

MULTI-CULTURAL LITERACY

Big Controversy going on ....

GREAT BOOKS... WHICH BOOKS.....

E. D. HIRSCH....CULTURAL LITERACY...

-- works to identify the bases of a common culture....

ALLAN BLOOM, THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND....

Thesis: we don't know very much any more....

CORE CURRICULUM: -- basic stuff everyone should know

William Bennett, "back to basics" education....

Jonathan Kozol, ILLITERATE AMERICA -- notes that one out of six Americans cannot read well enough to read labels off cans...or menus...or the Surgeon General's warnings....

*Everyone knew how to write the narrative*

-----  
Multi-Cultural Literacy authors....

- (1) recognize that change has occurred demographics.... America today is not the America of some time ago -- and there is no turning back
- (2) believe strongly in literacy.....

"At a time when one out of four Americans are people of color, none of us can afford to remain ignorant of the heritage and culture of any part of our population."

Question: is there "mainstream culture?" Answer, yes & no.

But the more accurate definition of "the mainstream" comes in the form of Jesse Jackson's "RAINBOW COALITION"

- (3) believe strongly in diversity, and in the value of diversity...

-----  
THE JAMES BALDWIN Essay --

a talk to teachers....

there is a fundamental problem: the purpose of education is to socialize individuals....///

the process of education occurs within a social framework, and is designed to perpetuate the aims of society.....

BUT, as one becomes consciousness of the society, one begins to examine it critically.....

When Baldwin did this, he began to understand his place in society...

And it goes something like this:.....

Everything in society was created for someone else's benefit...  
not for Baldwin's benefit....

BLACK MEN WERE BROUGHT TO THE UNITED STATES AS A SOURCE OF  
CHEAP LABOR.....

THEY WERE INDISPENSABLE TO THE ECONOMY.....  
THEY WERE TREATED LIKE ANIMALS...

Hence, once blacks begin believing that they are humans....  
real humans...they must attack the system that wants to  
keep them in their place.....

Now, for the whites: they have created the myths that are intent  
upon keeping blacks in their place.....

So, knowing this...the better educated Baldwin became, the more  
at odds with society he found himself.....

SO WHAT WOULD BALDWIN DO IF HE WERE THE TEACHER?

He would teach students that there is a conspiracy out there  
to do them in.....

its intention is to destroy them....

THEREFORE, one must never MAKE PEACE with the conspiracy.....

So, students are encouraged to identify themselves as being  
something more than whatever role they were assigned  
within the system.....

"AMERICA IS NOT THE WORLD, AND IF AMERICA IS TO BECOME A  
NATION, SHE MUST FIND A WAY TO USE THE TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL  
IT HAS.....

---

Paul Gunn Allen --

lots of good ideas.....

-- one of them: how would American history be taught from  
a native American perspective?

Well, one thing; you wouldn't start with Greece & Rome..  
but would start with the tribes that formed this  
area before the EUROPEANS ARRIVED.....

-- not about pilgrims...and the English....

but about the various tribes & nations that lived here  
first ...and about their forms of government....

-- ALSO TURNS OUT THAT NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE WAS  
HEAVILY MATRIARCHAL.....

Paul Gunn Allen finds some of the first roots of  
what later was called FEMINISM in native American  
culture....the idea also influenced Karl Marx....

In short, what "mainstream culture" continues to seek was  
already present in the societal form that the Europeans  
worked to replace.....

Corollary: Visit to Soviet Union in 1988....

QUESTION: WILL MOTHER RUSSIA RISE UP TO PROTECT HER  
CHILDREN....

-----  
WENDELL BERRY --

PEOPLE, LAND & COMMUNITY.....

Thesis: there once was a time when there was a kind of  
cohesion in life.....when the various elements fit together....  
or could be blended together....but that time is no  
more.....

WHAT WAS TRUE THEN? THE WAY PEOPLE LIVED WAS SUPPORTED  
BY THE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN WHICH THEY LIVED.....

PEOPLE WORKED WITH THEIR HANDS... THEY LIVED CLOSE TO THE EARTH....  
THEY DID THINGS THEMSELVES.....

But, as time progressed..... people did and do less & less....  
instead of doing things for themselves, they pay others  
to do it for them....

SO THEY LOSE THE ABILITY TO DO THINGS...TO MAKE THINGS...

BERRY's Imagery is AGRICULTURAL:~~TA~~x Talks a lot about THE FARM.

Bob Kerrey Story -- about Orville Boesecker ....

I'm going to buy me a place like this....

CAN:T BUY IT.....

Berry: "people are joined to the land by work..."

