READING FOR MODULE 2: SEEING WITH A NATIVE EYE

SEEING WITH A NATIVE EYE: HOW MANY SHEEP WILL IT HOLD? BY BARRE TOLKEN (copyright 1976)

SUMMARY: The author highlights the differences between his Western culture and the Navajo (Dine) culture. He contrasts perceptions of religion, time, space, ways of knowing, and how these cultural differences caused a kind of "cultural shock." Living with the Navajo people for two years and speaking their language gave him insights into his own cultural beliefs/values and how his cultural worldview influenced how he (often incorrectly) perceived the Navajo culture.

There are some things that one knows already if he or she has read very much about the native Americans. One of the most important is that there is almost nothing that can be said about "the Indians" as a whole. Every tribe is different from every other in some respects, and similar in other respects, so that nearly everything one says normally has to be qualified by footnotes. What I am about to say here does not admit room for that. I propose, therefore, to give a few examples from the Navajo culture and make some small glances at other Indian cultures that I know a little bit about; that is simply a device to keep my observations from appearing as though they were meant to be generally applicable to Indians of the whole country.

It is estimated that there were up to 2,000 separate cultures in the Northern hemisphere before the advent of the white man. Many of these groups spoke mutually unintelligible languages. Anthropologists estimate that there were as many as eighty such languages in the Pacific Northwest alone. In terms of language and traditions, these cultures were very much separated from each other; and although they have been lumped into one category by whites ever since (and that is the source of some of our problems), any given Indian will have a few things in common with some other tribes and many things not in common with others. My generalizations are made with this in mind from the start. But one must start somewhere in an attempt to cope with the vast conceptual gulf that lies between Anglos in general and natives in general, for it is a chasm which has not often been bridged, especially in religious discussion.

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I do not claim either to be one of those rare people who have succeeded in making the leap—an insider, a confidant, a friend of the Red Man's Council Fire—in short, one of those Tarzans even more rare in reality than one would conclude from their memoirs. But I did have the good fortune to be adopted by an old Navajo, (Little Wagon), in southern Utah in the mid-fifties during the uranium rush. I moved in with his family, learned Navajo, and lived essentially a Navajo life for roughly two years. Of course, I have gone back since then at every possible occasion to visit my family, although my adopted father is now dead, as is his wife and probably 50% of the people I knew in the fifties. If one has read the Navajo statistics, he knows why. This is not intended to be a tale of woe, however; I simply want it understood that I was not a missionary among the Navajo. Nor was I an anthropologist, a teacher, a tourist, or any of the other things that sometimes cause people to come to know another group briefly and superficially. Although, indeed, at one time I had it in my mind to stay with them forever, it is probably because my culture did not train me to cope with almost daily confrontation with death that I was unable to do so. I learned much from them, and it is no exaggeration to say that a good part of my education was gained there. It was probably the most important part. "Culture shock" attended my return to the Anglo world even though I left the Navajos as "un-Navajo" as when I arrived.

With that for background, though, I think I can say something about how differently we see things, envision things, look at things, how dissimilarly different cultures try to process the world of reality, which, for many native American tribes, includes the world of religion. In Western culture, religion seems to occupy a niche reserved for the unreal, the Otherworld, a reference point that is reached only upon death or through the agency of the priest. Many native American tribes see religious experience as something that surrounds man all the time. In fact, my friends the Navajos would say that there is probably nothing that can be called nonreligious. To them, almost anything anyone is likely to do has some sort of religious significance, and many other tribes concur. Procedurally, then, our problem is how to learn to talk about religion, even in preliminary ways, knowing perfectly well that in one society what is considered art may in another be considered religion, or that what is considered as health in one culture may be

religion in another. Before we can proceed, in other words, we need to reexamine our categories, our "pigeonholes," in order to "see" things through someone else's set of patterns. This is the reason for the odd title: "Seeing with a Native Eye."

