

Picking Sweetgrass Reflection

I think our money-based economy does not adequately provide for reciprocity. The reason why I think this is because we live in such a capitalistic society where everyone is always ready to step on a hundred heads just to get to the next dollar. We have been taught from literal infants that money is everything and you should throw your life away just to get your next paycheck. On top of that, living in the U.S. has you under that mindset because it's necessary to survive. Every single aspect of your life has consequences that relate to money. You wake up and take a shower, that's the water bill, you watch a video on your phone, that's your phone bill, you drive to work, that's gas, you eat lunch, that's straight up money. Those are the daily things, but it gets even worse when you go through situations like being ill. Everything you do in this country has an effect of spending some type of money. So, of course the mindset of the people here will always be to get to their next paycheck, because that's the only way we know of to get through this capitalistic country.

Our "taking," which Kimmerer sees as the rampant consumerism of modern life, complicated our participation in this reciprocity because we are constantly being conditioned to chase the next big thing. Whether that means we have 20 different water bottles or 5 items of clothes that total over \$15,000, every person from every class is being pushed towards this same ideal. We can't find ourselves following this reciprocity if we are constantly stepping on any and everybody's heads to get to the next paycheck, and then continue on to spend as much as possible on the new this or the popular that.

When Kimmerer concluded that "[n]ot everything should be convenient," I genuinely felt the depth and weight of that statement. It made me think how there are so many things that are readily available to us and sometimes you notice that it's not all good things. Everywhere you

look there's always at least 2 McDonald's around, so it's cheap and global; easy access.

However, you rarely see more healthy options going for \$3 and you can drive just 5 minutes to get it; there's always so many hoops you have to jump through. Maybe in order to make change we have to go back to being more self-sufficient. Instead of being able to go drive 5 minutes and acquire a \$5 meal deal, you go tend to your garden and farm, and work to make your meal. I feel that it will allow us to appreciate what we have and engage more in that reciprocity.

The rules of Honorable Harvest might find adoption in our modern economy by us, again, turning more towards self-sufficiency. This would allow us to understand and have gratitude for the Earth more, but for that to happen, we would have to change almost everything we have come to do. Our practices of looking for the things that we can gain so much of and then just dispose of is completely different from what that represents. The cultural values might stand in the way of such adoption because, as described, early Europeans regarded the rules of Honorable Harvest as laziness. This is something we see today as well with people of color constantly being labeled as lazy, freeloaders, not wanting to work, etc., but then we are the ones contributing and working the hardest to "earn" our place in society.

I would definitely say that Honorable Harvest can be applicable to energy consumption because it's about reciprocity and having gratitude towards the Earth, but the way we are rapidly, and carelessly, consuming this energy goes against that. What Kimmerer is asking us to think about in this chapter is how we treat the Earth, the economy, each other; how we show reciprocity. We can't continue to just take and take without giving anything back. We must take accountability for our actions and protect and preserve the beautiful gifts we have been given.