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TITLE THE TREES STOOD DEEP ROOTED

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but rather with the theory itself as finally developed and with the many implications it has for our studies.

6. Charles S. Peirce, Ms. 692, as quoted in Thomas A. Sebeok, "One, Two, Three Spells U B E R T Y (in lieu of an introduction)," in *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*, ed. Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 17.
7. References to Peirce's works will be given by volume and paragraph numbers from Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, vols. 1–6 ed. C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss; vols. 7–8 ed. A. W. Burks, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931–1958).
8. Peirce was concerned with how abduction differs from induction. He changed his mind on the matter many times. For a discussion of this distinction see 2.624.
9. Peirce utilized the term *guess* frequently to characterize hypothesis and theory. For discussions of the term see Charles Sanders Peirce, "Guessing," *The Hound and the Horn* 2 (1929): 267-82 and *Collected Papers* 5.181 and 8.385.
10. William H. Davis, "Synthetic Knowledge as 'Abduction,' " *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Spring 1970, 40.
11. Norwood R. Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 119.
12. "A Pearl of Great Price and a Cargo of Yams: A Study in Situational Incongruity," in Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 90-101.
13. The closest is Peirce's discussion of "doubt" and "the fixation of belief" (5.370–87), which parallels in some respects my following discussion of stock hypotheses that terminate the abductive process.

The Trees Stood Deep Rooted

Some time ago I went to hear Indian elders speak about public education programs for Indians. An old Papago man was among them. When his turn came, he rose slowly, and with deliberation began to speak. His style was formal and bore an air of certainty, though for his meaning I had to await the English interpretation. He began with the creation of the Papago world by telling how Earthmaker had given the Papago land its shape and character. He identified the features of that creation with the land on which he had always lived, as had his father and all his grandfathers before him. Pausing in his story, he asked how many of us could locate our heritage so distinctly. Then he went on to tell the stories of Iitoi who had acted as protector and teacher of the Papago under the name Elder Brother. He told of the way of life of the Papago people, a way of life they have always enjoyed.

It was perhaps fifteen minutes before he began to speak directly to the subject of education, but the old man had been talking about education all along. He was demonstrating to his audience a basic principle in education: knowledge has meaning and value only when placed within a particular view of the world. He was utilizing the way of his people by consulting the stories of the creation for the proper perspective from which to speak. There was power in his words and his statement was convincing.

As a Papago elder this old man understood the power of relating the stories of creation. Papago culture abounds in songs and poems ritually uttered in order to provide sustenance and to maintain the Papago way of life. They are the gifts of the gods, not the works of man. Some are attributed to Iitoi, who used them to win battles against enemies. The Papago identify the ruins which are found

throughout their southern Arizona desert homelands as the villages of these enemy peoples. The Papago people have songs and poems which they recognize as capable of affecting nearly every aspect of life. The feeling of the power the people find in these words is captured in the beautiful lines of one of their poems.

> With my songs the evening spread echoing
> And the early dawn emerged with a good sound.
> The firm mountains stood echoing therewith
> And the trees stood deep rooted.[1]

The Papago are not unique among Native Americans in recognizing a kind of performative power in the language of their songs, prayers, and poems. In his eloquent address "The Man Made of Words," N. Scott Momaday said, "Whenever the Indian ponders over the mystery of origin he shows a tendency to ascribe to the word a creative power all its own. The word is conceived of as an independent entity, superior even to the gods." According to Momaday, the Native American "locates the center of his being within the element of language. . . . It is the dimension in which his existence is most fully accomplished. He does not create language but is himself created within it. In a real sense, his language is both the object and the instrument of his religious experience."[2]

The repetitive nature of Native American prayer and song has caused some observers to declare them to be merely the recitation of magical formulas. This is a view to be guarded against. The magic of the word lies mainly in the fact that it is capable, through image and symbol, of placing the speaker in communication with his own being and with the whole world. Native Americans do not restrict language to its capacity to describe the world; they recognize that, from one perspective, it is the world.

