

Franklin's argument in remarks concerning the savages of north america

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What is Franklin's argument in "Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America"? In "Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America," Benjamin Franklin compares the attitudes and customs of Indian culture and American and British culture. Franklin provided an alternative view of the interactions between the Native American Indians and the White man. It was common in the late 18th century for the Americans and British Loyalists to look down on the American Indians because of their simple way of life. Benjamin Franklin shows the similarities and differences between the so called "savages" and the ways the white man by comparing both cultures' social customs, showing how the British display more characteristics of savages than the Indians do, and arguing that the view of savages is based on ignorance more than anything. Benjamin Franklin assesses the presumption of Indians being savages by comparing each culture to show it for what it really is. He begins by describing the social structure of the Indians' culture. He goes through the various levels of social standing and shows a culture that is built upon rules and respect. However, Franklin explains how this is very loose and everyone understands where they are in the food chain; young men are hunters and warriors, older men are counsellors, women tend to the ground, make food, and bring up the children. These roles are considered natural and no one feels left out because of their role in society. Franklin compares this to his culture, which in comparison seems mindless and without order. The Indians understood this when an offer was made to them to send their youth for further education at a White University. However, the Indians declined this for the reason that once the youth return to their culture, they do not fit in with

Indian society anymore. Instead, the Indians made an offer for the White man to send some of their sons to learn from the Indians' culture. This story is a great example of how each culture thinks of itself as superior to the other. The truth is that each culture has some form of disorderly conduct, but can also shows civility at times. Next, Franklin shows how the British, at times, show traits that would be considered savage to the Indians. First of all, he describes the typical social meeting of a group of Indians. The old men sit in order of social standing and the warriors sit behind them. The women and children sit at the far back. The role of women is to listen to what is being spoken and commit it to memory in order to tell it to their children. The person who is speaking is allowed to stand, while the rest must remain silent. After he is finished speaking, the rest still maintain silence in order that the speaker can correct himself if he must. It would be considered highly rude to interrupt someone who is speaking. Franklin compares this to British culture, where the House of Commons is a scene of rage and confusion. In contrast to the Indians, within British culture speech must be delivered rapidly or else you will be interrupted almost immediately. Finally, Franklin argues that giving a culture the term "savage" is based solely on ignorance on the part of the so-called "superior" culture. In this case, the British viewed the Indians as conquered and a lesser culture than their own. This is not so much based on fact but a fear of the unknown. Franklin pleaded that each culture be respected for what it was and not because of a feeling of superiority. The British looked down on the Indians as savages simply because the Indians did not do things as the British would usually do. In conclusion, Franklin tries to educate his largely American and British

audience by explaining how the Indians are not savages in the way that the White man refers to them. The British already looked down on the Indians, but Franklin was trying to encourage Americans not to go down the same path. Benjamin Franklin breaks down culture barriers by comparing the social customs of the two cultures, arguing that the British are more savage than the Indians are, and reasoning that ignorance is the major factor in calling another culture savage.