WHEN THERE IS PROPER JUNCTION WITH THE LAND, WORK IS  
UNDERSTOOD.... PEOPLE TEND TO KNOW WHAT THEY  
OUGHT TO BE DOING....

BERRY -- AGAINST ARTIFICIALITY.....

BERRY: in favor of HARMONY.....

people have to be able to stay in one place for a long  
time...for anything significant to develop.....

Stories have to be passed from one generation to the  
next if identity is to be formed....

MRS. SORENSON: "SUNDAY DINNER" ....

My VIEW: ORDINARY LIFE PHILOSOPHIES..... WHAT DO PEOPLE  
ACTUALLY LIVE BY?

CARLOS FUENTES: --

-- has lived in many places, and regards himself as a citizen  
of a number of places.....

His father was a Mexican nationalist...

He himself was born in Panama Cityh...

His father was counselor at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C.,  
so Carlos was educated in the United States....

His father made him read the history of Mexico...as he was studying  
in the United States....

United States history was a history of wonderful military  
victories; Mexican history was a history of crushing defeats....

He found lots of ENERGY IN THE UNITED STATES....

In Mexico, he found ~~the absence of collective self-confidence~~  
the absence of collective self-confidence.

His father's career enabled him to travel to other places....  
notably to Chile....where he learned some additional things....

THEN HE LIVED IN MEXICO.... THEN HE MOVED TO SWITZERLAND.....

And everywhere he found immersion in the culture....

SO, WHAT IS THE POINT?

Well, he learned that language is a point of connection....  
moves from one culture to another...  
enables one to reach out.....

(2) he learned that human beings share tradition: "There is  
no creation without tradition.... No one creates  
from nothing..."

Fuentes' essay: illustration of an attempt to try to come  
to terms with a variety of cultures, and the ways in  
which individual identity is forged in these terms....

THERE IS A HINT THAT ONE GETS TO KNOW ONESELF TO THE EXTENT  
THAT ONE IS ABLE TO WRITE ABOUT ONESELF.....AND ONE CAN  
ONLY WRITE WHEN ONE USES THE LANGUAGE OF A CULTURE...OR  
THE LANGUAGE OF A TRADITION.....

SO, WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURE, NO KNOWLEDGE OF SELF.....

AND FUENTES ASSERTS THIS IN A CROSS-CULTURAL SENSE....

ISHMAEL REED -- america; the MULTI-NATIONAL SOCIETY

cites many examples of intermingling of cultures....

announcements in airports given in both SPANISH & ENGLISH

finding AFRICAN and AFRO-AMERICAN art gracing the walls  
of a MacDonal'd's RESTAURANT IN WISCONSIN.....

TALKS ABOUT WESTERN: Beethoven's 9th Symphony, called  
western but includes TURKISH MARCHES.

19th century French paintings -- WESTERN -- but heavily  
influenced by Japanese art....

Cubists & surrealists -- heavily influenced by Native  
American art of the Pacific Northwest coast....

Again, what's really western?

[WALKING IN A VILLAGE IN NORTHERN VIETNAM...LITTLE BOY....  
"OPEN THE DOOR, RICHARD:]

James Staten asks if CATHOLICS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT FIRST POPES  
WERE AFRICANS..... probably not...  
St. Augustine -- born, raised and lived in NORTHERN AFRICA.

Most pictures of Jesus -- make him look NORDIC....

OUR GOVERNMENT -- we say it comes from the MAGNA CARTA...  
and from English LAW....

But one can make a good case that BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was  
influenced by the Iroquois....and their notion of confederacy...

Then, the example of AMERICANS who are really AMERICANS...  
and who are PRAISED AS AMERICANS....

The people who settled New England.....

VERY POSITIVE VIRTUES: HARD-WORKING, INDUSTRIOUS...Work-Ethic.  
"Yankee ingenuity"....

On the other side: were able to punish people cruelly...  
tried, in some instances, to exterminate the native  
peoples...

had a long history of witchcraft and witch-possession....  
GAVE AMERICANS THE CONCEPT OF THE ELECT ....which leads  
to all kinds of condescension....

A MORE REALISTIC PORTRAYAL: THE WORLD HAS BEEN ARRIVING AT  
AMERICA'S DOORSTEP EVER SINCE THE BEGINNING.....

THE WORLD -- AFRICANS, EUROPEANS, ASIANS, SOUTH AMERICANS.  
CENTRAL AMERICANS, LATIN AMERICANS.....EVERYONE.....

AMERICA - THE PLACE WHERE THE CULTURES OF THE WORLD CRISSCROSS.  
- THE PLACE WHERE THE ENTIRE WORLD IS PRESENT.....