There seems to be a remarkable link between the stories of origin and the lifeways of Native Americans. It seems to me that this link is the language of ritual that constitutes Native American religious traditions. The events of creation are somehow paradigmatic, and the knowledge given in the creation stories permeates the life of the people.

To the Navajo the world was not created by some powerful earth-making god, but through the creative powers of thought and the

ritual language of song and prayer. Indeed, thought and speech were personified prior to the creation of the world. They arose from the medicine bundle out of which all creation was to come, and they were said to embody the powers of the bundle. They took the form of a young man and woman of such radiance and beauty that they could scarcely be looked upon. While they were to be present in this form for only a brief time, it was told that they would always be near to the world, for theirs are the powers that sustain life. Their names are often rendered in English as Long Life Boy (thought) and Happiness Girl (speech), reflecting the Navajo view that their names are synonymous with the highest measure of life.

The Navajo ceremonial Blessingway demonstrates how the Navajo envision the way thought and speech became manifest in the creation of the world and in the sustenance of life. Of the twenty-five or thirty major ceremonial ways known to the Navajo, Blessingway is generally recognized as fundamental to all others; it is an indivisible body of story and ritual and a whole religious ideology. The Navajo name for Blessingway, *hózhǫ́ǫ́jí*, reflects the pervasive ideology of creation that supports this ceremonial; a literal translation would be something like "the way to secure an environment of perfect beauty." The occasion for the first performance of a Blessingway ceremonial was the creation of the Navajo world; consequently the way of creation is the model for all versions and all performances of Blessingway. It is because Blessingway is the way of creation that it is called the backbone of Navajo religion and is recognized as the source and pattern of the Navajo way of life and thought.

In Blessingway stories the first act in the creation of the world was the building of a ceremonial structure in which the ritual acts of creation could be performed. A version of Blessingway, therefore, is performed on the occasion of the construction of a Navajo house. But Blessingway is also incorporated into all other ceremonials as the first-performed rite in order to "bless" the structure in which the rituals are to be carried out—whether the occasion be marriage, the need for rain, or difficult or imminent childbirth. In the story prototype the humanlike beings who were performing the ritual began to construct the ceremonial house. Significantly, these humanlike beings who preceded the creation of the world are known by the Navajo word *yałti'ii*, which means "speaker." They

readied the support poles and leaned them into position. As the support poles were readied and dropped into place, songs named them and described their placement and significance.

Along below the east, Earth's pole I
first lean into position
As I plan for it it drops,
As I speak to it it drops,
Now it listens to me as it drops,
It yields to my wish as it drops.
Long life drops, happiness drops into
position *ni yo o.*[3]

And below the south, Mountain Woman's pole is leaned into position, followed by Water Woman's pole below the west and Corn Woman's pole below the north.

The house described in this ceremony provides the pattern for the common Navajo conical-style hogan. It serves the Navajo both as a place of residence and as a ceremonial structure. But the song identifies the four main poles of this simple substructure with the pillars that support the Navajo world. The foundations of the poles are located below the horizon in the four cardinal directions. Each pillar is named and given the power to sustain life through its identification with long life (thought) and happiness (speech). The commonplace Navajo home is at the same time the structure of the entire Navajo world.

This linkage between the most commonplace and the most ethereal, made through ritual language, is illustrated even more powerfully in the imagery, found in a Navajo Nightway prayer, of the house whose structure is composed of the life forms of the earth:

House made of dawn,
House made of evening twilight,
House made of dark cloud,
House made of male rain,
House made of dark mist,
House made of female rain,
House made of pollen,
House made of grasshoppers.[4]

Each phrase focuses the mind on an image of the finite, material, domestic dwelling only to explore that image into fantastic dimensions by identifying its composition with unexpected building materials. A unity is achieved through the lines in their creation of an image of a living universe.

