American Indian Girl of the Caléndres

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Wisdom of the Elders

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Towards a Trauma-Centered Reading

The trauma of war and the violence it brings—such as physical harm, emotional distress, and damage to bodies and minds—is well-known and often discussed. However, trauma also occurs in the form of psychological harm, such as the emotional toll of witnessing violence, the impact of exposure to chronic stress, and the psychological effects of displacement and loss. These forms of trauma can have a profound and lasting impact on individuals, communities, and societies.

In the context of trauma, reading can serve as a tool for healing and recovery. By engaging in a trauma-centered reading practice, readers can begin to process their experiences, gain a deeper understanding of the impact of trauma, and begin to develop strategies for coping and recovering.

The following are some strategies for trauma-centered reading:

1. **Select Appropriate Materials:** Choose books and materials that are developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant. Avoid reading materials that are overly graphic or violent.
2. **Create a Safe Space:** Create a safe, quiet, and comfortable space for reading. Consider using soft lighting and music to help create a calming atmosphere.
3. **Take Breaks:** It is important to take breaks when reading about traumatic events. This can help prevent feelings of overwhelm and allow the brain to process the information.
4. **Reflect on Your Experience:** After reading, take time to reflect on your experience. This can be done through journaling, discussion, or other forms of self-expression.
5. **Seek Support:** It is important to seek support when reading about traumatic events. This can be done through therapy, support groups, or other forms of counseling.

In conclusion, trauma-centered reading can be a powerful tool for healing and recovery. By engaging in this practice, readers can begin to process their experiences, gain a deeper understanding of the impact of trauma, and begin to develop strategies for coping and recovering.
Between Indian and white world(views), to paraphrase the title of one of Szasz's books, there is a cross-cultural rhetorical obstacle. As Luther Standing Bear wrote nearly seventy years ago in Land of the Spotted Eagle: "Oratory receives little … understanding on the part of the white public, owing to the fact that oratorical complications include those of Indian orators." Articulating a Native rhetoric has been complicated by those very differences, structural, philosophical, and semantic. Consider the words of Clifford Crane Bear, Northern Blackfoot director of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary: "Theories are somebody's guess. Through our oral history, we were told never to use theories. We were told to use what we were taught. The first thing my grandfather taught me was that the Earth is our Mother. Respect her." Though this comment was made in reference to museum studies, I would suggest examining the semantic difference can offer resolution to our problem in literary studies. Crane Bear’s comment reveals both an epistemology and an ontology, one I would suggest that is common to many tribal peoples in North America. Moreover, this epistemology and ontology offer a theory of reading and understanding tied to a theory of communicating. American Indian Peoples have a theory of metaphysics, with all of its corresponding parts—but it is not traditionally articulated in conventional academic discourse. Vine Deloria says that "tribal peoples are as systematic and philosophical as Western scientists in their efforts to understand the world around them. They simply use other kinds of data and have goals other than determining the mechanical functioning of things" (41). Native articulation of philosophy—of who we are and how we see the world, of what our position in it is in relation to the rest of Creation—has been accomplished by indirect discourse. We are taught by story, and we explain by story, not by exposition.

In contrast, mainstream academic discourse depends on linear argument—an argument that proceeds through a series of points, each of which is a small chunk of information, connected by the sort of logic for which verbal thinking is most conducive. This contrast can be shown using the metaphor made commonly known by Leslie Marmon Silko’s widely taught and studied novel Ceremony. The spiderweb illustrates a Native ontology and epistemology, and not just because of its role in the stories of Southwest tribes. The spiderweb, the work of the Creator-Grandmother, is what is real, both seen and unseen. All of this creation is one story, the story which we as human beings inhabit. We can affect this story through our words, thoughts, and actions. And, like a web, if one strand is broken, the whole is affected. If someone wants to communicate something about this reality to someone else, there are an infinite number of connections between the speaker and the listener—and the story is all of the rest of the web. The speaker, knowing this, must pick a strand to follow. The listener must meet him or her at the point of connection. This is quite different from the rhetorical triangle of composition and communication theory, in which the noetic field is depicted with the speaker (subject) at one corner of the triangle, the audience (object)

at another, the particular aspect of reality being discussed at the third, and the text in the middle.