Through our study of linguistics and anthropology we have learned that different groups of people not only think in different ways, but that they often "see" things in different ways. Good scientific experiments can be provided, for example, to prove that if certain ideas are offered to people in patterns which they have not been taught to recognize, not only will they not understand them, they often will not even see them. We see things in "programmed" ways. Of course, Professor Whorf was interested in demonstrating the pervasiveness of this theory with respect to language, and many anthropologists and linguists have had reservations about his theories. But the experimentation continues, and there is some interesting and strong evidence that a person will look right through something that he or she is not trained to see, and that different cultures train people in different ways. I will not get into the Jungian possibilities that we may be born with particularized codes as well; this is beyond my area of expertise. But it is clear that when we want to talk about native American religion, we want to try to see it as much as possible (if it is possible) with the "native eye." That is to say, if we talk about native American religions using the categories of Western religious, we are simply going to see what we already know is there. We will recognize certain kinds of experiences as religious, and we will cancel out others. To us, for example, dance may be an art form, or it may be a certain kind of kinesis. With certain native American tribes, dance may be the most religious act a person can perform. These differences are very significant; on the basis of this kind of cultural blindness, for example, Kluckhohn classified the Navajo coyote tales as "secular" primarily because they are humorous.

The subtitle of this paper comes from my adopted Navajo father. My first significant educational experience came when I was trying to educate him to what the outside world looked like. Here was an eighty or ninety-year-old man in the 1950s who had never seen a paved road or a train; he had seen airplanes flying overhead and was afraid of them. He had seen almost nothing of what you and I

experience as the "modern, advanced world." I decided I would try to cushion the shock for him by showing him pictures, and then I would invite him into town with me sometime when I went to Salt Lake City. I felt he needed some preparation for the kind of bombardment of the senses one experiences in the city after living out in the desert.

I showed him a two-page spread of the Empire State Building which appeared in *Life* (magazine) that year. His question was, immediately, "How many sheep does it hold?" I had to admit I didn't know, and that even if I did know, I didn't count that high in Navajo; and I tried to show him how big a sheep might look if you held it up against one of those windows, but he was interested neither in my excuses nor in my intent to explain the size of the building. When I told him what it was for, he was shocked. The whole concept of so many people filed together in one big drawer—of course he would not have used those terms—was shocking to him. He felt that people who live so close together cannot live a very rich life, so he expected that whites would be found to be spiritually impoverished and personally very upset by living so close together. I tried to assure him that this was not so. Of course, I was wrong. Little by little one learns.

The next episode in this stage of my learning occurred about six months later, when I was at the trading post and found a magazine with a picture of the latest jet bomber on it. I brought that to him to explain better what those things were that flew over all the time. He asked the same question in spite of the fact that there were lots of little men standing around the plane and he could see very well how big it was. Again, he said, "How many sheep will it carry?" I started to shrug him off as if he were simply plaguing me, when it became clear to me that what he was really asking was, "What is it good for in terms of something that I know to be valid and viable in the world?" (That, of course, is not his wording either.) In effect, he was saying that he was not willing even to try to understand the Empire State Building or the bomber unless I could give those particular sensations to him in some kind of patternings from which he could make some assessment. He was not really interested in how big they were, he was interested in what they were doing in the world. When I told him what the jet bomber was

for, he became so outraged that he refused ever to go to town, and he died without ever having done so as far as I know. He said that he had heard many terrible things about the whites, but the idea of someone killing that many people by dropping the bomb and remaining so far out of reach that he was not in danger was just too much!

The only other thing that approached such outrage, by the way, was when I explained to him about the toilet facilities in white houses, and I mentioned indoor toilet functions. He could hardly believe that one. "They do that right in the house, right inside where everyone lives?" "No, no, you don't understand. There is a separate room for it." That was even worse—that there could be a special place for such things. A world so neatly categorized and put in boxes really bothered him, and he steadfastly refused to go visit it. At the time I thought he was being what we call primitive, backward—he was dragging his feet, refusing to understand the march of science and culture. What I "see" now it that, as a whole, he was simply unable to—it did not "compute" in the way he was trying to call my attention to that fact, and I was not receiving the impression.