Navajo sand painting also illustrates the way in which creation is fundamental in Navajo life. Paintings made of crushed vegetal materials or ground minerals and rocks are ritually constructed and used as part of several Navajo ceremonials. Hundreds of them have been recorded, and their designs and meanings are remarkably complex. Without accounting for all the occasions in which sand paintings are used, the ritual acts performed upon them, or the various scholarly interpretations made of them, it can be shown that the efficacy of the sand-painting act is derived from the events in the creation of the Navajo world.

In the Blessingway story it is told that after the "speakers" built the creation hogan, they entered it and proceeded with the creation. From the medicine bundle they took pieces of white shell, abalone, turquoise, and jet. With these materials they constructed representations on the floor of all forms of life that were to be in the Navajo world. These forms of life were personified as holy people having humanlike forms. The ritual construction was like a sand painting. Each holy being represented was given identity by its dress and placement relative to the others. The resulting design was not a physical model of Navajo land, but rather a map of the Navajo religious conception of the world.

The creation concluded with the intoning of a long prayer to these holy people, who represented the life forms of the earth. The prayer associated and identified them with the physical universe and consequently effected an indivisible unity between the ritual world of the ceremonial hogan of creation and the ordinary world of the Navajo, a unity of the spiritual and the material. A world had been made using only simple materials and the creative powers of thought and speech. Based on this model, Navajos continue to perform acts of creation through the power of representation in sand paintings and the ritual language of song and prayer.

Following the creation the life forms known as Dawn and Evening Twilight went on a tour to inspect the new world. Upon

ascending mountaintops to gain a vantage point, they found the scene around them to be extremely beautiful. This state of pristine creation is articulated by the Navajo people in many ways, and it stands as the inspiration and measure of Navajo life. Life is envisioned as a journey down a road. It is deemed a good life if the traveler is surrounded by an environment of beauty comparable to that of the newly created world. Most Navajo prayers conclude with a passage describing this good life:

With beauty before me may I walk
With beauty behind me may I walk
With beauty above me may I walk
With beauty below me may I walk
With beauty all around me may I walk
As one who is long life and happiness may I walk
In beauty it is finished.
In beauty it is finished.

Through the utterance of the prayer one is placed once again on the good road, so that it may be said with confidence and feeling, "In beauty it is finished."

There is yet another way to show how the events of creation are paradigmatic for Navajo lifeways. This centers on the importance in Navajo culture of the possession of a mountain-soil bundle. After the world was created, but before it was made suitable for habitation by Navajo people, a girl child was created. Her parents are said to be the beautiful youth and maiden, Long Life Boy and Happiness Girl. This child had the remarkable ability to grow older through time, to reach old age, and to repeat the cycle of life again and again. Because of this she was called Changing Woman. Changing Woman was given a medicine bundle containing objects and powers that created the world. The bundle was the source of her own existence, since her parents were the personification of the powers it held. Changing Woman was also taught the creation rituals. With the bundle and the Blessingway songs and prayers Changing Woman at once holds and represents the power of creation. She personifies the perfect beauty secured in the creation. She is identified with the newly created earth. She is the source and sustenance of all life. She is time. She is the mother of the Navajo people.

After her birth Changing Woman used her creative powers to make the earth ready and suitable for the Navajo people. She created the plants and animals and cleared the world of the monsters who had come to threaten human life. Having made the earth a suitable place, she created the Navajo people. Her final act before departing from the Navajo world was to pass the knowledge of Blessingway on to the Navajo people. In doing so, she charged them with the responsibility to maintain the world in its state of perfect beauty by the use of Blessingway. She warned them that the Blessingway songs should never be forgotten, for Navajo life depends upon them.

Changing Woman is wholly benevolent and of such beauty that she is rarely represented in any visual form in Navajo ceremonies. But she did show the Navajo how to make a bundle modeled on hers; this was the origin of the mountain-soil bundle. It is made with soil ritually collected from the four sacred mountains which stand in the quarters of the Navajo world. The soil from each mountain is wrapped in buckskin. Maintaining the directional orientations, these four bags are placed around stone representations of Long Life Boy and Happiness Girl. A buckskin is wrapped around all this and the bundle is secured.

