

LAND AS A SOURCE OF IDENTITY

LAND-BASED LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

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IDENTITY IS A SACRED RESPONSIBILITY

- IDENTITY IS A MULTIFACETED CONCEPT.
- INDIVIDUALS USE A LARGE AGGREGATE OF CRITERIA TO DEFINE WHO THEY ARE. THE CRITERIA MAY INCLUDE BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING: PERSONAL NAMES, FAMILY, RELIGION, NATIONALITY, RACE, SKIN COLOR, SPECIALTIES, AND LANGUAGE. IT MAY EVEN INCLUDE HEARING, SEEING, POLITICS, EVENTS, AND LAND.

LAND AS A SOURCE OF IDENTITY

- ALL SOCIETIES, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, LAY CLAIM TO A TERRITORY. WITHIN THAT TERRITORY A CULTURE ARISES FROM THE MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND. A CULTURE CONSISTS OF PARADIGMATIC CONCEPTS, VALUES, AND CUSTOMS. PARADIGMS ARE THE TACIT INFRASTRUCTURES MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY USE FOR THEIR BELIEFS, BEHAVIOR, AND RELATIONSHIPS.

LAND AS A SOURCE OF IDENTITY

- THESE BELIEFS, BEHAVIOUR AND RELATIONSHIP NORMS MANIFEST AS THE METAPHYSICS OF THE SOCIETY. THESE METAPHYSICS BECOME THE INTERPRETIVE TOOL TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING FROM SCIENCE TO HUMAN AFFAIRS.
- THE METAPHYSICS OF ONE SOCIETY MAY DIFFER FROM THAT OF ANOTHER SOCIETY.

