

NATIVE AMERICAN CONTEXT:

We start with this because it provides a way of dealing
with the subject that is very effective....

I'm asking: how does Black Elk view the world?
is it possible for you to view it the way Black Elk did?

~~Examples~~ THREE EXAMPLES:

1. BARRE TOELKEN -- Anthropologist at the University of Oregon

think of all of this.... mother earth is pregnant....

BUMPER STICKER: BE KIND TO YOUR MOTHER (meaning EARTH)
Steel shoes... Springtime...

2. Ake Hultkrantz -- SWEDISH PROFESSOR. at the University of
Stockholm...and one of the world's leading experts on the
study of Native American religions...

SALVATION:..... ok.....

not if this implies rescue...

3. SCOTT MOMADAY....

Literacy

Talking about VET CENTERS....

And he told me about Native Americans he knows he
engage in cleansing by going out in the woods to
live like the animals...

various kind of intellegence

Excellent Essay; STRANGERS IN THE VILLAGE, by David Mura

essay begins with comments on Black Women in NYC who take care of upper-middle class and upper-class white children.
notes: while black women are occupied this way, taking care of white children, the children of the black women are coming home and taking care of themselves...

MURA describes the situation in the houses of the whites who employ the black nannies...
white women come to expect that they have the right to make demands on the black women; why? -- because they employ them...
BUT, white women also need the Affection of the black women who work in their homes....
Why is such affection needed?
because the person is black...
Mura suggests that the affection serves as ABSOLUTION for historical and collective GUILT...

Now for Mura's perspective: He is third-generation Japanese-American....

Where does he fit?

He believes his people once had more in common with the black workers than with the white employers...

But soon he will be able to employ servants (or servant-help) in his own home...

But he is resisting it...

He recognizes that WHITE CULTURE is DOMINANT CULTURE...

He has also been complimented when people say, I don't see you as being JAPANESE. I see you as being WHITE...

Mura's response: "I don't want to be a WHITE PERSON. Why can't I be just who I am? Why can't you think of me as a Japanese-American and as an individual?"

Mura remembers the internment camps, when, during World War II, Japanese Americans were taken away from their communities, and placed in guarded camps, behind fences, as if they were in prison... and some were third or fourth generation American citizens...

Mura's recognition: that all of the minority groups within the United States are in a similar situation....

He discovers sustenance in Asian-American writers...

But he finds the same sustenance in writers within other minority traditions.

And he is particularly taken by the writings of a contemporary black psychologist, FRANTZ FANON, who wrote the book BLACK SKIN, WHITE MASKS.

Fanon talks about how the majority population oppresses the minority population through CULTURE....

When all of the hero stories are about the majority culture, and its heroes, the stories can give minority people a very warped, confused, and unreliable picture of themselves...

MURA's INSIGHT: the individual who is subjected to this treatment
must eventually recognize that the SOCIETY ITSELF is SICK...
and that the IDEAS are SICK because the SOCIETY is SICK.

What MURA received from FANON: Anger --
the ANGER to cry out
the ANGER to protest
the ANGER to search for an alternative

His DISCOVERY: DEPRESSION is the REPRESSION of ANGER and GRIEF.
SO he cried out...

And he complained that he knew much more about SHAKESPEARE,
HOMER, DONNE and SOPHOCLES than he does about Japanese
or Japanese-American writers...

Similarly, BLACK AMERICANS know more about WHITE WRITERS
than they do about the writers within their own
tradition...

NATIVE AMERICANS are taught Shakespeare, Jefferson,
Plato, and the rest, but have no knowledge of
the WRITINGS of NATIVE AMERICANS.

Finally, MURA believes that instead of experiencing WHITE CULTURE
as a person who wishes to be a WHITE PERSON...
one must experience WHITE CULTURE as an Asian-American person..
or as a BLACK PERSON....
or as a NATIVE AMERICAN....

[This was the point made by Carlos FUENTES in the essay we reviewed
yesterday --- His LANGUAGE is SPANISH, and his CULTURE IS
LATIN AMERICAN]

And by the END of the Article, MURA has put all of it together....

He talks of the wrongs that have been perpetrated upon
MINORITY PEOPLES by the WHITE MAJORITY...

the INTERNMENT CAMPS, affecting his own people
the TAKING of NATIVE AMERICAN land...
the ENSLAVEMENT of BLACKS...
the CONDITIONS of MIGRANT FARM WORKERS and ILLEGAL ALIENS...

His point: the LAWS of the LAND work to make THESE SITUATIONS
PERMANENT ...



the WHITE MAJORITY talks about JUSTICE & EQUALITY...
but when the crucial battles come, they TEND to
vote the other way, to PROTECT THEIR OWN POSITION
WITHIN THE SOCIETY....

WHAT SHOULD MINORITY PEOPLE DO?
WHAT APPROACH SHOULD MINORITY WRITERS TAKE?

Well, it is IMPORTANT that MINORITY VOICES be HEARD?
[This is important so that MINORITY PERSONS
will be able to fashion their own identities...]
BUT it is EQUALLY IMPORTANT that WHITES listen to these
MINORITY VOICES.... Why?

BECAUSE -- HERE IS THE KEY!!! -- WITHOUT SUCH VOICES
WHITES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES....

Thesis: REALITY IS NOT SIMPLY KNOWING WHO WE THINK WE ARE...
BUT ALSO WHAT OTHERS THINK OF US.....

And only with this KNOWLEDGE will WHITES have the basis
for UNDERSTANDING what needs to be Done to CREATE EQUALITY
in our land....

A version of the theme: "VOICES OF THE STRANGER"

Rev. SMITH... Nico Smith

WHITES in SOUTH AFRICA have BLACK SERVANTS....
tell story: MARY doesn't show up for WORK...
because MARY has died....

and though she has WORKED for the WHITE FAMILY for, say,
thirty years, the WHITE FAMILY knows nothing of her
family...or the conditions of her life....
who she is...

SO, to create some rapprochement between WHITES and
BLACKS... SMITH proposed that the WHITES visit
the BLACKS in their COMMUNITY, and sit down
and have a DISCUSSION....

WHITES protested: (1) weren't sure if they would be protected
(2) didn't know if the Blacks would know what to feed
them
(3) didn't know what they would talk about...

Nicco's response: (1) the BLACKS will provide protection
(2) Black knows what Whites eat...because they have
been preparing their meals
(3) if the Whites don't know what to talk about, the
BLACKS surely do....

What's the point: MURA believes the situation argues for MULTICULTURALISM
and this is what he means by "Multi-Cultural Literacy"
wherein people know and understand their own
self-conceptions....
and also how they are known, regarded and conceived
by others...

HEARTILY RECOMMENDED ESSAY...

WE HAVE THREE KINDS OF BOOKS:

the first ones all TELL about what is NEEDED
for MULTI-CULTURAL LITERACY...
or MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY

the second ones are STORIES from "the rest of the
world...." by writers who were born outside
the United States, principally, who write
about their own locales...peoples...
in characteristics ways...

the third ones are AMERICAN WRITERS, many of whom
have NOT BEEN ANTHOLOGIZED before because they
belong to under-represented minorities...
and DO NOT SPEAK IN THE SAME VOICE as the majority writers.