Indian 2 Essay, Research Paper

When comparing the cultural differences between European Americans and Native Americans, nothing can be said about Native Americans as a whole. Every tribe is different from every other in some aspects and similar in other aspects. In general we can express cultural differences; how differently we see things and vision things, look at things, language, religion, and cultural holidays.

For instance, squarness is dominant in American mainstream culture. We presume that our way of living, our way of seeing things, our way of organizing, is obviously the most logical. Native Americans lived within a ’round’ culture and can give us some idea of the cross-cultural experience. They have problems moving within the white mans square and streight world. In Native American way of thinking, symbol is the circle, the hoop. The tipi was a ring in which people sat in a circle and all the families in the village were in turn circles within a larger circle. The nation was only a part of the universe, in itself circular and made of the earth, which is round, of the sun which is round, of the stars which are round. Circle is timeless, it is new life emerging from death – life winning out over death.

For European Americans ‘Land’ is a symbol of private property and individualism. Native Americans perceive ‘the Land’ as something that cannot be owned, land has its own existance. Plants each have a spirit, as does each animal, and all of these essences are part of ‘ the Land.’ To foul ‘ the Land ‘ is to dishonor all of the spirirts that have ever existed there, this difference is at the hearth of most conflicts between American Indians and the United States government.

There is a difference between Indian Americans and European Americans, how they 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. Many Native American tribes see religious experience as something that surrounds man all the time. For them there is nothing that can be called non-religious.