

Class: English 2130

Assignment: Discussion Questions/N. Scott Momaday's *The Way To Rainy Mountain*  
Directions: Read each of the questions below and answer thoughtfully and exhaustively. Consider each question in context of the historical setting, the literary setting, and the intertextual setting. In other words, how does the historical context influence Momaday's work? How does the literary setting and the literature of the past work in conversation with this text? \*\*Note: In answering these questions, reference James Ransom's article, "Perpetuating Remembrance: N. Scott Momaday and Kiowa Storytelling" (posted on your syllabus)

Question #1: In terms of its literary setting, N. Scott Momaday's work initiated the Native American Renaissance as a literary phenomenon. What is the Native American Renaissance period? How is it defined? What are its characteristics? How does Momaday's work, including *TWTRM*, fit into this category? How does the Native American Renaissance compare to those literary movements that have come before it?

Question #2: In *TWTRM*, N. Scott Momaday's investigation and recounting of his Kiowa past can be seen as a personal enterprise, a grounding of himself. Ransom also says that "what Momaday himself has called his act of imagining for himself an identity as an American Indian is narrated in his mixed-genre masterpiece, *TWTRM*." How does Momaday attempt to create an identity for himself in this work? How does this creation relate to our idea of what it means to be American? Does it change or alter the definition? How does Momaday's definition of "American identity" compare to that of his literary predecessors?

Question #3: Consider the tripartite structure N. Scott Momaday employs in *TWTRM*. Define each part of this structure. How does Momaday choose to order each of these tripartite sections? For what purpose? How do they, according to Ransom, "work sequentially to deepen historicality into the assumption and affirmation of cultural or tribal identity of the Epilogue?"

Question #4: Ransom's title infers that N. Scott Momaday's *TWTRM* is an act of "perpetuating remembrance." How does Ransom define this term? How does this definition relate to Momaday's act of storytelling in *TWTRM*? Also, how is this act of storytelling similar to and different from other techniques of storytelling that have come before him? In other words, when thinking about telling the story of "America" and what it means to be "American" how does Momaday's technique compare to other literary works that have come before him?