirm the strength of the model person”²².

A Hopi person from her/his place in the universe can interact with the force of life represented on individual level by *hikwsi*. *Hikwsi* is the key concept to understanding the Hopi view of the world and their communicative relationships with all aspects of the world. Human *hikwsi* is a portion of the life-giving force that enfolds the entire world and invests all its elements, for instance the sun, the stars, the clouds, the wind, manifesting in them differently²³. On the fourth day after death, a person's *hikwsi* leaves the body and goes to a place which can be

²¹ M. R. BRADFIELD, *An Interpretation of Hopi Culture*. Duffield, Derbyshire 1995, p. 206, 296.

²² A. GEERTZ, op. cit., p. 318

²³ For further discussion on the concept of *hikwsi*, see M. GLOWACKA, *The Concept of Hikwsi in Traditional Hopi Philosophy*, American Indian Research and Culture Journal 1999, vol. 23(2).

best described by the native term *atkya* (literally: „down below”)²⁴. The word *atkya* can refer both to the bottom of the Grand Canyon called *Síp’apuni* from which the Hopi emerged in mythical times and to an area seen from the tops of Hopi mesas in the southwestern direction where the San Francisco Peaks, homes of the Hopi *katsinam* are located²⁵. *Hikwsi* of the dead is believed to have the ability to return to the Hopi mesas in the visible forms of rain (or rain-bringing clouds) that sustains life and to operate as animating force in the world of the living. With the concept of *hikwsi* the barriers between living beings, and what Westerners would label non-animate entities are removed.

Hopi ethics assumes that individual and collective efforts of those who are *qa hovariwta* i.e. have pure hearts can influence events in the world such as coming rain, or the formation of clouds. Through living up to their ethical ideals, that is following *Hopivötskwani* and performing ritual action in a proper way the Hopi are able to participate in the process of actualization of being and contribute to the desired state of nature.

The Hopi understanding of the model person and Hopi ethics bring into a large repertoire of modern behavioral patterns respect for deeper potentials of a human being and for the environment.

²⁴ E. SEKAQUAPTEWA, personal communication.

²⁵ This area is marked with *kiikiqö* (footprints, or ruins) that are places once inhabited by the Hopi ancestors *Hisatsinom* before they arrived at Hopi present settlements, such as Homol’ovi, Wupatki, Tsor’ovi (Tuzigoot).