

**James C. FARIS, *The Nightway: A History and a History of Documentation of a Navajo Ceremonial* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1990, xii + 288 pp. ISBN 0-8263-1198-9)**

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[See table of contents](#)

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James C. FARIS, *The Nightway: A History and a History of Documentation of a Navajo Ceremonial* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1990, xii + 288 pp. ISBN 0-8263-1198-9)

The author and the University of New Mexico Press are to be congratulated for this complex, well-presented and fascinating volume, which is of considerable interest to anthropologists, folklorists, museologists, historians of science, and, far from least, Navajo themselves. The casual reader or non-Navajo specialist will find an overview of the interaction between Navajo and Euro-American cultures as exemplified in the recording and interpretation of a single Navajo ceremonial; as such, the book is an intriguing case study in the history of science, with careful scholarly detail combed from archives. For the specialist, there is a collation of detailed information that allows a non-casual assessment of the form, context and history of the Nightway ceremonial. The extensive footnotes entice the reader into this world of detail and the consistency of practice documented by it (although some of the footnoted material should have been incorporated into the main text).

The volume presents an analysis of Navajo practices surrounding and constituting the Nightway ceremonial, based on all of its recorded versions. Faris argues that Euro-American anthropologists, from whom he dissociates himself remarkably given that he is one, have imposed their theoretical preoccupations—largely with symbol and theory—on Navajo practices. He takes these practices to be the essence of healing, of restoring order and beauty to the world.

Transmission of the ceremonial is documented through genealogies and interviews with currently practicing medicine men. The use of masks, medicine bundles, and sandpaintings is also explored, with publication for the first time of twenty-two sand painting reproductions (analyzed in the text in terms of both form and history of preservation). The role of the now-defunct Rough Rock Training School for Medicine Men and Women is particularly fascinating in the maintenance and growth of Navajo traditional ceremonial practice and apprenticeship.

The third section of the volume presents a Nightway text recorded in English by Hosteen Klah in the 1920's which has never before been published. Faris notes that the Navajo language version was never recorded but shows little interest, surprisingly given his explicit respect elsewhere for details of the ceremonial within the Navajo worldview, in linguistic recording of texts as the basis for analysis of practices. He seems not to draw the conclusion that it is because of

their linguistic sophistication that he so often finds himself praising the interpretations of Edward Sapir and Father Berard Haile.

Faris presents himself as having a political agenda on behalf of the Navajo, protesting the appropriation of their culture's ceremonials for a Euro-American curiosity and reification (though acknowledging that many of the records we have would not exist without the anthropologists). In the language of the postmodernist critics of anthropology, emphasizing "local knowledges", Faris sets forth the context of particular recordings, albeit with the unfortunate implication that anthropologists will disapprove of his efforts and that an East Coast academic career is somehow incompatible with serving the interests of the Navajo (e.g., pp. 13-14).

In sum, the volume is a gold mine of different kinds of information about a single Navajo ceremonial. It may serve as a model of the kinds of things a folklorist might want to know—and is rarely told in such detail—about such a cultural form and its practice. It may further serve as a model for meticulous scholarship and consistent respect for individuals and communities studied.

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Karl A. PETER, *The Dynamics of Hutterite Society: An Analytical Approach* (The University of Alberta Press, Edmonton, 1987, 232 pp. ISBN 0-88864-108-7 [cloth], 0-88864-109-5 [paper])

This book provides a social history and a sociological analysis of current dynamics of an enduring cultural-religious sect, the Hutterites. Peter traces the origins of this sect in central Europe during the sixteenth century Reformation. Due to religious persecution and frequent relocation of residence, they developed a strong communal lifestyle and the supportive theology for the same. This communal lifestyle has been transplanted and firmly maintained by the Hutterites in both the Canadian and American Prairies.

The thrust of the book is to analyze the dynamics of that communal life style, its constituent elements, the tensions it generates,