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# Societal Rebirth: The Importance of Spirituality

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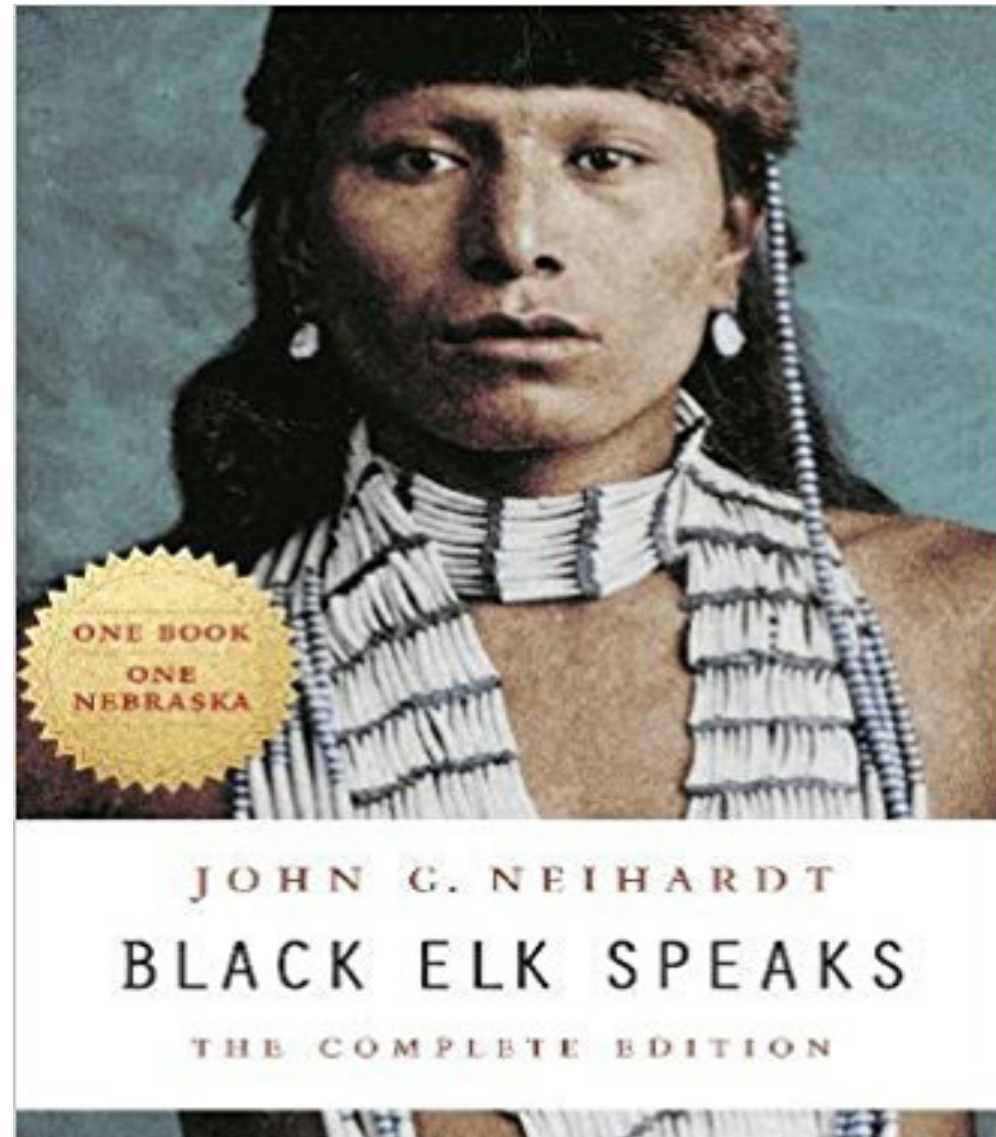
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# SOCIETAL REBIRTH: THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUALITY



Deloria, Philip. J. "Black Elk Speaks Cover Art". Google. <https://www.google.com>

What are the social consequences of the ways that modernity strips away religious-human relationships to the land?

The two texts *Grapes of Wrath* and *Black Elk Speaks* both include moments of anonymous forces imposing systematic modernization on society. Through the controversial subject of societal rebirths, traditionally defined through employment and steady food source availability. I propose an approach to societal rebirths that emphasizes the importance of spiritual connection to the land through a critical analysis of Bakhtin's theory of chronotope and Leopold's theory of land ethic.



"Wakan Tanka." The Dale Lewis Art Gallery. <http://www.dalelewisartgallery.freemove.com/>



Galati, Frank. "The Grapes of Wrath." The Stratford Theatre. <https://www.google.com/>



PENGUIN CLASSICS

JOHN STEINBECK

*The Grapes of Wrath*

Demott, Robert. "The Grapes of Wrath." Google. <https://www.google.com>

Within *Black Elk Speaks* there is a central theme of cultural relocation that is experienced by Black Elk and his tribe as they undergo forced removal to a reservation. Black Elk is gifted with a vision in a time of need which shows him how to reconstruct the nation's hoop. Black Elk fears the vision as he sees the modern world mixing with the spiritual world and does not know how to let the two chronotopes coexist. Black Elk does not rely on spirituality to help his people ultimately resulting in a failed societal rebirth.

The main element is when Black Elk receives the vision gifted to him by the six male figures. The vision is a guiding force to help Black Elk and his society. As the vision became more nature based and society continued to diminish, spirituality and the land started to exist separately. Black Elk looked upon his land and its modernization and began to fear the vision. Black Elk's society followed the traditional sense of spirituality and did not believe in a connection to the land. Through a critical analysis of chronotopes and land ethic we can see how Black Elk let the anonymous forces hinder his society from experiencing a rebirth.

The two main elements of the story focus on Muley and Grandpa and the character of Rose. As the family is faced with systematic modernization Grandpa sees leaving as a social injustice. The plot highlights the birth of Rose's stillborn baby to reinforce the lack of spiritual connection the Joad family has to the land. The earth is depicted as controlling Rose's fate where we see the chronotope of spirituality and land never existing cohesively. This leads us to the final conclusion that society experienced a failed societal rebirth due to modernity stripping away the religious human relationship to the land.

Within *Grapes of Wrath* the outside force of policies and economics enact systematic modernization on the Joad family. Due to this, the Joad family sees the land in a modernized view, not valuing the land for its natural values. The central theme of forced removal parallels the concept of societal rebirth. The modernization of society pushed the Joad family away from spirituality. As the disconnect between the land and society grows, their efforts at a societal rebirth are hindered.

Will our present society become systematically modernized to the extent where all land and air is a commodity and no longer a gift given to sustain life?

Works Cited:  
Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Penguin Books, 1992.  
Neihardt, John G. *Black Elk Speaks*. University of Nebraska Press, 1979.  
Bakhtin, M.M. *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel*. 1937.  
Leopold, Aldo. *The Sand County Almanac*. <http://www.naturenet.com>