I bring these matters up not because they are warm reminiscences, but because difficulties in communicating religious ideas are parallel to these examples. When my adopted father asked, "How many sheep does it hold?" he was asking, "What is it doing here, how does it function? Where does it go? Why do such things occur in the world? We might consider the Pueblo view that in the springtime Mother Earth is pregnant, and one does not mistreat her any more than one might mistreat a pregnant woman. When our technologists go and try to get Pueblo farmers to use steel plows in the spring, they are usually rebuffed. For us it is a technical idea— "Why don't you just use plows? You plow, and you get 'x' results from doing so." For the Pueblos this is meddling with a formal religious idea (in Edward Hall's terms). Using a plow, to borrow the Navajo phrase, "doesn't hold any sheep." In other words, it does not make sense in the way in which the world operates. It is against the way things really go. Some Pueblo folks still take the heels off their shoes, and sometimes the shoes off their horses, during spring. I once asked a Hopi whom I met in that country, "Do you mean to say, then, that if I

kick the ground with my foot, it will botch everything up, so nothing will grow?" He said, "Well, I don't know whether that would happen or not, but it would just really show what kind of person you are."

One learns slowly that in many of these native religions, religion is viewed as embodying the reciprocal relationships between people and the sacred processes going on in the world. It may not involve a "god." It may not be signified by praying or asking for favors, or doing what may "look" religious to people in our culture. For the Navajo, for example, *almost everything* is related to health. For us health is a medical issue. We may have a few home remedies, but for most big things we go to a doctor. A Navajo goes to the equivalent of a priest to get well because one needs not only medicine, the Navajo would say, but one needs to reestablish his relationship with the rhythms of nature. It is the ritual as well as the medicine which gets one back "in shape." The medicine may cure the symptoms, but it won't cure you. It does not put you back in step with the things, back in the natural cycles—this is a job for the "singer." Considering the strong psychological and spiritual role of such a person, it should not come as a surprise that it is on spiritual (magic?) grounds, not medicinal, that some medicinal materials are not used. For example, Pete Catches, a Sioux medicine man (who practices the Eagle "way" of the Sacred Pipe), knows about but will not employ abortion-producing plants, for such use would run counter to and thus impede the ritualistic function of the pipe ceremony, a good part of which is to help increase the live things in the world. In the reciprocative, death is not a proper ingredient.

I want to go a little further into this, because these patterns, these cycles, these reciprocations that we find so prominently in native American religions, are things which for our culture are not only puzzling but often considered absolutely insane. It is the conflict or incongruency in patterning that often impedes our understanding. Let me give a few examples of this patterning. In Western culture—I suppose in most of the technological cultures—there has been a tremendous stress on lineal patterning and lineal measurements, grid patterns, straight lines. I think one reason for this is that technological cultures have felt that it is not only desirable but even necessary to control nature. We know there

are very few straight lines in nature. One of the ways people can tell if they are controlling nature is to see that it is put in straight lines—we have to put things "in order." And so we not only put our filing cases and our books in straight lines and alphabetical "order", we also put nature in straight lines and grid patterns—our streets, our homes, our acreage, our lives, our measurement of time and space, our preference for the shortest distance between two points, our extreme interest in being "on time."

