

Here I bring together some human experiences interrelated only in that all of them transcend ordinary, daily "seeing," which is limited to unobstructed eyeball-range. The German word for tele-vision (Greek, "far-seeing") derives from the etymology of the English word: *das Fernsehen* ("the Farseer"); and the other term is equally picturesque: *der Bildfunk* ("the Pictureradio"). But without such technology, we humans are capable of astonishing eyeball-transcendence in our "seeing"; indeed, television itself is a product of this transcending power, which moves outward (the self seeing afar) and inward (the self seeing itself from afar). The title of this thinksheet tips you off that here I'm more interested in the latter than in the former.

1. Imaginative literature exercises your far-seeing power. You're reading Joseph Conrad on exotic places, and all at once you catch yourself peering into your own depths. You're a man, you're reading Alice Walker's *THE COLOR PURPLE*, and suddenly it hits you how a woman sees a man (not all women, not all men, but the generalization is true enough to make you squirm). Or you see the 1985 film "The Gods Must Be Crazy" and you are looking at yourself and your civilization through the eyes of a puzzled black African and the hymn line comes to you "Forgive our foolish ways." Or in a Sanskrit text you read about you "long body" and you can see yourself getting smaller and smaller till you disappear. Or you have a near-death experience and sense yourself looking down at your body from above. And you remember Bobby Burns' "the gift ta gi' us/To see oursels as ithers see us."

2. In addition to television, other technology aids this nondaily seeing: microscope, telescope, stereoscope (primitive and recent forms), the space camera that in 1936 let us see the whole earth (one side, of course!) simultaneously for the first time, the xray, the catscan....

3. But for the rest of this thinksheet, I'm dealing with the Amerind (or Indamer or American Indian or Native American) as a divine gift to help us invaders (ie, everybody else now in the USA) see ourselves. (For me as a Christian, the Jew is the world's most important person to help me see myself as a Christian...but that is a story for another time.)....The Native American helps me in three ways:

(1) Imaginative literature, again. Even when not written by an Amerind--eg, Ken Kesey's *ONE FLEW OVER THE COOKOO'S NEST*. Remember it was an "Indian" who exposed the insanity of the insane asylum and then "flew" it? Uproarious and glorious! Unfortunately, the novel was a factor in the commission of a further insanity, viz, turning most of the inmates out onto the streets with no halfway provisions and the further insanity of not freeing asylum funds commensurate with the releasing (so that now, Feb/86, the staff/patient ratio in asylums is ca.1:3, none of the old asylum budgetary funds having yet been transferred to helping the thousands of emotional incompetents turned out on the public).

(2) Public confrontations now in process between Native Americans and government at all levels. Last year, Indian-rights efforts to recover treaty lands failed in MA and succeeded in ME and WASH. And now the Smithsonian (!) is under attack for insensitivity to Amerind religion and personhood: 14,000 skeletons in Smithsonian possession need, the Indians say, reburial--to which the Smithsonian replies, No, they need restudy. (When I first came to Cape Cod, I was asked to be--and accepted--the official reburier of accidentally exhumed Indians. Appropriately, soon thereafter an Indian clergyman was found for the task. But I had a momentary gut-involvement in the American Red/White tragic culture-conflict. As I had last week a

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sharp happy memory of working briefly on the Mandan Reservation of N. Dakota: a missionary there then has just become Prot. chaplain to the Cape Cod Hospital.)

(3) Literary remains of great Native Americans. (My #817, on Indian-American religion, is good background for the present thinksheet.) I choose three examples:

(a) SENECA, the Iriquois chief whose magnificent statue--at the entrance of Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo--I saw frequently as a boy. While gazing at it, I heard my father's sadness over what we whites had done to the reds, and his awed respect for the spiritual and oratorical greatness of this Iriquois Chief, participant in the forming of the Council of the Six Tribes, which Benj. Franklin declared "a model for uniting the Colonies in democracy." Through Seneca's eyes, my father saw the heritage, cost, and hope; and I through my father's eyes--my father, who'd memorized Seneca passages he'd use with telling effect when trying to consciousness-raise somebody on this dimension of American history. (On Seneca, pp.35-47 and 53-68, Elisabeth Tooker, ed., NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY OF THE EASTERN WOODLANDS, Paulist/79; another anthology in the same series, THE CLASSICS OF WESTERN SPIRITUALITY, is Miguel León-Portilla, ed., NATIVE MESOAMERICAN SPIRITUALITY, Paulist/80.)

(b) Of BLACK ELK I've written much elsewhere. Great thanks to the U. of Nebr. for BLACK ELK SPEAKS and THE SACRED PIPE. Shaman, & Christian catechist, in creative combination.

(c) CRAZY HORSE, the Sioux chief who, whether or not he was crazy, named himself for his horse, which he considered crazy because he (the chief) saw him (the horse) dancing in a dream of his (the chief's). So hear Dee Brown in his BURY MY HEART AT WOUNDED KNEE: "Since the time of his youth C.H. had known that the world men lived in was only a shadow of the real world." (A Western Hemisphere Plato!) "To get into the real world, he had to dream, and when he was in the real world everything seemed to float or dance. In this real world his horse danced as if it were wild or crazy, and this was why he called himself C.H." Thus his very name was a constant reminder of and witness to the other world/dimension....McLuhan's daughter, T.C., in her beautiful TOUCH THE EARTH, quotes C.H.: "We did not ask you white men to come here. The Great Spirit gave us this country as a home. You had yours. We did not interfere with you. The Great Spirit gave us plenty of land to live on, and buffalo, deer, antelope and other game. But you have come here; you are taking my land from me; you are killing off our game, so it is hard for us to live. Now, you tell us to work for a living, but the Great Spirit did not make us to work, but to live by hunting. You white men can work if you want to. We do not interfere with you, and again you say, why do you not become civilized? We do not want your civilization! We would live as our fathers did, and their fathers before them." Implicit in God's gift of the land was the directive to live by hunting, ie, live as a hunting-worshipping society. This simple theology was, unlike that of the religion that became Judaism, unable to survive the loss of the sacred land--in C.H.'s case, the Black Hills, invaded by treaty-breaking gold prospectors whom C.H. tried to drive out, killing Gen. Custer in the process and losing his own life--at ca.28!--the year the land was lost, 1877. Both he and Black Elk were Sioux, he a chief and B.E. a shaman whose theology was somewhat less land-locked (Jesus returning as the white buffalo cow woman, a rough but ready syncretism)....Our emerging ecothology can be illumined and abetted as we far-see ourselves from the eyes of former and contemporary Amerinds, our fellow-inhabitants and fellow-citizens. ...C.H. immediately before his surrender the year he died: "I only wish we had the power to civilize" the white man. (FMHaas, THE GREAT S.NATION.)