II. Imagining: Meeting the Other

A. **Natural world is sacred.**

1. The earth is a living, breathing entity.

a. not a metaphor

Chief Seattle: “Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people.”

Black Elk: “Every step we take upon You, should be done in a sacred manner, each step should be as a prayer.”

b. can be harmed

Smohalla: no mining or agriculture with a plow, only a “gentle digging stick,” (see Dust Bowl and monocrop farming).

2. It is inspirited, animal, bird, insect, plant, forest, river, the land, mountains.

3. Traditional Navajo

a. Dine

b. Dinetah, sacred land, which is marked by

four sacred mountains

c. First Man and First Woman are prominent among the

Holy People

d. the earth was devoid of form when the Holy People

arrived

e. First Man brought soil from the world below

i. sacred matter

ii. planted it in the four different places

iii. breathed into them to make them live and grow large

f. During this creative period Talking God and Calling

God assumed guardianship of the mountains

i. dressing them in jewels

ii. giving each two songs

iii. placing super naturals within to gather the clouds

and answer prayers "those that stand within"

g. The mountains are referred to as hogans in which

and on which many beings reside, animals and plants

h. much of Navajo ritual, and social life is organized

around their belief in the sacredness of the mountains.

i. they would not harm the mountains, mining, logging, hunting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiZ7pPNISyc>

4. Tewa

a. The land is an extension of Indian thought and being

b. place is not just physical but spiritual

c. A relationship of reciprocity with the land

i. "this is the place that made us"

ii. living carried out with humility, understanding, and respect for the sacredness of the place and all living things in the place

iii. "look to the mountain" which refers to the long view,

what we are doing in terms of future generations

d. this relationship was the basis and is reflected in every aspect of their culture, language, art, music, dance, social organization

e. education starts with the environment

**B.** **Nature as Ethical Community**

1. All beings, human and non-human, are members of the community

2. Human are not qualitatively different or superior

3. All beings have souls or are inspirited.

4. all beings have moral standing

5. relation of human to others based on a complex system of obligations and responsibilities for humans

6. even in hunter societies

a. belief in reincarnation

b. complex rituals involved in sending creature

on its way

c. to return again

Navajo and bears

Often considered to be as much human as animals, they are shown respect that is due holy beings . . . even tracks are treated with respect. They have the power to heal and help. Only killed under extreme circumstances such as starvation and then with a prayer, "though you are eaten, you will return whole to your own people and will become chief over your own people."

**C. Norms, Ceremonies, Creation stories**

1,There is an order to this world and the goal of

human beings ought to be to find one's place in the

order.

2. Traditional Navajo: *Hozho*, or the beauty way of life

a. humility

b. harmony

c. respect for all living things

3. This relationship is the primary and most important

relationship for the culture/society.

4. Above is reflected in cultural and religious practices.

a. corn and the prayer at sunrise

b. shape of homes or hogans

c. songs, ceremonies, art work

5. sacred symbols: Cheyenne

Cheyenne and Sacred Arrow

The Medicine Arrow symbolize the collective existence of the tribe. As the Arrows prosper, the tribe prospers; as they are allowed to suffer neglect, the tribe declines in prosperity. There attributes are in their supernatural qualities.

The Arrows were given to the Cheyenne by their mythological culture hero, Sweet Medicine. Sweet Medicine went to Bear Butte with all the wise men of all the peoples of the earth as a pupil of Maiyun (the Great Spirit). The Great Spirit gave Sweet Medicine

the four arrows, two have power over the buffalo, and two have power over human beings. They are the Cheyenne’s greatest resource against two biggest threats: hunger and enemies

e. ceremonies and dances

Cheyenne Sun Dance

The central theme of the Cheyenne Sun Dance is world renewal. "the object of the ceremony is to make the whole world over again . . ."

The origin myth of the Sun Dance is that Erect Horns journeyed to a sacred mountain because of the need of his people - famine. "Vegetation withered, the animals starved, the land became barren and dry, and the ancient Cheyenne were on the verge of starvation, for they had no food but dried vegetation and their dogs of burden."

Erect Horns took his wife to the sacred mountain where the Great Spirit taught them the Sun Dance: Follow my instructions . . . when you go forth from this mountain, all of the heavenly bodies will move. The roaring Thunder will awaken them, the sun, moon, stars, and the rain will bring forth fruits of all kinds, all animals will come forth behind you from this mountain, and they will follow you home.

f. rituals: Walkabouts

Appendix I

A. Iroquois: creation story

1. Before there were humans there were Sky People who

dwelled in the celestial world

2. There was no sun all light came from the celestial

tree that stood in front of the Lodge of Sky Chief

3. Sky Chief had married a young wife who became

pregnant Sky Woman

4. Firedragon spread rumors that the child was not

Sky Chief's

5. Sky Chief in anger ripped up the celestial tree and

through his wife in the hole

6. Sky Woman fell down towards the water below

7. The birds feeling sorry for her supported her breaking

the fall and carrying her slowly downward

8. The water animals hurried to make a place for her

9. Turtle said that he would support a world on his back.

10. Muskrat came up with a large mouthful of earth

which he placed on turtles back

11. The blossoms of the fallen celestial tree shone through the hole

and became the sun

12. When Sky Woman landed grass and trees had already begun to grow

13. Sky Woman gave birth to a daughter who gave

birth to two sons, the father could have been Turtle

or West Wind

14. The two were twins but one was good and one was

evil, the good twin born the the usual way, the evil twin

born through the mother's side and killed her

15. Sky Woman buried her daughter and plants miraculously began to grow

from various parts of her daughter

16. These were the most important plants, corn,

beans, and squash "Our Supporters" or "Three Sisters"

17. As the good twin grew to manhood he began creating

good things: plants, animals, medicinal herbs, rivers,

and streams

18. The Evil Twin began to spoil his brother's work,

rapids, and boulders in the river, poisonous plants, thorns,

and briars, diseases, and monsters

19. The Good and Evil Twin battled on, Evil could never

win

20. Finally, The Good Twin created human beings to

enjoy all the good things that he had made for them

Appendix II

I. Yup'ik Eskimos

A. Rich coastal environment of Nelson Island

B. they view animals as nonhuman persons

C. Viewed the relationship between humans and

animals as collective reciprocity

1. animals gave themselves to the hunter in response

a. to the hunter's respectful treatment of them

as persons in their own right

i. respect is understood as both love and fear

ii. *takar* (to be shy of, respectful for,

intimidated by

b. as humans animals also had souls

i. soul is life force

ii. stays close to body for time after death

iii. before it goes to extraterrestrial realm

for rebirth

2. both animals and humans participate in a cycle of

birth and rebirth

a. cycle was contingent on right action and thought

b. by both self and others

3. also in the past inanimate objects were thought to

have souls

B. Both animals and humans possess a awareness or consciousness which allow them control over their own destiny

1. experience through life is a key in controlling one's

destiny

2. from experience comes understanding for both

animals and humans of an elaborate set of rules

a. for living

b. which define action between humans and

humans and non-humans

3. especially important

a. rules for hunting were rules of respect that if

not followed would mean the animals would not

give themselves to the hunter