In linear discourse narrow theses are easier to work out. In fact, for those who think broadly or holistically, who see reality as an interwoven series of relationships in which everything is ultimately connected, thought is difficult to convey by this means. Thinking in smaller, verbal chunks changes the way the brain schematizes information, the way it stores and retrieves it. Verbal thinking allows, and, in fact, encourages, a thinker to move from point A to the related point B, and so forth, on to Z because the brain schematizes bits of information in relation to the ones it has already schematized. Very broadly speaking, the line of connection is known as “logic.” But since it addresses only one kind of thinking, this definition does not encompass every kind of “logical” thought, though it may be that other forms of logical thought seem “illogical” to those accustomed only to mainstream discourse. As Leslie Marmon Silko said in her presentation “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective”:

For those of you accustomed to a structure that moves from point A to point B to point C, this presentation may be somewhat difficult to follow because the structure of Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider’s web—with many little threads radiating from a center, criss-crossing each other. As with the web, the structure will emerge as it is made and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made. (48-49)

4 During a reading by Robert Bly at the 2000 Beall Poetry Festival at Baylor University, Waco, TX, March 27-30, 2000, he and Carolyn Kizer both publicly bemoaned the use of linear thinking and suggested it was inferior to Eastern thought. Whereas Bly has offended many Native Americans in the past with his indiscriminate borrowing of Native motifs (the “Iron John” controversy) and whereas Native American cultures have often been hastily compared to Eastern cultures, I believe examining Bly’s comment here can be profitable.

I would assert that Eastern thought, like Native American thought, is more holistic and syncretic, rather than linear and analytic. And there is now a scientific basis for this assertion, at least in terms of the differences between Eastern thinking and mainstream Western thought. University of Michigan social psychologist Richard Nisbett and his colleagues have recently completed several studies comparing European Americans to East Asians. At the last American Psychological Association annual conference in Washington, Nisbett said: “We used to think that everybody uses categories in the same way, that logic plays the same kind of role for everyone in the understanding of everyday life, that memory, perception, rule application and so on are the same.” Nisbett said. “But we’re now arguing that cognitive processes themselves are just far more malleable than mainstream psychology assumed.” Psychological Review has scheduled the publication of his research results.
towards a trauma-centered reading

If we use a trauma-informed approach, we can better understand the experiences of individuals who have been trauma-exposed. This approach helps us recognize the impact of trauma on individuals and their brains, and how it affects their behavior and decision-making.
TOWARDS A TRANS-CENTRED READING

Exclusivity on race and ethnicity. Does it still hold true for us in the modern era? How do we address the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour? This question is central to understanding the trans experience and how it intersects with other forms of oppression.

In the context of intersectionality, the trans experience is often viewed through a binary framework, which fails to capture the complexity and diversity of trans identities. This simplification can lead to a lack of understanding and empathy towards trans individuals.

Recent developments in trans rights movements have brought attention to the need for a more inclusive and nuanced approach to understanding trans experiences. This has led to a reevaluation of traditional binary narratives and the recognition of non-binary and genderqueer identities.

However, there is still a need for ongoing education and awareness-raising efforts to ensure that trans experiences are understood and valued in their full complexity. This includes challenging harmful stereotypes and promoting a more inclusive and respectful approach to trans identities.

In conclusion, while great strides have been made in recent years in terms of trans rights and acceptance, there is still much work to be done to ensure that trans experiences are truly valued and understood. This requires ongoing effort and commitment from all members of society to create a more equitable and just world for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or expression.
Natives of the Americas, those whose ancestors were the original inhabitants of the Americas, have a rich history and culture that is often overlooked by mainstream American society.

In this paper, I will explore the influence of Native American literature on contemporary American literature. By examining the works of Native American authors, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships that exist between Native American culture and the dominant American culture that surrounds it.

To begin, I will discuss the influence of Native American literature on contemporary American literature. Native American literature has been an important part of American literature for many decades, and its influence is still felt today.

Native American literature has been influenced by the history and culture of the Native American people. The stories, legends, and traditions of the Native American people have provided a rich source of inspiration for many Native American writers.

In conclusion, Native American literature has had a significant influence on contemporary American literature. By understanding the influence of Native American literature, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships that exist between Native American culture and the dominant American culture that surrounds it.