Those who have read the works of Hall and other anthropologists on the anthropology of time and space are familiar with these ideas. Each culture has a kind of spatial system through which one knows by what he sees as he grows up how close he can stand to someone else, how he is to walk in public and in private, where his feet are supposed to fall, where things are supposed to go. These patterns show up in verbal expressions too—we have to "get things straightened out," "get things straight between us," make someone "toe the line." We also arrange classrooms and auditoriums in some sort of lineal order (other groups might want these to be arranged in a circle). To us, having things "in order" means lining things up, getting things in line. We talk about "getting things straight with one another," looking straight into each other's eyes, being "straight shooters." We even talk about the "straight" people vs the "groovy" people. Notice how we often depict someone who does not speak clearly "talks in circles," or uses circuitous logic. We think of logic itself as being in straight lines: A plus B equals C. We look forward to the conclusion of things, we plan into the future, as though time were a sort of straight track along which we move toward certain predictable goals.

If one knows much about native Americans of almost any tribe, he realizes that I am choosing, intentionally, certain lineal and grid patterns which are virtually unmatched in native American patterns. We learn from each other in the house or in the city by learning the intersection of straight lines—so many doors down the hallway is the kitchen, or the bathroom, and we are never to confuse them. We separate them. One does not cook in the bathroom—it is ludicrous to get them mixed up. We have it all neatly separated and categorized. For most native American groups, almost the reverse is true—things are brought together. Instead

of separating into categories of this sort, family groups sit in circles, meetings are in circles, dances are often—not always—in circles, especially the dances intended to welcome and include people. With the exception of a few tribes such as the Pueblo peoples, who live in villages which have many straight lines, most of the tribes usually live (or lived) in round dwellings like the hogan of the Navajo, the tipi of the plains Indians, the igloo of the Eskimo. The Eastern Indians and some Northwestern tribes sometimes lived in longhouses, but the families or clans sat in circles within.

There is, then, a logical tendency to recreate the pattern of the circle at every level of the culture, in religion as well as in social intercourse. I think the reason for it is that what makes sense, what "holds sheep" for many tribes, is the concept that reciprocation is at the heart of everything going on in the world. I have had Pueblo people tell me that what they are doing when they participate in rain dances or fertility dances is not asking help from the sky; rather they are doing something which they characterize as a hemisphere which is brought together in conjunction with another hemisphere. It is participation in a kind of interaction which I can only characterize as sacred reciprocation. It is a sense that everything almost always goes this way. We are always interacting, and if we refuse to interact, or if some taboo action has caused a break in this interaction, then disease or calamity comes about. It is assumed that reciprocation is the order of things, and so we will expect it to keep appearing in all forms.

I think it makes anthropological and linguistic sense to say that any culture will represent things religiously, artistically, and otherwise, the way its members "see" things operating in the world. But here is where the trick comes in. When we from one culture start looking at the patterns of another culture, we will often see what *our* culture has trained us to see. If we look at the Navajo rug, for example, we are inclined to say that Navajos use many straight lines in their rugs. And yet if we talk to Navajos about weaving, the *gesture* we often see is a four-way back-and-forth movement; and they talk about the interaction within the pattern—a reciprocation. Most often the Navajo rug reciprocates its pattern from side to side and from end to end, creating mirror images. My adopted sister, who is

a very fine weaver, always talks about this kind of balance. She says, "When I am thinking up these patterns, I am trying to spin something and then I unspin it. It goes up this way and it comes down that way." And she uses circular hand gestures to illustrate. While we are trained to see the straight lines, and to think of the rug in terms of geometric patterns, she makes the geometrical necessities of weaving—up one, over one—fit a kind of circular logic about how nature works and about how man interacts with nature. If we are going to talk about her beliefs with respect to the rug in terms of geometric patterns, she makes the geometrical necessities of weaving—up one, over one—fit a kind of circular logic about how nature works and about how man interacts with nature. If we are going to talk about her beliefs with respect to rugs, we need somehow to project ourselves into her circles.

