

Notes on Ch. 21 of *The Kinship World View*: "Nature Seen as Benevolent"
Discussion between Four Arrows w Basil Johnston (Wasauksing)
– Contributed by Davi Anick –

Some main points:

- Is Nature fundamentally competitive, or benign and cooperative?
 - "Survival of fittest" concept (Spencer's phrase, not Darwin's)
 - Does competition within and among species drive evolution?
 - A projection of our self-view of humanity as competitive, warlike, & selfish
 - Margoulis: cooperation actually has helped adaptation & survival more
- Hunted animals, gathered plants, *etc* seen as GIFTS from Mother Earth
 - vs conventional notion that humans wrest these from a resisting natural world intent on withholding them from human use. But we "win" against Nature through fortitude, strength, and cleverness. Individuals who do so are "heroes."
 - The feelings associated with receiving: gratitude, respect, & awe vs prowess and smug pride in getting the upper hand on Nature. Examples: how to harvest a whole forest, dam a river, or punch pipes into the ground to suck out petroleum
- Knowledge is important: avoid snakebites & piranhas, knowing when trees bear fruit, animals migrate, fish return, *etc*. This is part of a communion, vs "military intelligence"
- Example of Buffalo Bill as a hero (taught in elementary school) – killed some obscenely huge number of bison, thereby allegedly making the plains "safe" for settlement by Europeans. That distressed me even as a kid. The explanation was that bison stampede and when they do they destroy everything in their path. Even then I didn't buy it.
- Earth Herself is felt as the source of strength, connection, reassurance, & belonging
 - Quote p. 204: "For [the Indian], to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and came closer in kinship to other lives about him."
 - Neurobiology view: grounding or "earthing" will decr stress hormone (cortisol), improve vagal nerve tone, and incr oxytocin (for trust and bonding)
- Walter Block (prof of economics at Loyola Univ) – unbelievably crass quote
- Nature's challenges to humans – heat waves & extreme cold, floods / droughts, storms, tornadoes – these are fundamentally neutral or benign – the indigenous way is adaptability and non-attachment. Human population rises and falls in cycles, like all things, vs "economic growth" as absolutely essential. Growth = conversion of ever more spheres of resource being converted into short-lived human convenience or control
 - When Nature exceeds our resiliency *e.g.* major hurricane we see Nature as something to be "tamed". Nature is "hostile" to our designs; "wild" is bad.
 - This culture is happiest when all Nature is contained, penned up, reduced to a small number, weakened to near-extinction. Then we can "trust" it since we have control. Once a species is reduced to near-extinction, suddenly we who have been exploiting it now want to "save" it (whales, rain forest, wolves, *etc*). Keep a few around who know which species is "boss" and we'll be entertained.

- Very Big picture: Geology – ice ages, volcanic winter (snowball earth), asteroid collision;
 - This is another focus of the New Story: by forcing life to adapt to these changes it has been good for evolution / complexity in the long run
 - Magnetic pole reversals – story of 42 kya
 - In hindsight, are these violent disruptions “good” for life on Earth as a whole?
- Another theme touched upon: “moral sense”
 - Needed to evolve, to keep human societies cooperative, resilient, adaptable
 - Jane Goodall observed male chimpanzee bands engaging in organized warfare
 - The development of powerful brains that could make tools, learn from others’ experience, and plan via language necessitated new mechanisms to keep selfish impulses in check.
 - “Moral Sense” includes the pleasure of being in a group, the desire to be accepted, the capacity for empathy and relating to experience of others, and the ability to self-observe and bring one’s behavior into line with social expectations.
 - Darwin (and many others) : Indigenous societies may have this better developed
 - My personal resonance with the Hopi Prophecy (I first encountered it in 1980)
 - Per Hopi mythology, global human civilizations have flourished and collapsed in three prior cycles. As this cycle draws to a close humanity may go through a “crazy time” with “life out of balance” (Koyannisqatsi). Nine signs would portend its arrival. All of them have occurred.
 - This 4th world in which we now reside will have an opportunity to choose either a return to “the path of heart” or the “zig-zag path.”
 - On the former we survive and make a bumpy but continuous transition into a 5th world. On the latter the majority of humans become mindless enemies of the few who still understand what survival requires. Depicted as humans w/o heads *i.e.* we have lost our (moral) sense of judgment.
 - The zig-zag path simply ends. War and “natural catastrophe” probable. Could bring an end to all life on the planet. Emergence into a 5th world is not guaranteed from the zig-zag path.
- Final theme: CAT-FAWN as a practice or protocol for escaping from colonized mind
 - Fabulous video (27 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UT20UbiBLBI>
 - Four Arrows’ personal story, NDE, and discovery of the CAT-FAWN method
 - Concentration-Activated Transformation: Fear, Authority, Words, Nature

CAT – self-hypnosis to become open to (self-)suggestion for a new way of thinking

F – fear -> can go to courage / virtue or to cowardice / drama / greed

A – authority -> kowtow to external vs heeding inner authority / Spirit

W – words -> of prayer, ceremony, connection can completely change / reframe experience

N – nature -> non-anthropocentric viewpoint, “all my relations” includes the non-human



This exercise can shift mindset out of divide + conquer / scarcity / competition and into a holistic indigenous way of being with the situation.