

Attempts to save a people



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There are two ways in which one culture can attempt to save another. The first way is through what is needed most, through the needs for survival that have been denied or impinged upon by war or natural devastation requiring that one civilization who sees this need respond to it. Food, shelter, safety, and other concerns can be needed by one group of people when a disaster strikes and this can be provided by another when they have the resources and see the pain of a people in crisis. However, there is another type of 'saving' that one civilization can impose upon another. This can be divided by either ideological concepts or religious concepts. When one culture decides that the way of life of another does not meet the standard of what is 'right', great tragedies can result that can cause the loss of a culture, if not the loss of lives and methods of survival.

One of the problems with the advanced way in which human beings think is that great ideologies and mythologies about life can be envisioned. This means that there are great waves of innovation that sweep through political systems, scientific communities, and communities of those who wish to find something to believe in so that they can better understand their world. The problem comes when the thoughts of one people comes into contradiction with those of another. An assumption is made that the differences between two peoples means that one is right and one is wrong.

In particular, the rise of Western culture has created a definition of what is 'civilized', thus creating a great number of cultures outside of this definition for whom groups of people in the West have endeavored to find a way to 'save' them from the 'backward' nature of their culture. In addition, Christianity has been considered by many members of the religion to be the

only way of life, thus furthering the interference that the West has made into indigenous populations.

Therefore, the attempts that the European settlers have made to interfere with the Native American populations created great changes that devastated those tribes. The nature of their culture was forever changed, through the introduction of disease, war, and vilification that took place during the great migrations of Europeans into the Americas. Reforms that were attempted were too late and without effect as the tribes are now relegated to near extinction, their cultures almost completely lost, and their existence a mere fragment of their former rich heritage. The nature of the Native American in regard to his or her culture is to be lost within a world in which their culture and the rituals that defined that culture are now scattered. The Native American is an American, his or her existence defined by trying to fit the round peg of his ancestry into the square hole of the American landscape. One of the concepts of anthropology is that one cannot study a culture without affecting it through the influence of one's presence. The Native American tribes had more than the affect of someone looking at their culture. The people were herded off their lands, their means of survival sorely interrupted and changed, and their civilizations torn. The people may still exist, but the interference of European influences and aggressions forever changed the nature of their societies. By the 19th century, generations had been without the living traditions and rituals of their people. Therefore, the any reforms that were begun during this time was far too small to have any real affect. Those cultures are now history, gone and replaced by a struggle to maintain an identity.