Let me give a couple of other examples. These, by the way, are not intended to be representative, but are just some things I have encountered. They are simply illustrative of the way a Navajo might explain things. There is a species of beads that one often finds in curio shops these days. They are called "ghost" beads by the whites though I do not know any Navajos who call them that except when talking to whites (they feel they ought to phrase it the way the whites will understand it). The brown beads in these arrangements are the inside of the blue juniper berries, which the Navajo call literally "juniper's eyes." In the most preferred way of producing these necklaces, Navajos search to find where the small ground animals have hidden their supply of juniper seeds. Usually a small girl, sometimes a small boy, will look for likely hiding places, scoop them all out when she finds them, and look for the seeds that have already been broken open, so as not to deprive the animals of food. She puts all the whole seeds back and takes only the ones that have a hole in one end. She takes them home, cleans them, punches a hole in the other end with a needle, and strings them together. I do not know any Navajo in my family or among my acquaintances who ever goes without these beads on him somewhere, usually in his pocket.

My Navajo sister says that the reason these beads will prevent nightmares and keep one from getting lost in the dark is that they represent the partnership

between the tree that gives its berries, the animals which gather them, and humans who pick hem up (being careful not to deprive the animals of their food). It is a three-way partnership—plant, animal, and man. Thus, if you keep these beads on you and think about them, your mind, in its balance with nature, will tend to lead a healthy existence. If you are healthy by Navajo standards, you are participating properly in all the cycles of nature, and thus you will not have had dreams. Bad dreams are a *sign* of being sick. So these beads are not for warding off sickness itself; rather, they are reminders of a frame of mind which is essentially cyclic, in the proper relationship with the rest of nature—a frame of mind necessary to the maintenance of health.

Again, using the weaving of rugs as an example, I want to explain the significance of the spindle and the yarn. The yarn comes from the sheep, of course. The Navajos explain the relationship there not in terms of the rug, the end products—which, of course, is what our culture is interested in—but in terms of the relationship with the yarn and with the sheep, and with the spinning of the yarn which has to be done in a certain direction because it goes along with everything else that is spinning. Everything for the Navajos is moving; an arbitrary term in English such as east is phrased in Navajo, "something round moves up regularly." When one spins yarn, then, one does not just twist it to make string out of it; one twists it in the right direction (sunwise) with everything else (otherwise, the thread will ravel). Thus, the yarn itself becomes a further symbol of man's interactions with the animal on the one hand, and with the whole of the cosmos on the other. When one works with yarn one is working with something that remains a symbol of the cyclic or circular interaction with nature. Even the spindle can be seen as an agency of, or a focal point in, a religious view of man and nature.

In a recent experiment by an anthropologist and a moviemaker, some young Navajos were given cameras and encouraged to make their own movies. One girl made a movie called, "Navajo Weaving." It lasts, as I recall, almost forty-five minutes, but there are only a few pictures of rugs in it. Most of the film is about people riding horseback, wandering out through the sagebrush, feeding the sheep, sometimes shearing them, sometimes following them through the desert,

sometimes picking and digging the roots from which the dyes are made. Almost the entire film is made up of the things that the Navajo find important about making rugs: human interaction with nature. That is what rug making is for Navajos. Something which for us is a secular craft or a technique is for these people a part or extension of the reciprocations embodied in religion.

Religious reciprocity extends even into the creation of the rug's design. My Navajo sister wove a rug for me as a gift, the kind which the traders call *yei* (*yei* means like "the holy people"). The pattern in this particular rug is supposed to represent five lizard people. The two on opposite ends are the same color, and the next two inward are the same color, and the one in the middle a distinctly different color. The middle one is the dividing line, so that the pattern reciprocates from end to end of the rug. When my sister gave it to me, she said, "These represent your five children." Of course, I was moved to inquire of her why she should represent my five children as lizards (I had private ideas why she might). I wondered what her reasoning was, and I certainly knew children are not "holy people"—far from it. She pointed out, "Your oldest and youngest are girls, and they are represented by the two opposite figures on each end. Then you have twin boys—they are the two white ones, because they are alike. Then, there is another boy, who doesn't have a mate in your family, is he is the center point of the family, even though he isn't that in terms of age." She made the pattern reciprocate from one end to the other not only in terms of representing my family but in terms of color. All the dyes were from particular plants which were related in her mind to good health. Lizards represent longevity, and she was making a statement of, an embodiment of, their health and longevity. This is a wish that any Navajo might want to express, because, as noted above, health and longevity are central to Navajo religious concerns. If I knew more about the symbolic function of certain colors in the rug, or the use of the dye-producing plants in Navajo medicine, I have no doubt that I would have more to say about the religious expression intended therein.