The mountain-soil bundle is the nuclear ritual object in Blessingway. Many Navajo families keep bundles as guides to the Navajo way of life and as sources of long life and happiness for the family. The bundle holds the powers of creation. It is the source of life and the paragon of perfect beauty established by Blessingway.

Navajo people often refer to the relationship of their many ceremonial ways as the branches of a tree which extend over every occasion, bearing and protecting the Navajo way of life. They identify Blessingway as the trunk of this tree which supports all other ceremonial branches. This tree stands deep rooted in the creation of the world.

Certainly the Navajo are not representative of all Native American peoples, nor should they be considered typical. Even in the American Southwest the Navajo are only one among many cultures that contain a wide variety of lifeways and religious practices. While there is tremendous diversity within Native American cultures, certain general observations may be drawn from the Navajo example.

We have seen that the Navajo find in the story of their origin a paradigm for their lifeways and religious practices. The story of origin serves at once as a prototype for a ceremonial performance and as a wellspring of philosophy and world view. A distinctive characteristic of this paradigm is the way in which it unifies the primordial and physical geographies, the ethereal and the commonplace, and the spiritual and the material. Frequently the best-known passages from Native American literature are ones that illustrate this correlation. Often these passages describe an association of four to seven directions or world categories with colors, animals, birds, eras, and certain qualities or temperaments.

To many such well-defined patterns have suggested that Native Americans live in simple harmonious integration with the world around them. But in light of the Navajo views of creation we should reexamine this common assumption that Native Americans are simple children of nature, for I believe we will find it erroneous. Native Americans have shown themselves to be masters of survival in an environment that has often been reluctant to nurture them, but their lifeways can scarcely be called the simple following of natural instincts. It seems almost the opposite. The Navajo, for example, look upon no living thing as simply natural, as a product of some impersonal system of natural law. Life is dependent upon holy people who were created in the beginning and who stand within all living things. Many Native Americans can hold a person-to-person relationship with their environment or some aspects of it because in their view of creation, the power of life, which has personhood, is united with and identical to the physical living world. The nature of these personal relationships is not determined by the aspirations of ego as much as by patterns established in the stories, songs, and prayers.

There is also a tendency to assume that the paradigms which arise from the stories of creation represent Native Americans views of the permanent status of their world. But these patterns of perfect beauty serve more as an objective and a measure in life than as a description of it. Underlying these global representations of the ideal are infinitely complex principles of relationship which determine and direct the lifeways. In the whole range of human action nothing is exempt. In other words, for many Native Americans all

human action is continually measured against traditional patterns so that the way life is experienced is dependent upon how it is lived.

Through a tradition of formal ritual acts Native Americans can relate to the world, find the significance of life, and uphold the responsibility for maintaining order as it was given to the world in the beginning. In this view their ritual acts are creative acts of the highest order, since the object of their creation is the world itself. The greatest human responsibility is to perform the acts upon which life and reality depend.

The Native American view of human creativity is based in religion, not in art. Such a stance is not void of excitement and illumination, for it is the creative genius of the Native American way of life to see the uncommon in the common, to find the ethereal in the mundane. Theirs is the way longed for by Artur Sammler, the protagonist in Saul Bellow's novel *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, who said, "And what is 'common' about 'the common life'? What if some genius were to do with 'common life' what Einstein did with 'matter'? Finding its energetics, uncovering its radiance."[5] When deep rooted in creation, Native American traditions energize the common life.

NOTES

1. Ruth Underhill, *Singing for Power: The Song Magic of the Papago Indians of Southern Arizona* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968).
2. N. Scott Momaday, "The Man Made of Words," *Indian Voices: The First Convocation of American Indian Scholars* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1970), pp. 49-62.
3. Leland C. Wyman, *Blessingway* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970), p. 115.
4. Washington Matthews, *Night Chant, a Navajo Ceremony* (New York: American Museum of Natural History Memoirs, vol. 6, 1902), p. 143.
5. Saul Bellow, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), p. 147.