

Nacerima Response Paper

Miner's assertion that the Nacerima culture contains elements of "magical beliefs and practices," is a gentle description at best. After having read this article, and thought about the Nacerima and their strange ways, I can only surmise that they have developed their body rituals through hundreds of years of suppression by religious dogmas.

It is commonly known that many religions possess the power to cause one to think negatively toward one's own body. This may be exhibited in the full covering of the female form, as in some religions, to the mutilation of body parts in others. It would seem that the Nacerima have gone to the extreme where body adornment and body privacy is concerned. Their health is of primary concern most likely due to their economic interests. If one's health is deteriorating, it naturally follows that one's economic gains will also deteriorate, especially in the Nacerima's greed based market system where the level of care the old or infirm receive is based on the number of gifts they can give to receive such care. The Nacerima seemingly live to work at their economic gains, and for little else. It is to the Naceriman market system that I would now speak.

It would seem to me that, after having read Miner's article, not enough attention was paid to how these practices came about. I have mentioned that religion is a likely cause, but what drives their persistence in such a diverse culture as that of the Nacerima? Even having not done any research on the Nacerima, I would posit that the Naceriman market system and way of doing business tends to drive the Naceriman body ritual. From what I can tell thus far in my 34 years of research on the Naceriman culture myself, the

system of trade drives inequality, and rewards the greedy. In addition, the gift giving culture of the Nacerima causes one to try and appear as though they have plenty of gifts to give, when in fact, they do not. The practice of borrowing gifts from large gift “store houses” creates a system where individuals are obligated not only to replace the gifts they've borrowed, but give additional gifts to the store house from which they've borrowed from. This is an evil system, especially in light of the fact that, from childhood, Naceriman children are impressed with the knowledge that having large amounts of gifts to trade will cause them to gain notoriety, fame, and happiness. This is by far one of the best examples of a negative social adaptation in a culture. If the Nacerima continue down this path, a high percentage of their population will owe gifts back to these larger gift store houses than ever before.

It would seem, though, that the Nacerima have no intention of ceasing this negative social adaptation any time soon. “Gift debt” (as I will now call it), seems to be rampant not only in the individual Nacerima, but in their leadership as well. The Nacerima have a complex and confusing political structure, that uses the gift trading ideology with it's neighbors. In this way, the Nacerima leadership has collectively created a “gift debt” that is larger than any other in the world, and continues to grow.

In conclusion, I would have to say that that Miner article, uses the idea of Cultural Relativism quite well in describing the Nacerima, and their strange body rituals. I found the article enlightening, and it also lead me to the thoughts I've presented in this paper. My hope is that the Nacerima will end this lifestyle of shame and greed before too long. This social adaptation cannot last.

