

# Nacirema people and their rituals

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Nacirema People and Their Rituals Nacirema culture is a unique society, which inhabits territories between the Canadian Cree, the Northern Mexican States, and the Carib and Arawak of the Antilles. This group of people is known for their exotic spiritual viewpoints and practicing ancient exclusive body-rituals, like oral cleanliness and other mouth-rites, ritual of purification, or keeping little sacred "charm-boxes" filled with magical herbs and poisons, etc.

Nacirema culture used to be investigated by anthropologists and ethnologists, who, nevertheless, could not discover origin of these people. In a number of works Nacirema is described as a social group with quite developed market economy and flexibility for changes in their social behaviors, but still extremely dependent on their beliefs. Performing their body rituals, based on the belief that human body is naturally ugly, weak and imperfect, still takes a lot of their daily time and efforts.

Many researches about Nacirema are written in rather ironical tone, but personally I would not share such an attitude to this ethnicity. To my mind, principles of their culture are not primitive or excessively superstitious. They are practicing their body-rituals in order to reach good physical shape and spiritual balance, comfort and wellbeing. In addition, there are many familiar similar "body-ceremonies" in our own culture, like brushing teeth or shaving, which every one of us performs frequently.

Besides, it is obvious that Nacirema culture is not static in its life cycle. It is developing and changing, just very slowly. Lately the main transformation was connected with movement of women of the society to gain more opportunities and freedoms. As a result, little children and teenagers started receiving less attention from their mothers. Therefore, such situation found

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immediate reflection in their social life: children used to be watched by other adults and could not be provided with proper education and training.

Besides, the level of juvenile violence and crime critically increased.

Many rituals of Nacirema people are connected with the ways of healing people. There are special doctors, who use medicines or sacred brews made from herbs and natural curative materials, and also perform a number of special ceremonies to heal body. These ceremonies take place in special temples, called latipso. I think that such a way of curing can be much less dangerous than using modern chemicals, which frequently cause complications or side-effects. Good health conditions and high life duration average of Nacirema people are the best proves for this.

My personal attitude to Nacirema group is very positive, but, at the same time, I can not imagine myself living in such a culture. First of all, I am extremely urbanized person. I enjoy developments, opportunities and comfort of our big cities, and I need books, theatres, music, art, television, cinema or other entertainment. to make my existence happy. I'll never be able to give up the achievements of technical progress and civilization in favor of living among beauties of nature and wildlife, fulfilling daily rituals or meditations.

Moreover, it is hard for me to understand their ideology and values. To my mind, after long lasted social and industrial development of the humanity, such spiritual beliefs or performing body rituals are left far behind. There are millions of people of different nationalities, races, ethnic groups in the USA, but we all are united with the same consciousness of being American, which helps us to co-exist and support each other in advancement and evolution, regardless of our beliefs and religions.

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Of course, on the other side, these rituals and customs are what Nacirema people know, practice and worship from their very early times, and it is great and priceless that they are trying to keep them alive. But staying away from progress and developments of the whole world (like using basic inventions of humanity, etc.), keeping themselves isolated from other cultures and civilizations, or ignoring effective social rules and principles appear to be a little weird to me.