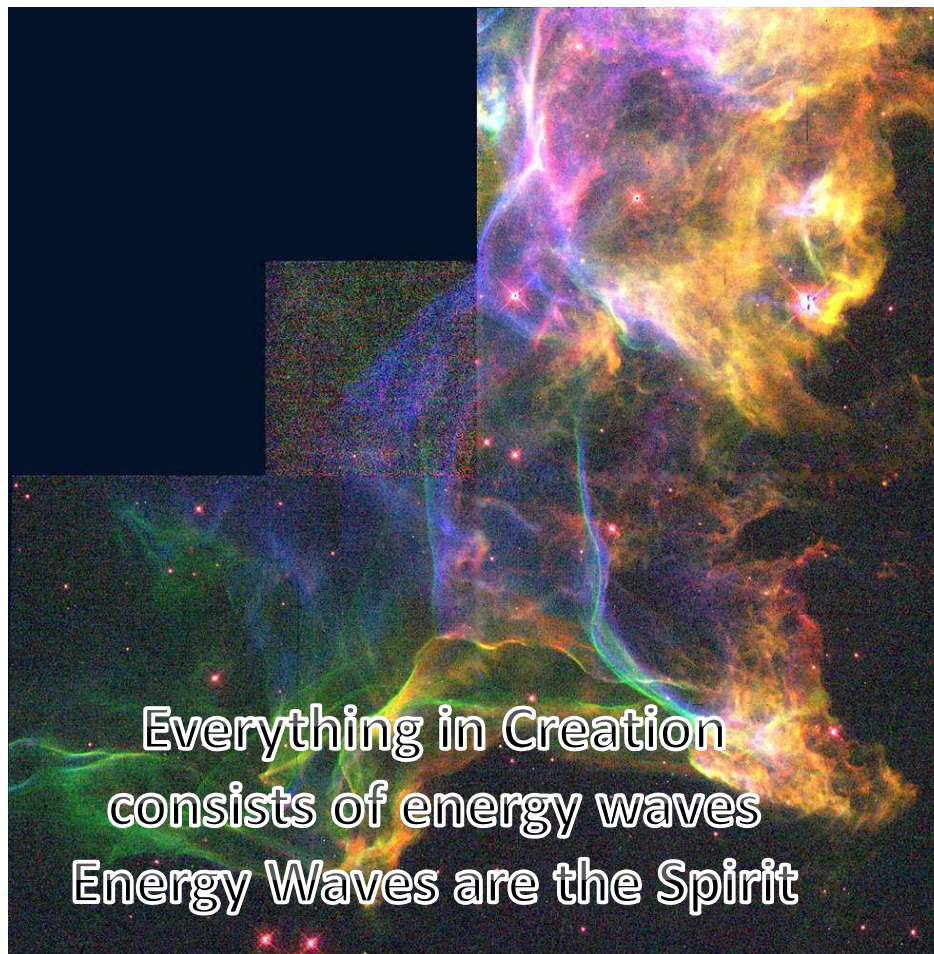
BLACKFOOT PARADIGM AND LAND

- ONE HAS TO UNDERSTAND THE PARADIGMS OF A PARTICULAR SOCIETY TO APPRECIATE THE WORLDVIEW OF THAT SOCIETY. BLACKFOOT PARADIGMS INCLUDE NOTIONS OF CONSTANT FLUX(EVERYTHING IS FOREVER IN MOTION, EXISTENCE CONSISTS OF ENERGY WAVES(AS OPPOSED TO MATTER), EVERYTHING IS ANIMATE, EXISTENCE IS A WEB OF RELATIONS, RENEWAL AND MAINTENANCE OF THOSE CONDITIONS AND FACTORS THAT MAKE FOR THE PRESENT REALITY AND WITHOUT WHICH HUMANS CANNOT SURVIVE AS A SPECIES, AND SUSTAING THE LAND UPON WHICH THE PRESENT REALITY DEPENDS ON. LANGUAGE, LASTLY, ACTS AS A REPOSITORY FOR THE KNOWLEDGE THAT ARISES OUT OF THOSE PARADIGMS, HENCE ITS IMPORTANCE.

Constant Flux



Energy Waves



Everything is Animate



Everything in Creation is
Animate and imbued with Spirit

All My Relations



Everything is Related: All
My Relations

Renewal



Reality Requires Renewal for
Continuing Existence

Space/Place



Indian Thought is About
Space Referencing

Language is Process/Action



LAND AS A SOURCE OF IDENTITY

- HUNDREDS OF GENERATIONS OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS HAVE COME AND GONE SINCE BEFORE AND AFTER THE LAST ICE AGE. THROUGH THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LAND, THEY HAVE DEVELOPED ICONS, SYMBOLS, AND IMAGES ABOUT THE TOTALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT. THOSE ICONS, SYMBOLS, AND IMAGES SERVE AS REPOSITORIES FOR THE PARADIGMS, VALUES, AND CUSTOMS. **THEY EMBODY THE LAND.**

THE EMBODIED NATIVE PARADIGM

- TO BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT CULTURE ONE MUST HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE PARADIGMS OR METAPHYSICS OF A CULTURE, IF ONE IS TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE TO CHILDREN.
- PARADIGMS AND METAPHYSICS ARE THE FOUNDATIONAL BASIS OF A SOCIETY'S WAY OF THINKING, BELIEFS, BEHAVIOUR, CUSTOMS AND VALUES.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE NATIVE PARADIGM IN AND WITH THE LAND

- FOR INDIANS, THE ENSOULMENT OF THE LAND IS A WEB OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE EARTH, ANIMALS, PLANTS, INORGANIC MATTER, AND THE COSMOS. IT IS CAPTURED IN THE STORIES, SONGS, AND CEREMONIES.
- FOR DAVID ABRAM, EVENTS HAPPEN ***SOMEWHERE***. EVENTS BELONG TO THE PLACE AND TO TELL THE STORY OF EVENTS IS TO LET THE PLACE SPEAK THROUGH THE TELLING.

ENSOULMENT OF THE LAND IS A SACRED RESPONSIBILITY

- LAND IS A VERY IMPORTANT REFERENT IN THE MINDS OF NATIVE PEOPLES. THE LAND IS 'MOTHER': IT CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM THE ACTUAL BEING OF INDIANS. ACCORDING TO CAJETE, 'NATIVE PEOPLE EXPRESS A RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATURAL WORLD THAT COULD BE CALLED "ENSOULMENT". THE ENSOULMENT OF NATURE IS ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY. ENSOULMENT OF THE LAND MUST BE PAST ON TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE NATIVE PARADIGM IN AND WITH THE LAND

- FROM THE ABOVE, ONE CAN CONCLUDE THAT IT IS THE PLACE THAT DETERMINES WHO YOU ARE. ANNE WATERS OBSERVES, “AMERICAN INDIAN IDENTITY AND WORLDVIEW, A HISTORY OF PLACE CONSCIOUSNESS, PRESERVED THROUGH ORAL HISTORY, MANIFESTS DISCRETE GEOGRAPHICAL PLACE SYMBOLS WITHIN CONSCIOUSNESS THAT PROVIDE A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE NATIVE PARADIGM IN AND WITH THE LAND

- ANNE WATERS, cont''d: ...IDENTITY AS PLACE. AMERICAN INDIAN CONSCIOUSNESS, AND HENCE, AMERICAN INDIAN IDENTITY, IS COGNITIVELY OF, AND INTERDEPENDENT WITH, OUR LAND BASE."
- A LOSS OF NATIVE IDENTITY MAY BE THE LOSS OF THE STORIES, SONGS, AND CEREMONIES THAT HAPPEN AT CERTAIN PLACES.