Reciprocity is central to the production of many other Navajo items, especially so in the making of moccasins. My brother-in-law, Yellowman, when he

goes hunting for skins to put on the body, tries to produce what the Navajos call "sacred deerskin." It is supposed to be produced from a deer whose hide is not punctured in the killing. If one wants the deer for meat, it can be simply shot (Yellowman, though he is in his early sixties, still hunts with a bow and arrow). But when he hunts for moccasins, or for cradle boards for his family (the deerskin helps to surround the baby), then he wants skin of the sacred kind. To obtain sacred deerskin in the old fashion way, one runs the deer down until it is exhausted, and then smothers it to death.

It is done in this manner: one first gathers pollen, which he carries with him in a small pouch. He then gets the deer out into open country and jogs along behind it, following until it is totally exhausted. Deer run very rapidly for awhile but soon get tired. The man who is good at jogging can keep it up for some distance. Still, it is no easy job, as you can imagine if you ever visited the desert of the Monument Valley area. When the deer is finally caught, he is thrown to the ground as gently as possible, his mouth and nose are held shut, and covered with a handful of pollen so that he may die breathing the sacred substance. And then—I am not sure how widespread this is with the Navajos—one sings to the deer as it is dying, and apologizes ritually for taking its life, explaining that he needs the skin for his family. The animal is skinned in a ritual way, and the rest of the deer is disposed of in a ritual manner (I do not feel free to divulge the particulars here).

The deer-hide is brought home and tanned in the traditional way. The coloration is taken from particular kinds of herbs and from parts of the deer (including its brains). Then the moccasins are made by sewing the deer-hide uppers with cowhide soles. In many cases they are buried in wet sand until the person for whom they are designated comes by. In so doing, of course, he wears his footprints into them. You can always tell when you have on someone else's moccasins, if that mistake should ever occur, because they hurt. Your own toe prints are in your own moccasins, for they have become part of you. It is no accident that the word for moccasin or shoe is *shi ke,* "my shoe," which is exactly the same word for "my foot." Religiously speaking, what happens is that the deerskin becomes part of us, and this puts us in an interactive relationship with the deer. The whole event is

ritualized, carried out in "proper" ways, because it falls into a formal religious category, not a mere craft. The moccasin is more than something to keep the foot warm and dry: it is symbolic of that sacred relation and interaction with the plants and animals that the Navajo see as so central to "reality."

Also central to Navajo religion is the restoration of health when it has been lost. The *hogan* is the round dwelling the Navajos live in. The fire is in the middle of the floor, and the door always faces east. One of the reasons for this, as my adopted father told me, was to make sure that people always live properly oriented to the world of nature. The door frames the rising sun at a certain time of the year. The only light that comes in is either through the smokehole on the top, or through the door, if it happens to be open. Healing rituals involving "sandpainting" are usually enacted inside the hogan and are oriented to the four directions. When the patient takes his or her place on the sandpainting, ritually they are taking their place within the world of the "holy people," related to all the cycling and reciprocation of the universe. It is partly that orientation which cures one.

