The Great American Story. Edition No. 1

Description: This study examines U.S cultural values through the lens of family storytelling. Through an examination of 53 family stories, it addresses: the role of family storytelling in the transmission of cultural values; the existence of shared American cultural archetypes, motifs and themes; the existence of shared national values and the role of storytelling in promoting peace. As dynamic folklore, family stories are ideal instruments with which to tease out deep-rooted values. Stories are rich repositories of cultural schemas, the bricolage of information and attitudes that form our identities. They are also repleted with symbols that reflect shared, unconscious understandings. Unlike many other cultural products, moreover, they are relatively unaffected by government or corporate agendas. More unlike, many other types of folk narrative, they typically resonate with Americans. Finally, storytelling both reflects and comprises the social drama characterized by anthropologist Victor Turner, which leads to communitas, the spirit of community. The study attempts the promotion of communitas by demonstrating how humankind makes connections through the shared elements found in our stories.


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