Dine Be keyah : the cultural geography and environmental connectedness associated with the religion of the Navajo nation, including a brief synopsis of Navajo perceptions illustrated in Sacred clowns : an honors thesis (HONRS 499)

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Abstract:
The Navajo Nation, located in the American Southwest, are a people who have traditionally maintained a holistic perception of the landscape. A perception that discerned the entire landscape as sacred. Yet, the majority of the Navajo are currently demonstrating a lack of respect for their sacred environment, and ownership disputes concerning the natural resources on their reservation have resulted. The cause of this trend away from traditional practices can be attributed to outside economic forces and federal governmental influences. The discussion details the Navajo religious practices and beliefs, which define the existence of the Navajo Nation. The thesis provides background on traditional Navajo thoughts and gives an explanation of the Navajo Blessingway ceremony. The landscape and the natural resources, which include vast resources of coal deposits, are examined, and the current land dispute revolving around the Hopi tribe is explored. A brief synopsis of the environmental perceptions illustrated in Tony Hillerman's Sacred Clowns is also included to provide a contemporary view on Navajo life.

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