LOSS OF NATIVE IDENTITY

- ***NATIVE IDENTITY LOSS COMES ABOUT WHEN THE LAND DOES NOT RECOGNIZE YOU AND YOU DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE LAND.***

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR US AS ADULTS, PARENTS OR TEACHERS? IT MEANS WE HAVE TO BRING UP OUR CHILDREN IN A CULTURAL ATMOSPHERE THAT BEST RESEMBLES THE LAND WHERE THEY COME FROM. THE LAND IS THEIR IDENTITY. YOU SHOULD KNOW AND TEACH THE SONGS, STORIES, AND CEREMONIES.

WHY IDENTITY AS A SACRED BUNDLE

- IF I WERE TO RESURRECT IN 200 YEARS FROM NOW, WILL I BE AMONG STRANGERS? WILL I HEAR MY SONGS, MY LANGUAGE, MY STORIES?
- TO BE BLACKFOOT MEANS I HAVE TO LIVE BY THE TEACHINGS CONTAINED IN THOSE SONGS, STORIES, AND CEREMONIES. IT MEANS I MUST BE ABLE TO TRANSMIT THOSE TEACHINGS TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION IF MY BLACKFOOT WORLD IS TO CONTINUE.

AXIOLOGY OF BLACKFOOT CULTURE

- BECAUSE OF COLONIZATION MANY OF US HAVE BOUGHT INTO THE IDEA THAT OUR INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE HAS NOTHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE. BUT IF WE JUST LOOK A LITTLE BIT DEEPER WE DISCOVER THAT IN MANY FIELDS PEOPLE ARE JUST BEGINNING TO FIND OUT ABOUT THINGS THAT WE KNOW.

AXIOLOGY OF BLACKFOOT CULTURE

- IN SCIENCE: TIME AND SPACE BEING THE SAME, NON-LOCALITY, HIGGS PARTICLE, SPACIAL DIMENSIONS
- IN ECONOMICS: SUSTAINABILITY
- IN PSYCHOLOGY: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS
- IN LAW: ORAL HISTORIES
- RELATIONSHIPS: DEALING WITH COMPLEXITY

OUR YOUTH MUST HEAR BLACKFOOT SOUNDS

- THOSE SOUNDS ARE SOUNDS OF THE LAND, THE ENVIRONMENT. HEARING THOSE SOUNDS CONNECTS YOU TO THE LAND. EVENTS HAPPEN AT A PLACE. TELLING THE STORY OF AN EVENT IS ALLOWING THE PLACE TO SPEAK THROUGH THE TELLING (ABRAM)
- FOR INSTANCE, THE NORTHERN PLAINS HAD BUFFALO ROAM OVER IT. THE BUFFALO WAS PART OF THE PLAINS. BLACKFOOT, IN TURN, HAD CULTURAL CONNECTIONS TO THE BUFFALO

VANISHING BUFFALO, VANISHING PLAINS CULTURE

- THE NEAR EXTINCTION OF THE BUFFALO RESULTED IN A LARGE PART OF PLAINS CULTURAL DISAPPEARANCE
- BUT THE BUFFALO IS COMING BACK! OUR CULTURES ARE RE-AWAKENING!
- OUR YOUTH ARE THE ONES THAT WILL CARRY OUR LIFE-WAYS INTO THE DISTANT FUTURE. **THAT'S WHY OUR YOUTH ARE OUR SACRED BUNDLES.**

LAND-BASED LEARNING

- WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR A LAND-BASED LEARNING APPROACH TO EDUCATION?
- BLACKFOOT PEOPLES MARK THEIR TERRITORY BY SACRED SITES. THESE SITES HAVE STORIES, SONGS, AND CEREMONIES EMBODIED IN THEM. SO IT MEANS WE MUST TAKE OUR YOUTH OUT TO THE SACRED SITES TO HEAR THE STORIES, SONGS, AND PARTICIPATE IN THE CEREMONIES. THEY WILL KNOW WHO THEY ARE.