

# Nacirema essay

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Nacirema typically refers to the act of distancing oneself from anthropology in American culture. Nacirema is “ American” spelled backwards. The term was originally used in satirical writings about anthropology.

The nacirema is described as a “ little know group located between the Canadian Cree, the Yaqui and Tarahumare of Mexico, and the Carib and Arawak of the Antilles.” In other words the area we know as the United States of America. In the writings, the civilization of nacirema has fallen due to environmental concerns. The satire is meant as a social commentary on America’s fallacies from an anthropological perspective.

Nacirema is primarily described as a cult like society, with everyday activities, such as brushing ones teeth, described as a ritual. While the portrayal is accurate in some senses it also under minds true ethnographic procedure by creating this fictional society and presenting it as truth. The problem with nacirema is that it only theorizes what could happen to society, not what did happen. There is also a problem with cultural violence within Nacirema and a deeply capitalist economy. Moral problems are very prevalent within this society. Some have turned away from worshiping gods and as a result have a lower social class than those that are believers. However, nacirema also raises some good points about anthropology. It raises questions as to why anthropologists analyze things as they do and how do you really define words such as “ ritual”, “ cultural heroes”, “ cults”, and “ myths”. Overall this work of fiction serves as a warning to how America could turn out it actions are not taken to correct their current actions and practices.