

Annotated “Snaidanac”

Much of the Snaidanacs’ day is spent in ritual and ceremony [**stereotype (exaggeration)**]. The centre of this activity involves the human body; its appearance is vitally important for these people [**stereotype (oversimplification about our preoccupation with appearance)**]. While this is not unusual, the ceremony and philosophy concerning the body are entirely unique to the culture [**radical uniqueness (other cultures care for their bodies in similar ways)**]. The fundamental belief appears to be that the human body is ugly and that its natural tendency is toward decay and disease [**stereotype (exaggeration)**]. As humans are trapped inside their ugly bodies, their only hope to avoid the decay and disease is religious ritual and ceremony [**ethnocentrism (looks like a religious ceremony from the author’s perspective)**]. To an outsider this preoccupation may seem pointless, but these religious practices greatly reassure the people, and if they choose to live this way, we should not question it [**cultural relativism**]. Every household has one or more shrines for this purpose [**stereotype (slight exaggeration) and ethnocentrism (referring to bathroom as a shrine)**]. They appear to treat a box or chest built into the wall as the most important place in the shrine. In this box, the natives keep strange charms and magical potions [**cultural superiority (negative connotation)**]. These include miniature paintbrushes and coloured sticks with tiny brushes [**ethnocentrism**]. Beneath the charm-box is a small font or basin. Each day, every member of the family, one after the other, enters the shrine room, bows his or her head before the charm-box, mixes holy water in the font and then proceeds with a brief rite similar to Christian baptism [**ethnocentrism**]. The holy waters come from the Water Temple of the community, where the priests undertake excessive measures to make the liquid ritually pure [**ethnocentrism and cultural superiority**].

Adapted from Ruth Sandwell et al. *Early Contact and Settlement in New France* (Vancouver, BC: The Critical Thinking Consortium, 2002), pp. 33–60. Permission granted by The Critical Thinking Consortium for use by Alberta teachers.