Yellowman still hunts for meat with bow and arrow. His arrowheads are made out of ordinary carpenters' nails pounded out between rocks, although he has a whole deerskin bag of stone arrowheads that he has picked up on the desert. When I asked him why he did not use those nice stone points on his arrows, he looked at me very strangely. (I knew that the Navajo put them in the bottom of medicine containers when they are making medicine, but I thought that perhaps he knew how to make them himself given the proper kind of rock.) I asked whether he knew how the old-timers used to make them. He looked at me as if I were absolutely insane. He finally answered, "Men don't make them at all; lizards make arrowheads." For him, stone arrowheads, such as one might find, are sacred items, and they fall into the same category as lizards, lightning, and corn pollen. Lizards, as I mentioned earlier, are related to long life and good health. When one finds a lizard or an arrowhead, he picks it up and holds it against the side of his arm or heart, the same places where pollen is placed during a ceremony. Clearly, stone arrowheads are for curing, not killing; or, more properly, they are for killing *diseases*. Thus, even arrowheads have to do with special sacred medicinal categories, not with the

kinds of practical categories our culture might see. In other words, learning about Navajo religion and daily life requires the learning of a whole new set of concepts, codes, patterns, and assumptions.

A student of mine paraphrased an old proverb this way: "If I hadn't believed it, I never would have *seen* it." This is essentially what I am saying about viewing religion in other cultures. Our usual approach is in terms of pictures, patterns, gestures, and attitudes that we already know how to see. For example, when some dance specialists went to Tucson a couple years ago to watch the Yaqui Easter Ceremonies, all they saw were the dances. They did not see that on a couple of occasions, several people very prominent in the ritual were simply sitting next to the altar for extremely long periods of time. I talked to almost every person at that conference, and only a few of them had seen those people sitting there. There wasn't any dancing going on there, and so the dance people weren't "seeing." And yet it was probably a very important part of the dance. I do not pretend to have understood this part, but the point is that the strangers had not even seen it; they were watching for what they as Anglos and dance specialists could recognize as dance steps. I would not accuse them of stupidity, ignorance, or narrowmindedness. Rather, they had not been taught to "read," to see other kinds of patternings than their own.

To complicate matters further, many tribes feel the real world is not one that is most easily seen, while the Western technological culture thinks of *this* as the real world, the one that *can* be seen and touched easily. To many native Americans the world that is real is the one we reach through special, religious means, the one we are taught to "see" and experience *via* ritual and sacred patterning. Instead of demanding proof for the Otherworld, as the scientific mind does, many native Americans are likely to counter by demanding proof that *this* one exists in any real way, since by itself, it is not ritualized.

What the different cultures are taught to see, and how they see it, are thus worlds apart (although not, I think, mutually exclusive). One culture looks for a meaning in the visible, one looks for a meaning beyond the visible. The "cues" are different because the referents and the connotations are different. Add to this

basic incongruency the fact that the patterning of one is based on planning, manipulation, predictability, competition, and power, while the other is based in reciprocation, "flowering," response to situation, and cooperation—and who would be surprised to find that the actual symbols and meanings of the two religious modes will be perceived and expressed in quite contrastive forms? We must seek to understand the metaphor of the native American, and we must be willing to witness the validity of its sacred function, or else we should not pretend to be discussing this religion. Before we can see, we must learn to look.

TO PONDER:

1. THE AUTHOR CONTRASTS HIS WESTERN CULTURE WITH THE NAVAJO CULTURE. WHAT STOOD OUT MOST FOR YOU AS YOU READ THIS ESSAY?

2. WHY DOES THE WESTERN WAYS OF KNOWING RELY HEAVILY ON CATEGORIZATION?

3. WHAT CORE BELIEFS WERE REVEALED BY THE NAVAJO PRACTICES OF RECIPROCITY?

4. WHAT CULTURAL SHOCK DID THE NAVAJO ELDER EXPERIENCE WHEN HE WAS SHOWN PICTURES OF THE HIGHRISE BUILDINGS, BATHROOMS, AND BOMBER AIRPLANES?

5. THE SEPARATION FROM NATURE IN THE WESTERN CULTURE IS AN ESSENTIAL CULTURAL DIFFERENCE TO THE INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW. HOW COULD THEY COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER?