Seven Stories

~~~~~~~

by

Susan L. Feathers
~~~~~~~

“The ideas which determine our character and life are implanted in mysterious fashion. When we are leaving childhood behind us they begin to shoot out. When we are seized by youth’s enthusiasm for the good and true, they burst into flower, and the fruit begins to set.

“Grow into your ideals so that life can never rob you of them. If all of us could become what we were at fourteen, what a different place this world would be.”

~ Albert Schweitzer from *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth* (1924)

Table of Contents

To Readers: Why This Book?

The true brilliance of human culture is the ability to reinvent itself when conditions change. Our species is defined as a generalist species in ecology. That means we can live in many different habitats and adapt to them. This has been the basis of our species success so far. However, most of the companion plants, animals, and biological webs of life supporting us are specialists—able to thrive only within specific habitat requirements. Without them we do not exist. In fact our evolution is tied to the evolution of thousands of other species of plants and animals and all of us are tied to the weather, availability of water, a range of temperatures, and fertility of soils.

Our species now dominates the ecological zones of the planet to the extent that anthropologists have changed the name of the Holocene Era to the Anthropocene Era. Humans may have exceeded the carrying capacity of the planet (the capacity to provide enough food, clean water and air, and maintain temperatures within the range of biological systems). The renewing aspect inherent in healthy ecosystems is a result of millions of interrelated species interacting with land, water and air in a given location and that have evolved to a state of *dynamic* balance. This has long been held as an inviolable, sacred aspect of nature by many cultures. These cultures developed a set of values about how humans should relate to land based on their close observations of how nature works. In contemporary American culture, Aldo Leopold—one of America's most articulate writers about this relationship—understood that an ethic is something a community creates: "An ethic is not written but evolves in the minds of a thinking community."[1] As Leopold grew in his own understanding of the complex relationship between man and nature he began to see that the most important thing a person or culture can learn is "how to live on a piece of land without destroying it."[2]

[1] A Sand County Almanac (1947). "The Land Ethic". London: Oxford University Press.
[2] The River of the Mother of God (1991). "Engineering and Conservation", The University of Wisconsin Press.

As we enter the 21st century, climate change presses upon us to reconsider just how we understand and value animals, plants, forests, rivers, oceans, and air – and fellow human beings who for no fault of their own are now bearing the burden of climate impacts as the planet warms. Aldo Leopold first introduced the concept of a Land Ethic in essays published in his seminal work, *A Sand County Almanac* published in the last year of his life. It is comprised of essays written over a career in forestry management, and thus records the evolution of his thinking, based on years of trial and error in land and wildlife management. He is an important voice today precisely because he arrived at understanding by learning from his mistakes. This willingness to reconsider beliefs and practices that no longer serve the best interests of the human and natural communities is perhaps the single most important example modern Americans can embrace as we face global climate change, declining productivity of land, and widespread pollution affecting health. (See Leopold's essay, "The Land Ethic", in Appendix A).

The seven novels reviewed in this guide provide windows into intercultural conversations about the value of land spanning 400 years of American history. I believe these conversations are as fresh today as in 1600 in Plymouth, Massachusetts when a young Christian girl and a young Wampanoag youth explored differences in how their cultures viewed the world, valued nature, and formulated rules to live by.[3]
Our medium of time travel will be the imagination of seven gifted writers who each draw upon his or her personal experience, historical and geographical knowledge, and cultural origins. I chose to review novels rather than nonfiction because writers of fiction, like all good storytellers, draw from the deep well of human experience as they create a tale. Humans learn through story. As we *recall who we were* we learn *who we are* and maybe where we are going.

[3] *Caleb's Crossing* (2011). Geraldine Brooks.

By presenting this guide with seven regionally based stories I hope to encourage dialogue among students, book clubs members, faith groups, and many other *thinking communities* to promote the evolution of a Land and Earth Ethic fit to our time and places.

Note: For information about authors and their work, I used primary sources: I read what they wrote about their work and listened to numerous author interviews, from radio, internet and publicly recorded events; read their blogs and websites and talked to people who knew or know them. Secondary sources which I consulted include book reviews and biographies. However, I primarily took my information from what authors write or say about their work to get as close to the truth as possible. A very interesting primary source and great pleasure for me was access to Iola Fuller's scrap books which she kept with hundreds of interviews, book reviews, letters, and original comments from reviewers of her manuscript for *Loon Feather* which included Marjorie Rawlings original review comments. For this I am most grateful to Paul Goodspeed, Iola Fuller's only son.

INTRODUCTION

On the North American continent thousands of separate societies and experiments in human governance were in full swing at the time of European exploration. Indigenous peoples of North America were present as long ago as 25,000 years or more. In each of the continent's ecological regions (biomes) cultures developed and flourished. The northeastern hardwood forests and Great Lakes region, the southern piedmonts and long-leafed pine woodlands; the great rivers and their fertile valleys; the prairies and deserts; the young mountains (Rockies) and the ancient spine of the Continent, the Appalachians; coasts, the great springs and marshlands – each a major bioregion with distinct plant communities – spawned *ways of being* uniquely adapted to it.

Across these ecological areas, were "highways" that have persisted and traces of them can still be found. The Occaneechi Path was a well developed network used for trade between tribes in the Chesapeake, Virginia and Piedmont region of North Carolina with Cherokees as far south as Georgia. Business relationships included "middlemen"- tribes whose language was learned by all to negotiate contracts between suppliers and buyers North and South. On this continent tribal histories also tell of conflict and tragedy from which societies grew wise, developing advanced forms of democratic governance such as the Iroquois Confederacy and the Cherokee Nation - each with a written language and complex system of law and structures for governance.

While diverse in customs, the first American social experiments held one thing in common: they were aware of an inviolable aspect of nature which they understood as its sacred quality and which modern day scientists identify as its renewing capacities that made it resilient. Native people believe that to know the stories in the landscape where you were born and live is integral to being fully human. This treasure trove of human learning from America's original cultures constitutes a potential source of guidance for mobile societies whose beliefs and practice have proven unsustainable. What is missing is a land *ethic*—a set of values to guide decisions that collectively strive to secure the renewing power of an

ecosystem from which humans draw resources for their benefit. What may ultimately emerge as a new American land ethic will likely be a unique combination of principles of respect for life, western society's spirit of innovation and ingenuity, and the process of scientific inquiry—the sacred, the politic, and scientific realms, blended in such a manner that it works in all sorts of situations in different combinations.

This book reviews seven regional American stories. Each author imagines how historic or contemporary relationships between Native Americans and immigrant cultures play out. Each story is a discussion worthy of consideration in the present time. You may not agree always with the author's assumptions, but each challenges modern readers to think about how we relate to nature and to each other.

Use this small guide to explore contemporary ecological and social challenges in our current time. Does the voice of indigenous America resonate today? Are there lessons we can learn in these stories that will help citizens understand how to live on a small planet without killing ourselves and the living communities that support us, inspire us, and with whom we have a sacred bond in the Creation? Are the values that guide our nation sufficient for new ecological challenges?

Suggestions for Using This Guide

Each novel is presented with the same structure: 1) the circumstances that led to reading the novel; 2) the author; 3) the plot, and 4) analysis. Read this guide through to get a general feeling for how the seven stories present a larger story moving over time (400 years of political, cultural, moral and legal relationships among indigenous people and the colonies and U.S. government).

Good writers draw from what they know. Each novel arises from a landscape and lived experiences by the author through his or her characters. In the process of writing and at the headwaters of the creative process an artist draws from the collective unconscious. You can best see this demonstrated by reading all the novels and asking yourself afterward, did regional or historical circumstances lead to distinctly different outcomes and experiences? Or, are these outcomes similar across regions and time?

General Guiding Questions:

1. Why did all seven writers choose a young person as narrator or lead character?
2. What roles do lead characters play in his or her family? Tribe or township?
3. What are the conditions of women in their families and community?
4. How does the community play a role in a character's decision or personal freedom?
5. Is there a key point in historical time that acts like a fulcrum on which a different turn of events would have radically altered outcomes?
6. Were the characters believable or unrealistic, even idealistic, to you? Why?
7. What was the author trying to convey with his or her story?

The Loon Feather by Iola Fuller

How I came to read the book.

In 1990 I decided to study Native American culture with an Iroquois teacher. She was born in Quebec, Canada to an Iroquois (Mohawk) father and French mother. In my first few months of study she lent me her copy of *The Loon Feather*. It was a book to which she related strongly and perhaps hoped would increase my understanding of her personal struggle to bridge Iroquois and French Canadian cultures, much like the main character in the novel.

The Loon Feather (1940) remains a regional classic in Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio and particularly on Mackinac Island where the story centers. Iola Fuller wrote the story while a student at the University of Michigan. As happens with many writers, her first book remains her enduring legacy. She later wrote about the Black Hawk Wars (*The Shining Trail*, 1943) and Desoto's explorations on the Mississippi (*The Gilded Torch*, 1957). *The Loon Feather* is heralded for its superior prose. When reviewed by Marjorie Rawlings for the Hopwood Award in 1939 she noted it as a "book of the rarest beauty."

About the Author

I had the privilege of corresponding with Iola Fuller's son, Paul Goodspeed, who was just an infant when *The Loon Feather* was published. He recalled his mother's love of literature, her work at small colleges teaching writing classes, and how her students knew her as a stern but effective teacher of the written word. According to Paul there is no Native American lineage in the family tree. He is not sure how his mother became focused on the history of the Chippewa and other tribes in the region. She was a scholar of history. Fuller published two historical novels focused on early Spanish exploration in the region (*The Gilded Torch* and *All the Good Things*). In each novel Fuller achieved memorable characters whose responses to the historic narratives of their region and time are mosaics of our national history.

Iola Fuller was born in Michigan in 1906. She spent the majority of her life in that region of the U.S. and Canada where numerous Native American tribes lived along the inlets and shores of the Great Lakes. It is the region in the Northeast where American history began with French and English fur trading and early church campaigns to convert tribes to Christian beliefs.

Fuller had access to a trove of historic documents. During her graduate studies at the University of Michigan Fuller drew information from the William L. Clements Historical Library and from the Burton Historical Collection housed at the Michigan Public Library. The Clements Library houses original resources for the study of American history and culture (15th – 19th centuries). The collection is comprised of primary sources (books, maps, manuscripts, prints and photographs) from American history.[4] The Burton Collection houses documents and artifacts from early Michigan history.[5]

Fuller could have read from books, pamphlets, bound newspapers, atlases, maps, pictures, photographs, personal papers, archives, census, and business records. Whether she met tribal leaders or visited local reservations where she might have listened to elders or tribal leaders is not verifiable. Fuller's son does not recall any description of those kinds of activities by his mother. However, one of Fuller's students contributed the following remembrance of visits to Fuller's home via emails to me.[6] She studied with Iola Fuller at Ferry State College where Fuller taught American literature and English. The student and her mother had visited the author's home where they learned a great deal about Fuller's research and writing, and during which they examined manuscripts purportedly given to

[4] William T. Clements Historical Library: http://www.clements.umich.edu/, retrieved March 9, 2013.
[5] Burton Historical Collection: http://www.detroit.lib.mi.us/featuredcollection/burton-historical-collection, retrieved March 9, 2013.
[6] Amazon.com, Loon Feather reader discussion: http://www.amazon.com/gp/forum/cd/discussion.html/ref=cm_cd_pg_oldest?ie=UTF8&cdForum=Fx3I7J4DWJBX6HO&cdPage=1&cdSort=newest&cdThread=TxNRISGTJ0X2ZB, retrieved October 6, 2012.

Fuller by Native Americans. Fuller showed them diaries which recorded her interactions with tribal leaders during the development of the book:

"Mrs. Iola Fuller McCoy spent many summers on Indian reservations visiting and getting to know the native peoples after having spent many years studying early North American Indian history at University of Michigan where she developed contacts with tribal leaders and others who welcomed her inquisitive, sensitive and sincere interest. She often had access to historical documents that few authors outside of First Peoples are privileged to see. When my grandmother spoke at length with Mrs. McCoy during my time as a student at Ferris State, she was so impressed with Mrs. McCoy's description of First Peoples Indian and European interaction, she felt as though she was present watching history in the making; my grandmother spoke endlessly of Ms. McCoy's incredible detailed accounting of life, beliefs, culture and conversation obtained from diaries and other historically preserved documents that she was privileged to study, often provided by North American Indian tribal leaders that she came away with a whole new perspective on early European-Indian interactions, behavior, expectations and beliefs which ultimately involved one another in deeply moving, cultural exchanges and influencing beliefs, long held, about that time in early Michigan history. Few authors have had such intimate relationships with both sides of the culture when one of those cultures is clearly not their own, and Iola Fuller developed those relationships many years earlier during her undergraduate and graduate years at U of M, especially during summers spent on research and exploration. The level of intimacy she developed was special, that I came to a completely unique and deep understanding of Loon Feather, especially after Iola Fuller described so many unique and heretofore unknown facts about a particular chapter or paragraph. She was at the time, writing another book which came out while we were still in her classes. Her decades long experience with First Peoples, their culture and leaders, led to an insight not often achieved by someone from the "outside," one developed after decades of research, interviewing and access to rare First Peoples literature often not available to anyone, especially in a library. I remember visiting her home with my grandmother in tow, and Mrs.

McCoy proudly producing what appeared to be parchment paper, very old, some diaries of sorts, describing life in Michigan of First Peoples, their families and communities and their interactions with European settlers. Mrs. McCoy told me several times that she planned to expand upon that theme but was constantly pushed by her publisher for other works and this "other" project could wait. Some of her detailed notes with First Peoples Indians occupied volumes, and I saw only a few, some of her notes even then, dating back three decades or more, accompanied by rare photographs on glass plates to even earlier periods." [7]

Whatever may be facts, the result of Fuller's passionate quest to understand the truth of historical interactions among Native Americans, French and English settlers it is clear the author drew from rich source materials. This study enabled her to more sensitively represent an indigenous perspective in her books which established Fuller as an important regional author. Fuller also explores the role of women and the church in early American history.

Socio/political Background

When the novel opens, the French and English were nearing the end of what had been a century of fur trading in the Great Lakes region. Beaver were the first extracted resource brought to near extinction before settlers turned their attention to logging and mining. Tecumseh was born in 1768 at a time when tribes were progressively pushed off their land. Tecumseh traveled throughout Indian country forming a Pan Indian Alliance to try to hold onto traditional lands above the Ohio River into Canada. He also formed an alliance with the British to fight the U.S. but was later betrayed when the Brits ceded all Indian lands to the U.S. in the Treaty of Greenville. By the time the novel ends tribes have been dispersed and broken in spirit. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is formed in 1824 after which Indian children are separated from their parents to be assimilated into European culture and

[7] Amazon.com, Loon Feather reader discussion: http://www.amazon.com/gp/forum/cd/discussion.html/ref=cm_cd_pg_oldest?ie=UTF8&cdForum=Fx3I7J4DWJBX6HO&cdPage=1&cdSort=newest&cdThread=TxNRISGTJ0X2ZB, retrieved October 6, 2012.

educated at BIA boarding schools. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 "exchanged lands" with eastern tribes and removed them westward to reservations.

The Plot of the Story

It is 1806 in the Great Lakes region. The future of the young United States of America is still a question in the minds of the British army encamped in the Canadian regions around the Great Lakes. Ever opportunistic, they will make alliances with a great Indian leader and battlefield genius – Tecumseh – who has just realized that the only hope to preserve the Indian way of life on the continent is to unite the tribes east of the Mississippi River into a Pan American Indian Alliance. He negotiates with British forces in a mutually beneficial pact to defend their remaining homelands.

In the dense woodlands of what is today northern Michigan a child is born during a night when meteors fall and streak across the heavens. She is prophesied to bring a great leader to her tribe. Oneta begins her life's journey in uncertain times. Her father is away at the time of her birth as he will be absent for most of her childhood travelling throughout the eastern U.S. to convince tribal leaders to join the Indian alliance against the English.

Oneta feels pride in Tecumseh's reputation of bravery and leadership. As his daughter she will have only a few memories of him before news of his death in the Battle of the Thames in 1813. She is only seven years old when the hope of tribal sovereignty on their traditional homelands vanishes forever with his death. Oneta and her mother are propelled to adapt to the oppressor's demands or perish.

The plot juxtaposes the lives of an Ojibwe girl and a French tradesman who come to know each other through his courtship and marriage to Oneta's mother after the death of Tecumseh. These unlikely liaisons occur in the multicultural milieu on Mackinac Island at

the time when the centuries-long fur trade decreased as beaver populations collapsed from overharvesting.

Oneta's and Pierre's personal journeys evoke a host of voices from the past whose conversations still echo in the present. For example, when the two characters are first getting to know each other, Pierre examines a figure drawn by Oneta of an Indian brave who she represents with a large heart for courage but has no head. Pierre ponders: "I wonder, is the head really more important than the heart?" This aptly describes a vast cultural divide. Later Oneta reflects that Pierre's soft way of speaking was better suited to enclosed rooms with velvet hangings. Pierre himself is awash in conflicting emotions as he feels indignation at the biased treatment of Oneta's mother by his French and English peers yet finds his wife's beliefs and ways of living disgusting and disruptive to his sense of what is proper. Oneta becomes an intercessory between her parents. As the reader turns the pages he watches the steady dismantling of native customs, once fit to the natural environment, and now reshaped to fit a culture utterly foreign in its customs and sensibilities to Oneta and her mother.

Another key character is Marte, named by her French trapper husband, Baptiste. She is a medicine woman in Oneta's Loon Feather Clan. Marte is the soul and voice of native America in Fuller's story. Oneta spends much of her childhood in the care of Marte. As they roam over Mackinac Island gathering plants for remedies or ceremony, the author introduces the reader to an earth-based perspective and way of life. Baptiste is representative of the French Voyageur tradition of easy adaptability to Indian culture, close relationship with nature, and middleman between Europe and native America that developed over two centuries. Awash in this mosaic of nations vying for land and resources Oneta reflects: "The feeling came over me that I was where one time overlapped another, being all the same in eternity." Fuller's setting and characters evoke the unique tensions that animated relationships among the people at that time. Fuller magically recreates a time when there was some potential for cultural integration of values. She imagines Oneta

forming a way of life that makes sense to her but allows her to move in and out of different ways of being for survival.

At age 12, Oneta is sent to a convent in Quebec, the plan of her French grandmother to transform her from a rough native to a refined lady. For the next 12 years of her life Oneta lives in a world as she describes it - devoid of color: “I was obedient because there was nothing else to be….I felt like a plant uprooted and thrown to lie on strange ground withering and feeling its roots parched by wind and sun…”

Yet Oneta is loved and makes many friends among the nuns and other native youth. She indulges herself in literature and history. Occasionally she is reminded of her origins when she opens a window and breathes in the fresh air from the great pines and evergreens that line the lake spanning before her. Oneta’s time at the convent is similar to the time she spent as a child when Pierre first came into their world: contemplation on the strange and disconnected ways of living and thinking from that which she learned in childhood among the Ojibwe. She remembers how Marte challenged her to be the daughter of Tecumseh and is jolted remembering the legacy of her father: “And then I saw how I had let the new ways put aside the values of what I was.”

Following this revelation, Oneta’s life takes a dramatic turn culminating in a show down between her father-in-law, who in his cultural ineptness nearly foments a war, and her people who have been oppressed and cheated one time too many. Eventually, does bring a great leader to her tribe but not one the reader might have imagined at the outset of the story.

Analysis

At the time of its publication, Iola Fuller was a new graduate of the University of Michigan’s Creative Writing program where the prestigious Hopwood Award had been established

with an endowment from Avery Hopwood, an American dramatist who attended Michigan University. He instructed that one-fifth of his large estate be used in perpetuity to inspire creative writing among students. Iola Fuller won the fiction award in 1939 with the largest award ever made to a single writer: $2,000 – a small fortune then.

The Loon Feather caught the imagination of readers drawing them to a young Indian girl who is thrust into the maelstrom of North America's early melting pot. Her struggle to know herself in the midst of an all out assault on her values and genetic heritage must have caused readers to reconsider the historic narrative of Manifest Destiny and perhaps to draw a comparison to the cultural assault on Jews happening across the Atlantic at the time of the book's release.

Oneta's character, as drawn by Fuller, offers readers some recompense of guilt by endowing Oneta with skills and the personal attributes to easily assimilate into French and English cultural practices without losing her bedrock Native American perspective. This was criticized by at least one reviewer who pointed out the unreality of that kind of dualism for most human beings. Most biographies by Native Americans in similar situations tell of great personal suffering and refusal to adopt new ways of a culture at odds with their values. However, Indian children forced into boarding schools all had to do just that to survive. Those wounds still fester. Many tribal communities are reviving cultural traditions and recovering their native language which has made their people successful societies. As tribal communities are finding the center of their culture again, and at least some Americans embrace the values and perspectives of Native Americans as having value, youth can grow up in the U.S. A. embracing their origins and find resonance in the larger culture. There is still, however, much to be done including a full atonement by the U.S. government and society for the genocide in early encounters with native nations.

If Fuller were alive today and writing *The Loon Feather* it might have been a very different narrative. But, in 1939 it was shaped gently in the mind of a woman who had spent years

researching her topic. The authenticity of *The Loon Feather* in terms of reflecting Native American views toward white culture is not clear. However, I came to read the book at the recommendation of an Iroquois educator who believed it to be an accurate account of the historic times and the internal struggles of the characters in the cultures represented.

Fuller achieves two critical literary feats with *The Loon Feather*: 1) an accurate representation of a regional history in U.S.; 2) universal themes in a good tale that has lasted for nearly 75 years and a sea change or two in American and tribal histories. The questions raised in the book are still relevant and unanswered.

Finally, Iola Fuller, as a young writer, managed to do what John Steinbeck challenged all writers to strive toward: creating a story and characters that lift the human spirit.

The Man Who Killed the Deer by Frank Waters

How I Came to Read the Book

In 2006, I was awarded an eight-week Artist's Residency on the Frank Waters property in Arroyo Seco, New Mexico. This was a great honor for me as a budding Southwestern writer. The nearby Taos Public Library houses the lion's share of his works, correspondence and manuscripts. Frank Waters' works of fiction and nonfiction contributed to his being credited as the Grandfather of Southwestern Literature.

About the Author

Frank Waters was born in 1902 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. His life course would take him far and wide in a variety of occupations. From working as a lineman at a telephone company, to information consultant at Los Alamos, to editor of the Taos bilingual newspaper, Waters wrote from his varied experiences. Eventually he would publish 27 books, the majority still in print. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize several times by many who admired him and was the respected friend of many Native American leaders and writers of the time. Dr. Vine Deloria, Jr., an authority and ardent spokesperson for Native America, considered Frank one of the great thinkers of his time and place.[8]

Frank's paternal grandfather was a member of the Cheyenne Indian Tribe. As a boy Frank accompanied his father on visits to local tribal dances or ceremonies. His grandfather and father introduced him to the beliefs and practices of the Cheyenne people. As a youth he accompanied them to tribal dances or ceremonies. Frank was born into the early mining era in Colorado. The technology devastated many landscapes to fuel the economy of a new nation. Eventually his grandfather and father both owned mines on Cripple Creek. The values learned as a child and those inherent in extractive technologies like mining created

[8] *Rekindling the Light*, The Frank Waters Centennial (2003). Barbara Waters (Ed). "Reflections from a Dusty Road: Frank Waters, Time and the Indians." Taos, New Mexico: Frank Waters Foundation Press, pp 37-47.

grist in the mill of Frank's conscience. He witnessed the early days of industrialization, and with his early orientation to native values and the land, he began to observe, imagine, and write about the conflict in cultures. Eventually he left home before finishing his last year in engineering at Colorado State University to begin a colorful journey spanning the southwest and Mexico. During this period he worked in Los Angeles when the debate about diverting the Colorado River to green desert lands and for quenching *Angelenos*' thirst began. His early experiences caused him to reflect on the dual nature of American life that espoused the greatness of the landscape while devastating it.

He eventually made a home in the Southwest working as an editor for the *Taos Times*, and becoming a part of Mabel Dodge's *salon-out-west* in which the famous New York patron of the arts cultivated writers, artists, and thinkers during the 1930's at her pueblo mansion in Taos. Waters eventually bought land and an old adobe cabin adjacent to the Taos Pueblo in Arroyo Seco, New Mexico where he would live for the rest of this life.

In his books, lectures, and relationships with tribal leaders and great American artists of his time, Waters became an important voice on the anthropology and metaphysical lives of Native Americans in the Southwest and Mexico especially among the Hopi. A persistent theme in all his writing is the duality of cultural views, the strengths and weaknesses in both.

I knew little about Frank Waters until I discovered the Foundation website while researching writer's residency opportunities. Writing in the small, dusty-pink adobe cabin on the Water's property, I often felt the spirit of Frank watching over my shoulder as I labored to tell a tale about climate change in the Southwest. The Colorado River figured prominently in my novel. Frank published *The Colorado River in 19__,* a non-fiction book describing the changes occurring on the ancient river after the Hoover Dam channelized the flow, altering its habitats and ways of life forever.

Because of the Artist's Residency I was able to spend time at the nearby Taos Public Library studying Frank's books and manuscripts. I read *The Man Who Killed the Deer* and remember the powerful indigenous voice addressing the western world - much like Oneta and Marté in *The Loon Feather*. Yet Waters' far-reaching exploration of metaphysical thought in cultures of the Hopi, Inca and Maya, and his understanding of commonalities among early indigenous cultures, enabled him to write powerfully about American culture's separation from the spiritual forces that imbue the earth, and the path to destruction such separation foretells.

Socio/Political Background

In the 1940s tribes across America had been decimated by unfair laws that confined their authority to the reservation. Yet federal agencies such as Fish and Wildlife dictated what Indian people could or couldn't do on their own land in relationship to wildlife takings. Imposed on a complex, deeply spiritual relationship with animals in their homeland were secular rules and regulations based purely on the science of wildlife management (which was in its infancy.) This rendered the traditional beliefs and practices powerless.

Poverty of tribes was also endemic due to a poor land base, substandard education, poor health care, subsidized government food, and widespread depression. These conditions resulted in a pervasive hopelessness that settled like a dark cloud over Indian Country. His proximity to the Taos Pueblo fostered friendships among tribal members and families. Waters was drawn into the daily life and challenges of the Taos Pueblo people. He was in a tribal court room when a young man was brought before the judge for killing a deer out of season. He was struck by the conversations that ensued which juxtaposed tribal spiritual law with U.S. federal law and saw immediately how the young man had been trapped between them. This real incidence was the germ for his book, a best-selling novel that has been continuously in print for over 70 years.

The Plot and Main Character

Martiniano is a Taos Pueblo Indian youth who has returned from boarding school, married and has a young child. He was very young when separated from his parents and community by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He, like his peers, lost memory of his tribe's traditions and values through a program intended to destroy any ties to the culture. He was forced to assimilate European-American values and practices. While he learned to follow the rules, Martiniano nevertheless did not fully accept foreign concepts and ways. Thus, like many of his peers, he eventually belonged to neither culture. To make matters worse, the traditional people on his reservation suspected any member of the tribe educated in Indian Boarding schools, believing their minds altered irrevocably by Western values and ways of thinking. Equally, he would always be an Indian in white culture.

Martiniano predictably is not very successful. He struggles at low paying jobs and is generally depressed. His Indian wife wants him to be a man—assertive and confident. He can find no peace. The family is hungry during a particularly cold winter. Martiniano decides to kill a deer out of season. Yet even this turns into a huge controversy as he finds that he violates both the traditions of his people and a federal law. He faces a court hearing and maybe jail time because he cannot pay any fine imposed on him. His tribal elders press him to enter into ceremony to heal his broken spirit and come back into the tribal community again. Thus the voice of the pueblo rises throughout the book speaking to readers as well as Martiniano.

Waters puts the values of Western society on trial. He skillfully shows how the youth who grew up in westernized schools believes his actions are separate rather part of a *group mind*. Martiniano believes there is no personal freedom in following traditional ways. Yet the over culture's system of artificially controlling populations of animals is in stark contrast to tribal sensibilities that measure the taking of a life against values that respect the sacred nature of the landscape, considering whether the taking is absolutely necessary and asking for the consent of the hunted as an equal being of value and purpose. During

the trial period, Martiniano must make a choice of one culture over another to preserve his sanity. Tribal leaders decide to reach out to him with a powerful healing ceremony that can make him whole again. During a dance ceremony he communes with the spirit of the deer.

Analysis

Assimilation of Western culture by Indian youths in boarding schools began in the latter half of the 19th century. It started with religious groups who brought the Christian message of salvation to "natives." Later the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) supported these religious efforts with funding. In the early 1900's to as late as 1960, the BIA built and ran its own schools. Toward the end of the campaign many tribes relocated boarding schools to reservations governed by Tribal Councils. Older tribal leaders who attended Indian Boarding Schools carry the emotional scars of that terrible time. Martiniano is an adult manifesting the outcomes of such a childhood experience. In his struggle to accept community limits on his activity, he queries his rights as an individual, a value he learned in boarding school. Why can't he decide to kill a deer when his family is hungry? The tribal voice answers in eloquent passages that become an address to Western culture. The taking of another life is not a simple matter based on numbers of separate *things* as the U.S. environmental laws are written, but a response to killing some part of the whole, of being inextricably connected to this deer and its life and its family. Ritual and group decision-making are the only way to properly take a life for ones sustenance, survival. The story, with its own sonorous voice of a people who understand the wholeness of being in nature, is a startling small manuscript of a spiritual journey - much like Herman Hesse's story *Siddhartha*.

I Heard the Owl Call My Name by Margaret Craven

How I Came to Read the Book

I noticed a table of books at Pensacola's Barnes and Noble that represented the required reading for Advanced Placement (AP) in Literature for high school students. Among the classics in American Literature was a tiny paperback that caught my eye with its beautiful cover of towering mountains on a channel and mysterious totem poles—*I Heard the Owl Call My Name*. I returned home and read it in a few hours. Like *The Loon Feather* it is a regional classic, this one from northwestern British Columbia. It is a story about a young Catholic priest when he begins his work with the Kwakiutl people at the very point when the impact of boarding schools and access to alcohol is set to transform community life.

Margaret Craven - aged 69 - published her first and only novel which has lasted in print for 40 years. I was impressed that my community saw fit to bring the story to our youth just before they embark on their own life's path.

The deceptively simple prose conveys the beauty and timeless nature of British Columbia's archipelago of islands and channels near Vancouver Island, and centers around the seasonal migrations of salmon and pods of killer whales who hunt them. The book describes Kwakiutl life as seen by Craven but achieves a type of accuracy (she lived with the community for several months) which makes the story part of the renascence of traditional life happening today.

About the Author

Margaret Craven (b 1901), like Iola Fuller (b 1906) and Frank Waters (b 1902), was born to parents living in Montana where her father practiced law and raised horses on his ranch. He took Craven and her twin brother Wilson on pack trips into the surrounding mountains where she learned the value of solitude. Her family nurtured a young mind and a generous heart. Later the family moved to Bellingham, Washington. When her father suffered a

serious accident that affected his mind and behavior, Craven's mother had him committed to a long-term care facility. She sold the family belongings and spent most of her time with her husband. Margaret and Wilson were abruptly ushered into piloting their own destinies. An older brother paved the way for them to study at Stanford University. Craven became one of only a handful of women studying at the institution at the time. She and Wilson struggled to make ends meet, eating on the cheap and working several odd jobs at once. Margaret became editor of the university student newspaper and excelled in her history classes graduating with honors.

She would develop key relationships with editors of publications where she first worked and who helped her hone excellent writing skills as a journalist. In spite of titles such as secretary, she was every bit an editor and eventually gained that recognition from her bosses and peers. When her mother came to live with her they moved to San Francisco. Through friends she met Alice B. Toklas who arranged an opportunity for Craven to spend an afternoon with Gertrude Stein. The great writer's advice carried Craven through the rest of her writing career. Stein advised her to submit her stories to The Post (*The Saturday Evening Post*) because they required the highest standards from its contributing writers. That began a long stretch as a contributor to *The Post* plus many other popular magazines that were the mass media communication of her time. When television led to a downturn in their readership, many of America's popular magazines folded. She continued to write for several that survived including *The Post*. She was a gifted story-teller by the time her brother brought her information about the struggles of the Kwakiutl people in British Columbia and suggested to his sister that it would make a good story.

Socio/Political Background

The tribes living along the shore of an extensive network of inlets on the northwest coast of British Columbia escaped some of the worst impacts of industrialization up to late 1960s. At the outset of Craven's novel, the community, like salmon that navigate the inlets, is on the last leg of their collective journey as an intact community governed by internal,

traditional values and unwritten laws. The over culture has penetrated into the community by taking children to boarding schools. The tools of assimilation will destroy tribal unity. The old people see it and try to dissuade youth from going away. In the story, Brian, the young priest who is dying but does not know it, receives the education of his life during his ministry to the Kwakiutl people. He proves his loyalty and later acts as an intermediary between the tribe, it youth and the dominant culture. The tribal community worships in a little church which blends Christian and tribal symbolism. Is the same God being worshipped? From the outside, impacts of development are beginning to diminish the salmon migrations, the pods of killer whales, and the land itself. In the 1970s when the book was written and received acclaim the nascent environmental movement was underway. The U.S. government has just formed the Environmental Protection Agency and passed the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act. The European over culture began to witness the result of unfettered development practices. Environmental regulation has since attempted to substitute for a land ethic that anchors decisions in shared values about nature and wildlife.

The Plot and Characters

On the first page we learn about a young priest who is diagnosed with a fatal disease and an estimated two years to live. His Bishop elects not to tell him but rather to send him to serve the Anglican Church's ministry to the native people living in traditional villages along the northwest coastal archipelago of Canada. The Kwakiutl villages along channels and straits that cut through steep mountainsides are undergoing change caused by imposed boarding school education and impending new policies that will allow native people to purchase alcohol. The life of the tribe has maintained its traditional community life little touched by European cultural values. Their isolated location helped stem that advance. But now it is changing. The Bishop explains that sending young Mark Brian to such a challenging assignment is "to live so he is prepared to die" implying a type of spiritual quickening awaits the young priest.

Analysis

Craven was a private person, reluctant to share much about her life publicly. Her very short memoir, *Again the Owl Calls* (1980, N.Y.: Dell Publishing), is, at best, a sketch with detailed accounts sprinkled along the way. Much of has been imposed on Craven by reviewers about what motivated the writing of her most successful novel. According to Craven she had no motivation other than to tell a good story when she researched and wrote *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*. At the time Craven wrote the story, her twin brother Wilson was dying of cancer. Craven read all she could about them and later contacted the Anglican Church missionary program to learn more about the church's work with the tribe. She interviewed priests who had spent time in their ministry at the village of Kingcome, British Columbia.

Eventually Craven decided to travel on the mission's boat that regularly brought provisions and ferried sick people to towns where they could receive treatment or birth their babies. She stayed for nearly four months joining in the regular routine of village life, learning from elders, mothers, and youth attending *away school*. Vivid experiences filtered through her mind and body. The beauty of the fjords and inlets, surging pods of killer whales, and the salmon running to spawn in their last living act – all swirled in her thoughts. The book that resulted is considered a small masterpiece on Kwakiutl life.

This story is written not so much from the mind but more from the soul rendering an ethereal quality to it. Perhaps that is why its relevancy has lasted for so long. A good story with universal symbols (the journey of the initiate, etc.). In this respect, Craven's novel is similar to *The Loon Feather*—both capture the *essence* of a traditional culture. I think of Margaret Meade's *Coming of Age* in Samoa. She was a social scientist but her work is nevertheless infused with her own woman's sensibilities. Craven and Fuller achieve similarly accurate accounts in their novels via a blend of research *and* imagination, even their own unconscious desire to makes things whole.

Craven creates an admirable character in Mark Brian who demonstrates his honesty and trustworthiness through his actions over the last year of his life. Afterward he is accepted by the community and plays a key role in helping tribal members deal with the intruding realities of the over culture as it encroaches on land, economic livelihood, and education of its children. The tribe has accepted Christianity over a long period of missionary influence. They appreciate the symbolic rituals of culture and make Christ their own. The carved images on tall wooden poles are symbols of spirits or major events in the life of a community much like sculpture, murals and monuments are in American culture. Mark Brian melds into the life he is handed by the bishop. He endures the same hardships of the community and provides assistance, substance, and regularity of spirit until he is beloved among the people – though he is unaware of it. Mark Brian is a *traveler* like the French voyageurs of early French colonialism who paddled deep into the inlets of the Great Lakes and learned the ways and language of its peoples.
As Craven imagines and crafts the narrative she chronicles the circumstances and social customs of the Kwakiutl in the first few decades of the 20th century.

When she published her novel in 1974, native people were romanticized in popular culture and used by the nascent environmental movement in the U.S. as paragons of perfect behavior toward the environment. Rather than helping indigenous peoples, it became a barrier that exists to this day, making them an adversary to enterprise and development, and further isolating First Americans from access to economic gain. In contrast Craven's novel has little sentimentality; it flows as a reporter might tell it but is softened with insight into human relationships. Craven never married nor did she have children yet she displays great humanity and compassion in her writing. There is a certain tempered discipline which might be the result of Gertrude Stein's admonition to balance "sensitivity with vitality", advice Craven took to heart and which she felt made her a better writer.

Gardens in the Dunes by Leslie Marmon Silko

How I Came to Read the Book

In 1999 I moved to Tucson, Arizona to serve as Director of Education at the Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum. There I began to learn about Tohono O'odham culture. A tribal elder and professor at The University of Arizona, Ofelia Zepeda, frequently gave lectures and read her poetry in the Kiva—a circular auditorium in the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILD) at UA. Attending her lectures and poetry readings, I learned how the tribe practiced dry farming or planting native seeds in basins to await the seasonal monsoon rain. Regularity in climate allowed the tribe to farm in this manner for thousands of years. Current day O'odham members use some irrigation to supplement rain as air patterns have shifted carrying away moisture up from the Sea of Cortez that provided rain for generation after generation of Tohono O'odham farmers.

During a 2007 the AILD hosted a Native Voices Symposium at which Leslie Marmon Silko was the keynote speaker. After her presentation, I became an avid reader of Silko's fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999) drew my attention because I was learning more about the early Colorado River Indian Tribes in my work at the time. The Cocopah Museum Director employed me to assist her with writing a short history of the Cocopah Nation for a tourist brochure. Known as The River People, the Cocopahs have traditionally fished the Colorado and gardened in the flood plain of the wild river after it flooding its banks (for which the Hoover Dam was built, in part, to prevent). Simply planting native seeds in the muddy reaches along the riverbanks they grew melons, greens, and corn much as the Tohono O'odham grew food in basin farms near Tucson.

About the Author

Leslie Marmon Silko was born in 1948 in the Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico. Her bicultural heritage – Laguna Pueblo and Mexican-American – is richly interwoven in her fictional characters, poetry and the multicultural sense she brings to her life and works. However

Silko embraces her Laguna heritage as her way of knowing the world about her. Silko was writing at a time of renaissance of indigenous voices in mainstream America, in fact she is credited by some for heralding the renewal of traditional culture in her stories. In *Ceremony* she shows the absolute necessity of ceremony for healing and wholeness of spirit. In *Almanac for the Dead* she draws across continents to show our common humanity and origins and to make the stories part of millennial history, putting the context of the short 500 years of Euro-American invasion and oppression as a bleep on the screen of a much longer, circular time.

Silko explained that, when she was writing *Almanac,* spirits road her like a horse while she wrote the ancients indigenous voice coming through her on to the page in the present time. At the time she wrote *Almanac for the Dead*, she was supported by a MacArthur Fellowship which freed her from work to devote herself to writing fulltime. But it was interrupted by a series of events in Tucson (where she was residing) which led her into political activism. Later she realized spirit was directing her when she spent a year with a Tucson community painting a mural in protest of corrupt police and a racist governor. The painting depicted a long snake with skulls in its belly. It was hungry - the people were hungry from the rich stealing their land. Later her Laguna elders reminded her that the snake is a messenger, a messenger of the Laguna people. So she then had the rest of the novel.

Silko is considered by many to be the first American Indian novelist. Her works remind readers there was a time on every continent on Earth when living and time were very different than what we see and experience today - a time much fuller in its awareness of the Earth, when human beings recognized that “they were a force *of* nature.”

Socio/Political Background

In Arizona near the Colorado River Valley south of what is today Parker, vestiges of Colorado Indian tribes lived in isolation along the river and floodplains. The gold rush (1848-55) brought irrevocable changes along segments of the mighty river when

developers logged-out mesquite forests to burn in steamboats that ferried gold seekers to California. Yuma, Arizona, adjacent to southern California became known as The Crossing. Charles Darwin, on the other side of the Atlantic, publishes *The Origin of the Species* in 1859 challenging traditional Christian beliefs about the creation of life. Into this jostling sea of change, Indigo, a mere child, navigates through a maze of changing social, religious, and political change. Tribes languished under state and federal laws which sought at every opportunity to eradicate tribal identity and to assimilate Indians into Euro-American culture.

The Plot of the Story

The story begins in the warm sand dunes where Indigo, a small child of the Sand Lizard Clan, and her sister (Sister Salt) and their mother and grandmother are cultural hold-outs, living in the old ways. Nearby the town is Anglicizing any native child they can find through boarding schools, and marginalizing - even killing Indian adults who do not assimilate. Readers are swept into this womb of life, the remaining vestiges of cultural integrity still alive in grandmother's teaching and the closeness of the children to nature. The dunes support gardens of food, where the river has left rich silt behind in its flooding and receding cycles. Native seeds flourish and the children find nourishment, materials for clothing and homemaking. Yet their future is precariously hanging by threads. If local police discover the children they will be immediately seized and sent away to boarding school.

When local authorities finally do come for the children, the sisters are separated and the novel follows two streams: one examines the fates for characters outside of the coming domination of European upper class values. Sister Salt escapes at the time of her capture; she is later caught and imprisoned. We follow her as she forms a community of women inmates who labor in mining encampments near Parker, Arizona. Sister Salt cleans and cooks in the nude, celebrating her body and has clean, easy sex with an African American who has found his own niche in the sub-economies, is saving money to live "the good life in Mexico". With him she conceives a child.

In the town, Indigo's mother is eking out an existence. She becomes involved with other tribal groups who are following a spiritual leader, Wovoka, who plans a Ghost Dance to bring Spirit to intervene in the terrible oppression and genocide they are suffering at the hands of the U.S. Government.

Meanwhile Indigo, who was placed in an Indian Boarding School, appears to be resilient and impervious to the cultural and spiritual assault on her native upbringing. She "flows like water" doing what she is asked but never changing interiorly. Edward ____, meets Indigo and is intrigued by her bright mind and shining spirit. He conceives a plan to adopt her to help his wife Hattie recover from the grief of not being able to conceive a child. Thus Indigo becomes part of an educated white family who loves her and provides her with comfort, safety, and an English education.

As the plot moves forward, we follow Indigo to England, to a rainforest in Brazil where Edward is in pursuit of a "new" species of orchid to immortalize his name in scientific nomenclature. Hattie and Indigo become close. Hattie is plagued by anxiety brought on in part by her unsuccessful attempts to "make it" in a man's world as an anthropologist. Her doctoral thesis paper is highly criticized. While in England the couple and Indigo explore the early ruins of ancient goddess culture and it is there that Hattie begins to understand Indigo and herself and has a revelatory experience of healing, when she reconnects her spirit with that of the Earth Mother.

By the time the little family returns to the U.S. Edward is still pursuing notoriety and Hattie's self-esteem is greatly strengthened through her understanding of how Western cultural forms of patriarchy usurped women's place in society. Indigo has grown and matured into a young woman. She has made many observations, comparing her original upbringing to the English, Westernized education and socialization that she experienced

with her adoptive parents. She decides to return to the gardens in the dunes to find her grandmother, mother and Sister Salt.

Analysis

As I read *Gardens in the Dunes* a second time, and reviewed transcripts of interviews with Silko at the time of the book's publication, I realized we, the readers, were following Silko's own lines of investigation. Silko described her surprise in discovering great similarities between Native American culture and the old cultures of Europe.[9] Like the American native cultures, the old Euro-goddess cultures were paved under in the march of the enlightenment. Christian values.

The book addresses white culture by taking us first to the beauty of a way of life that was bountiful and meaningful along the Colorado River, a way that was interwoven with nature and seasonal rhythms. The fact that Indigo emulates these qualities and possesses deep knowledge of plants and their uses is a natural connection with Edward—but from opposite poles. This plot and character device allows the author to delineate not only the differences in perception between the two cultural perspectives but also the consequences. Similarly, Silko explores how each culture regards the human body and sexuality, drawing parallels between the goddess cultures and Native American cultures, while showing the perversions of English attitudes toward sex as shown in Hattie's attitude toward her body, and in ____'s objectification of Sister Salt's breasts and body until he himself understands his own illness.

Indigo and Sister Salt are reunited in the old gardens in the dunes. Sister Salt will stay and reestablish the gardens. Indigo will come and go but is destined to work in the over culture having learned from her relationship with Hattie that common humanity can bridge cultures.

[9]Interview reference.

By making Edward a botanist, and highlighting the indigenous relationship to food which is mirrored in the scientific web of life, Silko can contrast the scientific tradition which reduces all living things to their smallest parts. Indigo on the other hand knows plants by their relationships to humans, to other animals and plants, to season—to the whole.

Complex devices in the novel take readers on a wild ride. Gardens in the Dunes is perhaps the culmination of Silko's own exploration of ties in Europe, her investigation of Goddess culture, and her interest in scientific advancements that explain or parallel indigenous beliefs and experiences.

Through these interwoven stories and chronologies Silko draws readers' attention to what Einstein discovered—that time and space curve so that it is possible for past, present, and future to be present at once. Time is circular. In this context Silko offers hope that cultures come and go but the most adaptable aspects will survive to thrive once more and each of whether we are aware of it or not are playing a major role in that transformation.

Of all the seven books reviewed herein *Gardens in the Dunes* may best exemplify an author's attempt to reconcile the devastating experience of cultural suppression, to understand the other culture, to speak to the other culture, to compare and contrast, and to assert the values that have been lost and which are sorely needed today to achieve the highest good.

The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

How I Came to Read the Book

While living in Tucson, Arizona I attended a performance/lecture by Sherman Alexie. It was held in the old auditorium on the University of Arizona campus - a paneled enclosure with wooden seats and pillars, much like an old sanctuary. The room was packed in anticipation of Alexie's biting truths wrapped in humor. He did not disappoint us. What he accomplished could be likened to shock therapy: while delivering mind-altering blows, he never the less brought us Anglos along with him on his quest for reconciliation, I'll never forget him—young, full of piss and vinegar, and a very good stand-up comic. Catharsis happened through gut bursting laugher when he made fun of everyone, nailing the prevailing stereotypes of Indian and Anglo alike. I noticed several times that Native American students looked at us Anglos to see how we reacted. Alexie drilled unmercifully into Western civilization's record of human abuse but somehow we were able to take it, to understand the profound truth and still yet want the cure.

After my first taste of Alexie I began to read his poetry. Then in 2007 *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian* was released. In the first seating I read it from cover to cover without a break. I knew that the story was autobiographical even though the main character is Junior with his own set of parents and friends. The part of me most engaged was my long lost teen. She resonated with the pain of not fitting into the social norms. All teens are awkward and most never look like the teen wonders we are all meant to be like. As a military family member I never felt like I belonged anywhere. But being a teen is hard enough without being an Indian teen in modern America or an Indian, disabled teen. And this is exactly how the author began life on the Spokane Indian Reservation. The book, for young readers, achieves universal themes and it was through this book that I knew Alexie was a great writer - beyond being Native American or any other identity - a true human being who understands the human condition and thus can speak powerfully to all of us. Individuals like Alexie come along rarely. Definitely read from his works.

The Author

Born into the Coeur d' Alene tribal community in Spokane, Sherman Alexie began life with a serious disability – hydrocephaly (fluid on the brain). Children born with the disorder seldom live or if they do they are significantly disabled. Alexie survived in spite of frequent seizures which he battled during his childhood and as a result stayed home and read. As his condition improved with medication and maturation, Alexie looked to something better than the depressing life of a reservation Indian. He did so from the terrible pain of living in an alcoholic family and observing the entire community disabled by alcoholism to numb cultural pain and hopelessness. While he developed self-deprecating humor as a strategy, he also realized that he must get off the reservation to achieve the life that he wanted. He enrolled in a nearby public high school where he was successful academically and launched himself into a private college in Spokane, Washington. He began to publish his poetry. The advent of wining an award for his work was the critical turning point that set Alexie on a path of productivity publishing books of poetry, fiction, and screen plays for which he has won notoriety internationally. Anyone who visits his personal blog today (fallsapart.com) can taste his blasphemy but also how he is skirts the boundaries of indigenous and immigrant experiences. You can not engage with anything Alexie has written or said without it causing some further soul-searching.

Socio/Political Background

The story takes place in contemporary U.S.A. Junior, a high school student, decides to attend the local white school rather than the reservation school when he finds that his geography textbook is 30 years old. In 1975 The Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act enabled tribal communities to develop educational systems that were based on community values and traditions. However, if your tribe is poor the education suffers.

The Plot

We meet Junior when he is thirteen. We get the sad and hopeless details of his life in humorous passages and stark caricatures by Ellen Forney. Junior was born with too much

cerebral spinal fluid, too many teeth, and an abnormally big head. He has brain damage and seizures and he is beaten up on a regular basis by other kids on the rez. We all know that adolescents can be heartless in their own insecurity but the reader isn't prepared for what Junior has to endure.

It's all done in humor but after a few pages you realize the situation is miserable. Alexie describes poverty from the inside and point of view of a kid. That poverty is the result of many factors reservation Indians could not change. Life on the reservation is submerged in alcohol, sickness and early death; the story starts to feel like a dirge for the living rather than a teen diary. Just when you think you cannot read another word, the story picks up with the friendship between Junior and Rowdy. Lean and mean is how Alexie describes Rowdy, a strong, cunning heart but Junior declares he loves him. Rowdy defends Junior from bullies like the Andruss brothers – "the cruelest triplets on the planet." The dialogue between Rowdy and Junior is fresh, funny and articulates the innocence of children caught in forces *way big* for them to handle.

Junior's got a few resiliency factors however. His mother is the Rock of Gibraltar and his father loves him, though he is a drunk. Junior is talented and smart, even with his disabilities. He's seeing through the reservation rhetoric that Rowdy espouses and that he is beginning to perceive as the very thing that is holding his tribe back. He sees that he'll never make something out of his life if he stays on the rez.

The turning point comes when he flips open a math book at school and sees his mother's name scrawled across its inside cover realizing the tribe can't afford new texts. He decides he wants to go to the town public school, off the reservation. Everyone thinks he is nuts, won't qualify, and will be annihilated by the white hordes. Rowdy is infuriated at his friend, believing he is forsaking him and his tribe. Most likely Rowdy felt helpless to protect his friend, too.

We follow Junior to the white school and his encounter with the boy Junior's grandmother described as the "alpha dog" and whom Junior socked in the face out of fury when he is called "Chief". Grandmother points out that since Junior was challenged by the alpha male and he socked him in the face, the boy would probably respect him. Turns out she was right. So little by little, hungry and often without a ride to school because there is no gas for the car, Junior perseveres with seemingly every count against him.
I just fell in love with him. The ending is true form for Alexie: Junior and Rowdy reconcile in the top of a gigantic pine tree, risking their lives once again. Rowdy sends Junior off to his sophomore year by giving him permission to go to another tribe to succeed.

Analysis

There is a quote from W.B. Yeats adjacent to the title page in the book: "There is another world, but it is in this one." As Junior navigates two worlds he discovers he can live between them but what opens that door is the acknowledgement by his best friend that it is okay to do so. This quality of forgiveness and big heartedness in Rowdy is the unwritten subject and deepest appeal from the author in my view. Alexie's own life, a direct parallel to Junior's experiences, can only find integrity if he is "allowed" by both to exist in each of them, to travel back and forth among both nations, and have that be legitimate. [Compare this idea to the "traveler" in Craven's *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*.]

How can Junior bridge different realities without going insane? In *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian* we have a model. In the last two chapters (Remembering and Talking about Turtles) Junior realizes he will not let booze kill him like it is killing his friends and family, and that by leaving the rez he was joining the ranks of other immigrants who left their homes to find a better life, only Junior would find his in a white world. That was the tragedy and betrayal. It was twisted. The reservations were, as Alexie writes, "death camps" which his tribe has forgotten. Yes, they survived but it's still killing them - slower and more painfully by robbing them of their dreams and futures. Junior/Alexie states a realization that even though he is leaving his Spokane tribe he is joining other tribes

(basketball players, cartoonists, teenage boys, etc.). He is seeing the larger tribes—something to which many Americans can strongly align. In the last chapter there is another leap of understanding as Junior's friend, Rowdy, who has felt betrayed by his friend's leaving the reservation, admits to his admiration of Junior. Rowdy realizes that in Junior's journey his friend follows his tribe's historical nomadic tradition. The reservation is then seen for what it has always been: a prison. It's off the reservation where the tribe will renew itself. Yet Rowdy admits to not having the courage to make that leap.

This book heralds so many books and stories by Native Americans about this same struggle. Perhaps in the leaps of many Indian youths into white culture a bridge has been constructed across which an exchange can begin to occur. It is but a trickle at present, surprisingly slow, but held back by America's refusal to admit to its terrible treatment of our continent's First People. This will continue to simmer hatred and resentment until white America is mature enough to come clean. In the meantime changes are occurring that may close the door on a possible reconciliation. Many reservations have recovered their tradition and are healing themselves of alcohol abuse and fueling their economies with new streams of income (gambling casinos, ecotourism, business enterprises, etc.). Native languages and other cultural elements are being recovered, learned by youngsters, and honored again. The attitude of white culture has improved in light of these developments, though it is small in comparison to the worse condition: complete denial of the presence of Indian people entirely. Even with a conservative led backlash that seeks to decrease diversity among Americans, the larger stream of young Americans (no longer predominantly white) is much more open to and seeking a diverse nation with an international focus.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian is a short-course on contemporary reservation life, on the ascendency of the human spirit, perhaps a direction for creating a more perfect union.

Caleb's Crossing by Geraldine Brooks

How I Came to Read the Book

National Public Radio (NPR) interviewed Geraldine Brooks in 2011 on the release of her novel, *Caleb's Crossing*. I was struck during the interview by Brooks' journalistic approach to forming an idea for a story and researching historical facts to undergird it. Subsequently, I read *March*, which imagines what happened to Reverend March of Little Women after he leaves his wife and covey of girls to join the Union Army as a chaplain. He and Mrs. March were abolitionists in Louisa May Alcott's classic story. So Brooks picks up the tale and follows Reverend March to the Deep South where he enters into a clash of cultures and death and faces the stark reality that what he understood as black and white melds into shades of gray when confronted by actual people on their own turf. What ails the Reverend is the discovery, away from his very idealistic wife, is the loss of assurance that his values are superior to another's. This was Brooks' experience as a foreign war correspondent for the Wall Street Journal. Each side believes they are better than the other and yet each is forced into barbarism and hatred. The enemy becomes human with a common struggle for meaning and safety.

Later I listened to four lectures delivered by Brooks as part of the Boyer Lectures—Australia's genius award given to one of their nation's most astute thinkers. Through the lectures I learned much about the author of nonfiction, fiction, and award-winning articles. Wherever Brooks lands she is inspired by the land and investigates the stories that arise from it. Her home is currently in Martha's Vineyard far from her homeland of Australia. But she draws parallels between the subjugation of the Wampanoag and that of Australia's aboriginal people who once lived on the same land as her childhood home in Sydney. That the landscape is full of stories is a major theme for Brooks.

The Author

Geraldine Brooks was born in a middle class neighborhood in Sydney, Australia. She studied at local colleges and went to work for the Sydney Morning Herald as a sports reporter. She had studied classics but took the job to break into journalism. The skills she gained to accurately report on the horse races later played into her ability to compile accurate facts on a tight schedule. Later she helped a friend who was compiling a book about the damming of the Franklin River which would submerge aboriginal lands and irrevocably change the functioning of the ecosystem. During intense nights and days she confesses she became an environmentalist. Later the Sydney Morning Herald asked her to cover the destruction of the wild landscapes on the Franklin. These experiences profoundly changed the way she views landscape. Brooks takes up the voice of Rachel Carson as she began to perceive that we have destroyed the land under our feet for which our bodies and minds are intimately adapted. She describes modern people as "space travelers"—no land beneath our feet. Readers should listen to the first Boyer's lecture ("Our Only Home") for a full revelation of Brooks' deepening understanding of the perilous place humans are traveling through the cultural values that come between us and our natural heritage.

Brooks won a scholarship to attend Columbia University's Master's in Journalism after which she began working as a correspondent for the Wall Street Journal in the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans.

Over her years of working in war zones around the world she met strong women who struggled to protect the lives of their children and the men who waged war. All these themes meld into the books of fiction that followed her nonfiction accounts, and in fact the line between fiction and nonfiction often cross over but the voice of Brooks' is a clarion call to respond to climate change and to man's inhumanity to man. She calls individuals to repair the "shards" of our destruction.

Socio/Political Background

The Mayflower pilgrims arrived to find numerous communities and nations of Native Americans living in what is today Maine. An uneasy relationship developed around reciprocal agreements to protect each other, share knowledge, food and goods. Disease had already taken a serious toll on indigenous people and as more and more Europeans arrived by boat an uneasy feeling began to grow among tribes, especially when the pilgrims wished to purchase land. A historic shift in the human relationship was on the verge of happening as the newcomers saw land as a commodity to be owned, sold, and used for human benefit alone. This philosophy was alien to indigenous Americans. Europeans believed they were entitled to land through their Christian faith which mandated them as people acting on behalf of the one great God.

The Plot

It is the 1660's in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (founded in 1641) on the traditional homelands of the Wampanoag Confederacy. Bit by bit the Pilgrims bought land from the Wampanoag who know themselves as the People of the Light—the first to see the sun rise. They have been living on the land for millennia. The new arrivals bring a growing presence and pressure on tribal leaders to sell more and more of their lands with the concept of ownership an enigma to most tribal members who were often in disagreement with these sales by their saccaham.

Bethia's family is one of several who moved from the mainland colony to what is today the island of Martha's Vineyard to escape growing autocratic rule of colony leaders. Bethia is a twelve year old girl whose future is prescribed narrowly to marry and raise children and obey her husband. She is allowed only the study of her Bible and recitation of the catechism yet she yearns to learn from the books her brother studies in preparation for the ministry.

Bethia is carries a burden of guilt that her earlier actions led to the death of her mother. It was during a famine that her parents required her to go clamming to supplement meager meals. She took advantage of the freedom, hiding one of her brother's Latin books in her basket and roaming the island where she learns the natural history. The author describes also the physical freedom Bethia experiences as she take off garments and runs free along the shoreline. Eventually Bethia and Caleb discover each other. He is a thoughtful youth, son of the chief, who is expected to lead his people some day. He roams the island as well to hunt and fish, in search of silence to grow his spiritual strength. When the two young people meet—two cultural orientations so vastly different—they find a common bond in their love of learning.

This begins many such encounters and even planned meetings during which they share their ideas, Wampanoag culture and language. Caleb becomes enamored by Bethia's books exclaiming his amazement that a man's ideas can still be kept alive 400 years later through recording his thoughts in a book. Bethia of course keeps these clandestine meetings (with a "salvage") a secret. This is how she comes to feel the burden of guilt because she knows that the time she spent with Caleb was time that she could have helped her mother with the new baby. When her mother dies of consumption Bethia fears that her meetings with Caleb and intimacy with nature are somehow influenced by evil forces.

Bethia's father decides to tutor Indian youths. He has risen to a place of respect among the Wampanoag, bringing many of the tribe into a Christian church, gaining their trust. He speaks their language and shows an honest respect for the Wampanoag people. Yet his motivation is conversion of heathens into proper Christians. The boys tutored will hopefully gain entrance to the new Harvard Indian College on the mainland in Cambridge. The Wampanoag chief sends his son, Cheeshahteaumauk (Caleb), because tradition dictates that future leaders learn the ways of other tribes to foster good relations, trade, and if need be, to know the enemy. And so, Caleb becomes a student of Bethia's father. While

cleaning and cooking or taking care of her baby sister, Bethia listens intently to the lessons her father teaches her brother and Caleb, committing much of it to memory. Caleb and Bethia do not let on that they know each other, but Bethia's brother observes an unusual warmth between them. Makepeace is jealous of Caleb's easy grasp of the lessons. Her brother is not Bethia's intellectual match, nor Caleb's. His inferiority makes him boastful and brutal to his sister who spares few words with her brother, pushing the boundaries of tradition and risking punishment from the rules of the colony for women's behavior.

The story moves forward as a chronicle of Bethia's attempts to find some meaning in her life. When her father sells her into contract with an elderly tutor in Cambridge to pay for Makepeace's education at Harvard, readers live the reality of Bethia's confinement and dashed hopes. She is now tethered for seven years to the brother she despises. Caleb and another Wampanoag youth matriculate to Harvard Indian College as well. There are several incidences that further demonstrate the rigidity and cruelty of the colonial religious leaders toward women and native people. Even the Indian College is part of a larger plan to assimilate youth leaders from the Wampanoag and also to gain funding from European investors to help pay for construction of Harvard College. During the year that Caleb is studying (he is an excellent student), Bethia's brother realizes he is not Harvard material and he and his sister come to blows. Bethia curses her brother and is then whipped and made to wear a note pinned to her dresses stating how she has sinned and the recompense she seeks. She is humiliated but we see her strength in getting through it all. She really is dauntless but the reader worries that the same qualities could get her burned at the stake. It is truly a dark time for women in America. An unexpected turn of events brings Bethia two suitors, one wealthy and living on the island which she loves, and one poor but an intellectual living in Cambridge and studying for a Master's at Harvard. He is the son of the man to whom Bethia is indentured. Caleb and Bethia continue to support each other but more in deeds that in words since they cannot be seen together alone. Caleb helps Bethia sort through her decision sharing how women in his tribe have freedom to choose in marriage and to end marriage. Among the Wampanoag marriage is not rigid as

in the colonial laws and religious beliefs. Other events afford the characters opportunities to grow and to make decisions that will rectify some of the inequalities for women and for native people in the wake of an oppressive colonial force. Bethia eventually marries Samuel Colbert, the intellectual, and we get a glimpse of what their life was like in diary entries of Bethia on her death bed looking back on the year at Harvard and how it changed all of them. Caleb graduated but Joel, his dear Wampanoag friend, is tragically drowned in a shipwreck, in route to the mainland. Caleb becomes ill with pneumonia one year after graduating and dies. The "experiment" with the first two Indian youth is lost in their deaths. But Bethia found her muse in Samuel, becoming not only a wife and mother, but his intellectual partner, free to read any book, to study and enter into debate with him and others. She pushes the boundary for women as a few did during those dark times long ago when women and native people, and the Earth itself, were thought to be evil, pagan, coarse, and to be controlled. The remarkable achievement of Caleb and Joel, a real historical fact, remains a true testament to the human qualities and potentials that exist across gender and cultural divides.

Analysis

This is a book about a remarkable woman's struggle to find true freedom in a time when women were secondary citizens. It is a struggle that continues today in the U.S. and all over the world. That it is linked to the Earth is an idea advanced by feminist writers and thinkers over the last 400 years. Emanating from studies of European "goddess" cultures that were matrilineal in social and political structure, feminist scholars trace the suppression of women back to the rise of patriarchy in the dark ages of Europe. Land once held by women in familial relationships was seized by the Roman Catholic Church and then given back to men through political alliances with monarchies.

The parallels between European women's enslavement to men through religion and the same type of land seizure that took place through the original religious colonies and later a nation founded on Christian principles, is the stuff of *Caleb's Crossing*. But its characters

were not privy to this understanding which came hundreds of years later through women scholars. I am not sure that the author herself had any of that in mind when she wrote the story. Listening to her interviews on NPR and in the Boyer Lectures, I believe that she took facts and created a story that attempts to recreate what it might have felt like to live in those long ago times with the understanding and circumstances of those times. Brooks had previously studied the 1600's in depth for *A Year of Wonders* which chronicles the Plague in Europe and for which it won the National Book Award. The main character is a young woman with remarkable resilience through whom we learn much about the strictures women endured in those dark societies…dark in the sense of their fear of women's power.

Through her interviews over many years with Wampanoag elders and historians in present day Martha's Vineyard, and through scholarly research conducted in the Harvard and Massachusetts historical archives, Brooks emerges with a framework for her imagination to recreate the way of life, way of thinking and believing that all her books are able to convey. Her experiences abroad play into the creative brew from which this story arises: Bethia's character in part is inspired by a young, Afghan woman Brooks interviewed. The young woman desperately desired to learn so much so that she climbed onto the roof of the local Ashram to listen to the lessons being taught to young men. She risked her life to do so. This is the reality of millions of young women today.

So Brooks used this woman's story to develop the character of Bethia. *Injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere*. This is a theme in all of Brooks' works. Beginning with her early orientation to political activism from her parents, Brooks developed a keen sense of justice as she became more involved in environmental and cultural justice issues as a correspondent. But she also looks deeply in herself to understand how she is part of it and also how she can be part of the solutions. The fact that her childhood home was built on aboriginal lands and that her current residence in Martha's Vineyard is on Wampanoag traditional lands is not lost on this perceptive woman and fearless scholar. She dives deep

into it and draws the connections in present day commercial and social realities of native people and the subsequent dissolution of healthy ecosystems and the threats to all life from climate change.

Brooks took 18 years to write *Caleb's Crossing*. When she first learned about the Harvard Indian College and discovered that the first Indian youth graduated 500 years hence, she was astonished and began to delve deeper. She carried out research and interviews over from 1990 to 2008 and then began writing the story. During her research, Brooks discovered that the stone step at the front of her home belonged to the original house on the property, owned by a miller, whose records showed he rerouted a brook there to make the mill more productive. That was a starting point for Brooks who saw him as the first industrialist who changed nature for a profit, a brook that had run free nourishing land and life alike for all the time that the local Wampanoag lived there (millennia).

In *Caleb's Crossing* we encounter an important factor. In very early American history the interactions among natives and immigrants was daily. While there must have been fears on both sides, there was also initial good will to cohabitate. As long as there were plenty of resources for all there existed a mutual toleration among the people of that time. However, as more immigrants arrived, the pressure began to build resulting in the history that we now know all too well. What stands out to me is the forward thinking of the Wampanoag to send a member of their tribe to learn the white man's ways, his theoretical framework for culture and commerce. Why were our colonial representatives (well-off, educated men) impervious to the original culture of the Americas, failing to send ambassadors to learn in the same spirit as the Wampanoag? It can only be that our religious and cultural training closed our minds to that fair exchange, believing to be better in every way.

We see today the same dogged struggle required to make a more perfect union. People are murdered, suppressed, and shamed right up to so-called modern times. Yet, it is not the majority of citizens who feel and act in this manner as it did in less enlightened ages. A

small minority may make it a long road to freedom in 2013, but so far, truth prevails. Brooks is not as optimistic as I am and it makes me think twice because of her worldwide experiences, a much broader base than I can bring to this study. And, too, she is an ex-patriot, a rebellious Aussie no less who has the benefit of distance from which she observes America. The question remaining is what are the roots of resistance to equality? It seems that in the final judgment it is and probably always has been a struggle for resources, an "us versus them" scenario over land, minerals, water, and forests. E.F. Schumacher, the 20th century British economist and philosopher, saw this as a control of the means of production. Neither women nor Native Americans have equal control to this very day.

To readers this book may seem a departure from the other books in the series because its themes run long and wide. But it serves as a key piece of the puzzle to "why can't we just all get along?" Brooks draws the connections between social injustice, healthy ecosystems, and who is in power. She demonstrates the power of individuals in their particular lives circumstances to advance justice. It doesn't always have a happy ending but the pulse of their struggle is eternal.

The Round House (2012) by Louise Erdrich

How I came to read the book

I am not sure how I came upon Louise Erdrich's novel *Love Medicine,* her first book, published in 1984 and which won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction. The advent of its publication might have been heralded by bugles announcing a long story, a pageant of characters and interwoven plots that for the last 33 years and 13 additional novels, has entertained readers and reaped a National Book Award (*The Round House*) and nominations for the Pulitzer Prize in fiction (*Plague of Doves*). *Love Medicine* was so potent I could not finish reading it. I picked it up and started over and over until in 2012 I finally read it all the way through. In 2013 I am reading it now with understanding, having read ahead in many other novels by Erdrich.

I found a PBS interview (October 9, 2012) with Erdrich by Jeffrey Brown on the publication of *The Round House*. It struck me that she had achieved a kind of clarity for herself through the embodiment of a 13- year old boy, Joe, whose relationship with his mother is irrevocably changed after she is a brutally attacked on the reservation. The author described how her character "took over" and wrote the story. Erdrich in her most powerful voice narrates the story of a historic legal conundrum. Erdrich admits to having struggled for years with how she could write about the vulnerability of native women in modern times: 1 in 3 will be raped in their lifetime and 80% of the perpetrators are nonnative and beyond the tribe's jurisdiction to prosecute the crime. Therefore, most go unprosecuted, continuing to terrorize women by their presence.

For these reasons I decided to read *The Round House*. I read it in a day. It reads like a mystery, a page turner. Unlike many of her other novels which can lapse into esoteric passages when characters access spirits in other times and places, this novel is present and linear in its structure.
It fits perfectly with the contemporary issue and the immediacy of its youthful narrator.

The Author

Much has been written about Louise Erdrich. I prefer to summarize her own words from many interviews and from Birchbark Books website - the independent book store she operates with her daughters in Minneapolis. Like all great writers we never get a complete picture because humans evolve, just as I feel Erdrich reached some new understanding through writing *The Round House*. I highly recommend that readers go to the bookstore website and follow the links to the interviews. Then, just start reading her novels. It's a life experience.

Erdrich was born in Little Falls, Minnesota but grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota where her father still works at a Bureau of Indian Affairs school on the Chippewa Indian Reservation. Her mother is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of the Ojibwa tribe and her father is from German immigrants. Louise is the oldest child of seven siblings. In an interview with Louise Erdrich at Dartmouth College (on the occasion of her selection as the Montgomery Endowment Fellow) Bruce Duthu, chair of the Native American Studies program at Dartmouth and a scholar on Native American tribal law, observed that Erdrich brings narrative to legal history so that readers gain understanding about how the existence or absence of certain laws impact real people, families and communities. Long-term injustice creates pressures on communities and individuals that play out in tragedies such as alcoholism and despair, but also provide grist for the development of strength and deeper understanding that Erdrich's characters demonstrate.

The Plot

A loving family, Basil (a tribal judge) and his wife, Geraldine, a child advocate for the Chippewa tribe, and their only son, Joe (13 years old) are introduced with extraordinary skill in just a few paragraphs. In that short run of words Erdrich communicates deep love and tenderness among them. Before the reader is ready the family is rent asunder when Geraldine returns home dazed, bloodied, and reeking of gasoline. Basil and Joe move in

seamless action. Within the span of a paragraph we see Joe ripped from childhood into adulthood. The reader is stunned, too. The feeling persists that something sacred is broken that will never be the same. Joe and Basil labor to piece together the circumstances.

We enter the world of adolescent boys and are taken on a riotous journey that is filled with graphic humor and irony; we feel hungry when their voracious appetites take over, satisfied as they consume their Aunt's frybread dripping with grease and sizzling meat, aroused as hormonal waves wash over each boy, and disgusted by their discussions of each other's manly endowment - or lack thereof. But Joe is now on a mission. Like the bionic community on Battlestar Galactica - for which the boys play the parts - the boys move in and out realities except Joe who is always present. On a normal bike excursion on the rez Joe makes a discovery that will lead him to the most sacred space in tribal culture - the "curvature of the world." It is there he will finally understand what happened and face his destiny with a hard decision. But he will not face it alone.

Joe, whose natural adolescent ambivalence with his parents is disturbed by the need to interact more with them to solve the crime, is determined to learn why his father is not taking more action legally. He's a lawyer, can't he do something? Basil shows Joe the law book in which he reads the tangled web of tribal, local, state, and federal laws that govern his tribal community. He begins to understand what it's been like for his father—a tribal judge relegated to litigate trivia. Ever the wolverine, Basil will use that trivia to piece together a suspect. When Joe learns that the tribe can take no action to protect his mother and cannot prosecute the offender, he is left with the dilemma of whether he is willing to break the law to seek justice for his mother.

Embedded in the story, as only Louise Erdrich can manage, are several concurrent narratives that further illuminate the state of tribal-U.S. relationships. One narrative stands alone to describe a young woman's background that ultimately has connection to the crime. It concerns a twin baby with a congenital deformity who is adopted by an Indian

family when the birth mother does not want her resuscitated. Much later in her twenties she is contacted by her birth mother but not out of love. An extraordinary request is made and we enter an emotional vortex in which the young woman's character is revealed and then acts as the measure against which we fully understand her twin brother's character—a brilliant device. The other narrative arises from Joe's grandfather who mumbles old Chippewa stories in his sleep. Joe sleeps with his grandfather during his mother's recovery at home, which is stormy with a pall of hopelessness that envelops the once happy home. Through these verbalized dreams we learn how the Round House came into being during a time of starvation - a reality in the tribal histories of many American Indian nations - and its role of healing in the community life of the tribe. Erdrich weaves at her loom bringing all these narratives together through Joe's experience and the culmination of all he learned and then decided to do.

Analysis

In its essence, *The Round House* is a mystery of the first order, a page turner. Erdrich explains that she wanted the book to have broad appeal because of the enormity of the problem for native women. The story is about the victim and her son, how the crime twists their relationship, impacts the whole family, and more, how decades of persistent injustice have impacted the tribal community. *The Round House* is about healing and how the story attempts to resolve itself. But as Erdrich respects the reader, one is left with the knowledge that the family is truly in "another country" after the crime and will never be the same again. *The Round House* then extends into the broader community of the nation itself. What must we do to promote healing?

When I began this guidebook I said that the stories speak to a universal experience of being human. *The Round House*, through Joe and his mother, raises awareness among readers about injustice in general. Civil rights, children's rights, and the rights of women across the world are all brought forward in these narratives. Joe's actions are brought into light just as Martiniano (*The Man Who Killed the Deer*) must ultimately decide where his loyalties lie.

But isn't it just right that the adolescent's keen sense of justice, of right and wrong, as yet untainted by the grey world of adults, rights a wrong. But, was it wrong, too?

Stay tuned for the next Erdrich novel. I cannot adequately describe how this author's narratives have taken up residence in my imagination. I feel always like I am riding on a chuck wagon with Louise as she explores the landscapes and people of native country.

Seven Stories

Each author chose a youth as the main character. In five the narrator is a young person (Bethia, Oneta, Indigo, Junior, and Joe). Martiniano and Brian are narrated in third person. Perhaps because history in the making is most influential on the youth who will live its consequences, these young people arose in the imaginations of the writers as the best way to tell their story. Louise Erdrich (*The Round House*) mulled over how she could tell the story of unjust laws that impact native women to the present day. It was only when Joe arose in her psychic, creative process and she was seized by his energy and perspective that the means to tell the story fell into place. In an interview Erdrich explained how Joe literally "took over" her body and she lived the life of a teenage boy. The story revolves around Joe's relationship with his mother who is irrevocably changed after the brutal attack.

It may be that Iola Fuller decided to create a child of Tecumseh as a way to tell his story and then propel readers into the events that occurred after his death with the dissolution of the Pan American Indian Alliance and final betrayal of the British. Fuller dealt with the consequences on families, how they struggled and coped, the mixing of cultural views, the destruction of the landscape to extractive industries fueled by Western economic and political pressures. Fuller creates a character who is able to mentally and emotionally straddle Ojibwe, French and English cultures without losing her sanity. Is Oneta the questioning mind of another woman centuries later – Fuller herself – who is curious and driven to find something good in what happened by creating a character who navigates it all and manages to go forward in a relationship with an American doctor? Was the book's popularity at the time of its publication, when word of ethnic cleansing in Europe piqued the American conscience, a resolution of sorts of the historic guilt contemporary Americans may have felt at the ethnic cleansing of Native Americans?

Alexie Sherman and Leslie Marmon Silko created characters that are more autobiographical than other writers. Sherman's Junior is almost 100% Sherman and perhaps a way to objectify the pain and struggle inherent in Junior's drive to find his own identity in the face of rejection by both his native culture and the over culture. His realization of being a part of many tribes is indicative of what the writer has described of his personal journey to embrace the best in both cultures. Sherman's experience with a disability creates another window into the segregation of "tribes" who don't fit the mainstream ideal of "normal" and who suffer through isolation/ persecution. Junior emerges triumphant but with many emotional scars that cannot be erased by anything short of full atonement by perpetrators. That is yet to come. But, loyal friends offer healing and the ever-in-short-supply encouragement that he is indeed free to choose whatever tribe he may desire while not losing membership in any.

Silko's youth was a multicultural experience through which she gained rich perspective on human nature. Indigo represents the clear mind of indigenous America, the mind present at the time of European invasion. It is a mind without separation from the earth and her creatures—a time when people were the land itself. Hattie, and especially Edward with his scientific reductionism, live in a mind separate from the land, where land is a commodity to be bought and sold and reduced to a dichotomous tree. Not until Hattie recognizes her body's connection to the Earth Mother does she begin to feel whole as a woman. The process of identifying something via scientific nomenclature is a dissection that leads to a fractured mind. Silko's exploration of the old Goddess cultures of Europe follows the historic feminist's curiosity and rediscovery of a time when the reproductive capacity of the earth was revered from a woman's capacity to bring forth life and nurture it to maturity. The feminist's movement of the '70's is evoked powerfully in *Gardens in the Dunes*, woven and reinterpreted in Silko's evolution as a multicultural feminist writer and poet in contemporary society.

Geraldine Brooks writes into *Caleb's Crossing* every woman's desire to have access to knowledge. Her experiences as a war correspondent allowed her to interview and come to know women in male-dominated societies. Bethia's eavesdropping on her brother's lessons derived from a Pakistani woman Brooks met who told her how she climbed onto the roof of the local mosque to listen to the religious texts being taught to young men her age and from which woman were barred. The evolution of women's rights in the world continues to unfold as we see today when women risk their lives to speak out, to demand an education.

In Silko's novel Indigo is fortuitously plucked from the Indian boarding school to which she and Sister Salt are initially delivered by BIA officers. Sister Salt escapes and Indigo becomes part of an English couple's family. Hattie and Edward who believe they are "saving a poor Indian child" end up being saved by her. Indigo has clarity about her identity within nature and she possesses a store of biological knowledge rivaling Edward's university degree for her knowledge of each plant cannot be separated from its whole – a true ecological conceptualization. She like Oneta in *Loon Feather* sustains her native perspective even as each adapts to a foreign cultural mind at its polar opposite. This is admirable, but as the other novels illustrate, is probably unrealistic. Martiniano and Junior, Joe and Brian all struggle deeply with this conflict. In the end they each make a choice about how to move forward and keep their sanity.

Silko also writes Hattie as a woman struggling to find a place in a man's world and who seeks authentication from that world and fails. The author then has Hattie encounter the deeper feminine powers of the Goddess culture at sacred sites in Europe where Hattie's sexual repressions are healed by the Great Earth Mother. During the American feminist movement in the 60s and 70s, Betty Freidan (*Feminine Mystique*) first articulated the repression of woman's innate powers by a patriarchal society. Later the *Chalice and the Blade* by Riane Eisler traced the loss of the feminine in European history and demonstrated that there once existed peaceful, egalitarian societies before warring tribes from the east

obliterated them with the final transformation via the possession of land from “pagan” matriarchal societies to the Catholic Church which dominated European political power up to the Reformation.

The themes in these seven novels arise from individual writers’ imaginations which is turn are influenced by the historic time and understanding in which they lived and wrote, and by a creative process that often “dips” into dimensions indefinable and mysterious. Joseph Campbell would attribute the latter to archetypal figures and themes that arise from the collective unconscious.

Three authors created characters whose voice is that of the traditional communal mind and soul. Frank Waters introduced the voice of the Pueblo Communal Mind—a device that helps readers understand different world views but also draws all people into an Ecological Mind. Iola Fuller invoked the voice of the Ojibwe people through the character of Marté. And, in The Round House, as in all of her novels, Louise Erdrich creates a character who voices the tribal soul coming through time, enigmatic, humorous, terrifying, and even annoying in its seeming incongruity with present day conditions and personal circumstances. Many critics and even Erdrich herself notes that through the 24 novels she has published, there is just one long story. Finally, Leslie Marmon Silko, through Indigo, presents the tribal mind, traveling across cultures and the world, reflecting from its place, rooted in the Earth.

I see in each the clash of world views about land. On the indigenous side of the divide is a unified understanding of oneself as existent in the group in the community so that identity is tribal. While each character has his or her own personality, the communal mind functions as one unit with the land, seasons, plants, animals, and larger family. This existed on the North American continent for 20,000 years or more. Europeans, brought up in the Enlightenment mind of individual rights within a group affiliation, ushered in something utterly new on the continent.

The extractive mind, the Western perspective, sees itself as separate from land, plants, animals, and physical powers of the earth and opposition. The Christian tradition which set man apart, as superior, steward of God's Creation, allowed society, even spurred society, to use the land for man's good. The religious view that man was created in the image of God sealed the fate of indigenous people across the planet. Land, nature must be conquered and controlled. Land is a commodity to be bought and sold or stolen. It is for the sole purpose of human betterment and supported by the kinds of religious thought that developed in the metals-based cultures that arose in Europe. These religious societies believed they were entitled to the land to spread God's word to pagans who were in with the devil (anything close to the earth including woman's powers of fertility). When Bethia was befriending Caleb, the Puritans under the direction of John Winthrop sought to build a "city on a hill" to which all people and resources would flow. Later Jefferson reiterated the same in the nation's policies toward Indian tribes. Anyone in the way was dispensable.

In early U.S. A. history of continental conquest and economic development, it was explicit that the rights of man were confined to white males who owned land. Since our founding, U.S. history can be described as the struggle of all other human beings outside of that select group to bring their grievances to courts of law to make this indeed a more perfect union. During our historic maturation what have we learned in those struggles? How has our American mind extended to embrace the best of all the cultural traditions incorporated with each advance in human rights? Finally, how has this process grown a more advanced understanding about our true relationship with each other, with wildlife, with land and the Earth on which we depend for everything?

APPENDIX A

"The Land Ethic"

By Aldo Leopold

From *Sand County Almanac* (1949). Oxford University Press.

Reprinted with Permission from the Aldo Leopold Foundation

The Land Ethic
By Aldo Leopold
Published in
A Sand County Almanac
Oxford University Press, 1949

When god-like Odysseus returned from the wars in Troy, he hanged all on one rope a dozen slave-girls of his household whom he suspected of misbehavior during his absence.

This hanging involved no question of propriety. The girls were property. The disposal of property was then, as now, a matter of expediency, not of right and wrong.

Concepts of right and wrong were not lacking from Odysseus' Greece: witness the fidelity of his wife through the long years before at last his black prow galleys clove the wine-dark seas for home. The ethical structure of that day covered wives but had not yet been extended to human chattels. During the three thousand years which have since elapsed, ethical criteria have been extended to many fields of conduct, with corresponding shrinkages in those judged by expediency only.

The Ethical Sequence

This extension of ethics, so far studied only by philosophers, is actually a process in ecological evolution. Its sequences may be described in ecological as well as in philosophical terms. An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from antisocial conduct. These are two definitions of one thing. The thing has its origin in the tendency of interdependent individuals or groups to evolve modes of co0operation. The ecologist calls these symbioses. Politics and economics are advanced symbioses in which the original free-for-all competition has been replaced, in part, by co-operative mechanisms with an ethical content.

The complexity of co-operative mechanisms has increased with population density, and with the efficiency of tools. It was simpler, for example, to define the anti-social uses of sticks and stones in the days of the mastodons than of bullets and billboards in the age of motors.

The first ethics dealt with the relation between individuals; the Mosaic Decalogue is an example. Later accretions dealt with the relation between the individual and society. The Golden Rule tries to integrate the individual to society; democracy to integrate social organization to the individual.
There is as yet no ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it. Land, like Odysseus' slave-girls, is still property. The land-relation is still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations.

The extension of ethics to this third element in human environment is, if I read the evidence correctly, an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity. It is the third step in a sequence. The first two have already been take. Individual thinkers since the days of Ezekiel and Isaiah have asserted that the despoliation of land is not only inexpedient but wrong. Society, however, has not yet affirmed their belief. I regard the present conservation movement as the embryo of such an affirmation.

An ethic may be regarded as a mode of guidance for meeting ecological situations so new or intricate, or involving such deferred reactions, that the path of social expediency is not discernible to the average individual. Animal instincts are modes of guidance for the individual in meeting such situations. Ethics are possibly a kind of community instinct in-the-making.

The Community Concept

All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in that community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for).

The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land.

This sounds simple: do we not already sing our love for and obligation to the land of the free and the home of the brave? Yes, but just what and whom do we love? Certainly not the soil, which we are sending helter-skelter downriver. Certainly not the waters, which we assume have no function except to turn turbines, float barges, and carry off sewage. Certainly not the plants, of which we exterminate whole communities without batting an eye. Certainly not the animals, of which we have already extirpated many of the largest and most beautiful species. A land ethic of course cannot prevent the alteration, management, and use of these 'resources,' but it does affirm their right to continued existence, and, at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state.

In short, a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.

In human history, we have learned (I hope) that the conqueror role is eventually self-defeating. Why? Because it is implicit in such a role that the conqueror knows, ex cathedra, just what makes the community clock tick, and just what and who is valuable, and what and who is worthless, in community life. It always turns out that he knows neither, and this is why his conquests eventually defeat themselves.

In the biotic community, a parallel situation exists. Abraham knew exactly what the land was for: it was to drip milk and honey into Abraham's mouth. At the present moment, the assurance with which we regard this assumption is inverse to the degree of our education.

The ordinary citizen today assumes that science knows what makes the community clock tick; the scientist is equally sure that he does not. He knows that the biotic mechanism is so complex that its working may never be full understood.

That man is, in fact, only a member of a biotic team is shown by an ecological interpretation of history. Many historical events, hitherto explained solely in terms of human enterprise, were actually biotic interactions between people and land. The characteristics of the land determined the facts quite as potently as the characteristics of the men who lived on it.

Consider, for example, the settlement of the Mississippi valley. In the years following the Revolution, three groups were contending for its control: the native Indian, the French and English traders, and the American settlers. Historians wonder what would have happened if the English at Detroit had thrown a little more weight into the Indian side of those tipsy scales which decided the outcome of the colonial migration into the cane-lands of Kentucky. It is time now to ponder the fact that the can-lands, when subjected to the particular mixture of forces represented by the cow, plow, fire, and axe of the pioneer, became bluegrass. What if the plant succession inherent in this dark and bloody ground had, under the impact of these forces, given us some worthless sedge, shrub, or weed? Would Boone and Kenton have held out? Would there have been any overflow into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri? Any Louisiana Purchase? Any transcontinental union of new states? Any Civil War?

Kentucky was one sentence in the drama of history. We are commonly told what the human actors in this drama tried to do, but we are seldom told that their success, or the

lack of it, hung in large degree on the reaction of particular soils to the impact of the particular forces exerted by their occupancy. In the case of Kentucky, we do not even know where the bluegrass came from-whether it is a native species, or a stowaway from Europe.

Contrast the cane-lands with what hindsight tells us about the Southwest, where the pioneers were equally brave, resourceful, and persevering. The impact of occupancy here brought no bluegrass, or other plant fitted to withstand the bumps and buffetings of hard use. This region, when grazed by livestock, reverted through a series of more and more worthless grasses, shrubs, and weeds to a condition of unstable equilibrium. Each recession of plant types bred erosion; each increment to erosion bred a further recession of plants. The result today is a progressive and mutual deterioration, not only of plants and soils, but of the animal community subsisting thereon. The early settlers did not expect this: on the Cienega's of New Mexico some even cut ditches to hasten it. So subtle has been its progress that few residents of the region are aware of it. It is quite invisible to the tourist who finds this wrecked landscape colorful and charming (as indeed it is, but it bears scant resemblance to what it was in 1848).

This same landscape was 'developed' once before, but with quite different results. The Pueblo Indians settled the Southwest in pre-Columbian times, but they happened not to be equipped with range livestock. Their civilization expired, but not because their land expired. In India regions devoid of any sod-forming grass have been settled, apparently without wrecking the land, by the simple expedient of carrying the grass to the cow, rather than vice versa. (Was this the result of some deep wisdom, or was it just good luck? I do not know.)

In short, the plant succession steered the course of history; the pioneer simply demonstrated, for good or ill, what successions inhered in the land. Is history taught in this spirit? It will be, once the concept of land as a community really penetrates our intellectual life.

The Ecological Conscience

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land. Despite nearly a century of propaganda, conservation still proceeds at a snail's pace; progress still consists largely of letterhead pieties and convention oratory. On the back forty we still slip two steps backward for each forward stride.

The usual answer to this dilemma is 'more conservation education.' No one will debate this, but is it certain that only the volume of education needs stepping up? Is something lacking in the content as well?

It is difficult to give a fair summary of its content in brief form, but, as I understand it, the content is substantially this: obey the law, vote right, join some organizations, and practice what conservation is profitable on your own land; the government will do the rest.

Is not this formula too easy to accomplish anything worth-while? It defines no right or wrong, assigns no obligation, calls for no sacrifice, implies no change in the current philosophy of values. In respect of land-use, it urges only enlightened self-interest. Just how far will such education take us? An example will perhaps yield a partial answer.

By 1930 it had become clear to all except the ecologically blind that southwestern Wisconsin's topsoil was slipping seaward. In 1933 the farmers were told that if they would adopt certain remedial practices for five years, the public would donate CCC labor to install them, plus the necessary machinery and materials. The offer was widely accepted, but the practices were widely forgotten when the five-year contract period was up. The farmers continued only those practices that yielded an immediate and visible economic gain for themselves.

This led to the idea that maybe farmers would learn more quickly if they themselves wrote the rules. Accordingly the Wisconsin Legislature in 1937 passed the Soil Conservation District Law. This said to farmers, in effect: We, the public, will furnish you free technical service and loan you specialized machinery, if you will write your own rules for land-use. Each county may write its own rules, and these will have the force of law. Nearly all the counties promptly organized to accept the proffered help, but after a decade of operation, no county has yet written a single rule. There has been visible progress in such practices as strip-cropping, pasture renovation, and soil liming, but none in fencing woodlots against grazing, and none in excluding plow and cow from steep slopes. The farmers, in short, have selected those remedial practices which were profitable anyhow, and ignored those which were profitable to the community, but not clearly profitable to themselves.

When one asks why no rules have been written, on is told that the community is not yet ready to support them; education must precede rules. But the education actually in progress makes no mention of obligations to land over and above those dictated by self-interest. The net result is that we have more education but less soil, fewer healthy woods, and as many floods as in 1937.

The puzzling aspect of such situations is that the existence of obligations over and above self-interest is taken for granted in such rural community enterprises as the betterment of roads, schools, churches, and baseball teams. Their existence is not taken for granted, nor as yet seriously discussed, in bettering the behavior of the water that falls on the land, or in the preserving of the beauty or diversity of the farm landscape. Land-use ethics are still governed wholly by economic self-interest, just as social ethics were a century ago.

To sum up: we asked the farmer to do what he conveniently could to save his soil, and he has done just that, and only that. The farmer who clears the woods off a 75 per cent slope, turns his cows into the clearing, and dumps its rainfall, rocks, and soil into the community creek, is still (if otherwise decent) a respected member of society. If he puts lime on his

fields and plants his crops on contour, he is still entitled to all the privileges and emoluments of his Soil Conservation District. The District is a beautiful piece of social machinery, but it is coughing along on two cylinders because we have been too timid, and too anxious for quick success, to tell the farmer the true magnitude of his obligations. Obligations have no meaning without conscience, and the problem we face is the extension of the social conscience from people to land.

No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions. The proof that conservation has not yet touched these foundations of conduct lies in the fact that philosophy and religion have not yet heard of it. In our attempt to make conservation easy, we have made it trivial.

Substitutes for a Land Ethic

When the logic of history hungers for bread and we had out a stone, we are at pains to explain how much the stone resembles bread. I now describe some of the stones which serve in lieu of a land ethic.

One basic weakness in a conservation system based wholly on economic motives is that most members of the land community have no economic value. Wildflowers and songbirds are examples. Of the 22,000 higher plants and animals native to Wisconsin, it is doubtful whether more than 5 per cent can be sold, fed, eaten, or otherwise put to economic use. Yet these creatures are members of the biotic community, and if (as I believe) its stability depends on its integrity, they are entitled to continuance.

When one of these non-economic categories is threatened, and if we happen to love it, we invent subterfuges to give it economic importance. At the beginning of the century songbirds were supposed to be disappearing. Ornithologists jumped to the rescue with

some distinctly shaky evidence to the effect that insects would eat us up if birds failed to control them. The evidence had to be economic in order to be valid.

It is painful to read these circumlocutions today. We have no land ethic yet, but we have at least drawn nearer the point of admitting that birds should continue as a matter of biotic right, regardless of the presence or absence of economic advantage to us.

A parallel situation exists in respect of predatory mammals, raptorial birds, and fish-eating birds. Time was when biologists somewhat overworked the evidence that these creatures preserve the health of game by killing weaklings, or that they control rodents for the farmer, or that they prey only on 'worthless' species. Here again, the evidence had to be economic in order to be valid. It is only in recent years that we hear the more honest argument that predators are members of the community, and that no special interest has the right to exterminate them for the sake of a benefit, real or fancied, to itself. Unfortunately this enlightened view is still in the talk stage. In the field the extermination of predators goes merrily on: witness the impending erasure of the timber wolf by fiat of Congress, the Conservation Bureaus, and many state legislatures.

Some species of trees have been 'read out of the party' by economics-minded foresters because they grow too slowly, or have too low a sale value to pay as timber crops: white cedar, tamarack, cypress, beech, and hemlock are examples. In Europe, where forestry is ecologically more advanced, the non-commercial tree species are recognized as members of the native forest community, to be preserved as such, within reason. Moreover some (like beech) have been found to have a valuable function in building up soil fertility. The interdependence of the forest and its constituent tree species, ground flora, and fauna is taken for granted.

Lack of economic value is sometimes a character not only of species or groups, but of entire biotic communities: marshes, bogs, dunes, and 'deserts' are examples. Our formula

in such cases is to relegate their conservation to government as refuges, monuments, or parks. The difficulty is that these communities are usually interspersed with more valuable private lands; the government cannot possible own or control such scattered parcels. The net effect is that we have relegated some of them to ultimate extinction over large areas. If the private owner were ecologically minded, he would be proud to be the custodian of a reasonable proportion of such areas, which add diversity and beauty to his farm and to his community.

In some instances, the assumed lack of profit in these 'waste' areas has proved to be wrong, but only after most of them had been done away with. The present scramble to reflood muskrat marshes is a case in point.

There is a clear tendency in American conservation to relegate to government all necessary jobs that private landowners fail to perform. Government ownership, operation, subsidy, or regulation is now widely prevalent in forestry, range management, soil and watershed management, park and wilderness conservation, fisheries management, and migratory bird management, with more to come. Most of this growth in governmental conservation is proper and logical, some of it is inevitable. That I imply no disapproval of it is implicit in the fact that I have spent most of my life working for it. Nevertheless the question arises: What is the ultimate magnitude of the enterprise? Will the tax base carry its eventual ramifications? At what point will governmental conservation, like the mastodon, become handicapped by its owned dimensions? The answer, if there is any, seems to be in a land ethic, or some other force which assigns more obligations to the private landowner.

Industrial landowners and users, especially lumbermen and stockmen, are inclined to wail long and loudly about the extension of government ownership and regulation to land, but (with notable exceptions) they show little disposition to develop the only visible alternative: the voluntary practice of conservation on their own lands.

When the private landowner is asked to perform some unprofitable act for the good of the community, he today assents only with outstretched palm. If the act costs him cash this is fair and proper, but when it costs only forethought, open-mindedness, or time, the issue is at least debatable. The overwhelming growth of land-use subsidies in recent years must be ascribed, in large part, to the government's own agencies for conservation education: the land bureaus, the agricultural colleges, and the extension services. As far as I can detect, no ethical obligation toward land is taught in these institutions.

To sum up: a system of conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided. It tends to ignore, and thus eventually to eliminate, many elements in the land community that lack commercial value, but that are (as far as we know) essential to its healthy functioning. It assumes, falsely, I think, that the economic parts of the biotic clock will function without the uneconomic parts. It tends to relegate to government many functions eventually too large, too complex, or too widely dispersed to be performed by government.

An ethical obligation on the part of the private owner is the only visible remedy for these situations.

The Land Pyramid

An ethic to supplement and guide the economic relation to land presupposes the existence of some mental image of land as a biotic mechanism. We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in.

The image commonly employed in conservation education is 'the balance of nature.' For reasons too lengthy to detail here, this figure of speech fails to describe accurately what little we know about the land mechanism. A much truer image is the one employed in ecology: the biotic pyramid. I shall first sketch the pyramid as a symbol of land, and later develop some of its implications in terms of land-use.

Plants absorb energy from the sun. This energy flows through a circuit called the biota, which may be represented by a pyramid consisting of layers. The bottom layer is the soil. A plant layer rests on the soil, and insect layer on the plants, a bird and rodent layer on the insects, and so on up through various animal groups to the apex layer, which consists of the larger carnivores.

The species of a layer are alike not in where they came from, or in what they look like, but rather in what they eat. Each successive layer depends on those below it for food and often for other services, and each in turn furnishes food and services to those above. Proceeding upward, each successive layer decreases in numerical abundance. Thus, for every carnivore there are hundreds of his prey, thousands of their prey, millions of insects, uncountable plants. The pyramidal form of the system reflects this numerical progression from apex to base. Man shares an intermediate layer with the bears, raccoons, and squirrels which eat both meat and vegetables.

The lines of dependency for food and other services are called food chains. Thus soil-oak-deer-Indian is a chain that has now been largely converted to soil-corn-cow farmer. Each species, including ourselves, is a link in many chains. The deer eats a hundred plants other than oak, and the cow a hundred plants other than corn. Both, then, are links in a hundred chains. The pyramid is a tangle of chains so complex as to seem disorderly, yet the stability of the system proves it to be a highly organized structure. Its functioning depends on the co-operation and competition of its diverse parts.

In the beginning, the pyramid of life was low and squat; the food chains short and simple. Evolution has added layer after layer, link after link. Man is one of thousands of accretions to the height and complexity of the pyramid. Science has given us many doubts, but it has given us at least one certainty: the trend of evolution is to elaborate and diversify the biota.

Land, then, is not merely soil; it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals. Food chains are the living channels which conduct energy upward; death and decay return it to the soil. The circuit is not closed; some energy is dissipated in decay, some is added by absorption from the air, some is stored in soils, peats, and long-lived forests; but it is a sustained circuit, like a slowly augmented revolving fund of life. There is always a net loss by downhill wash, but this is normally small and offset by the decay of rocks. It is deposited in the ocean and, in the course of geological time, raised to form new lands and new pyramids.

The velocity and character of the upward flow of energy depend on the complex structure of the plant and animal community, much as the upward flow of sap in a tree depends on its complex cellular organization. Without this complexity, normal circulation would presumably not occur. Structure means the characteristic numbers, as well as the characteristic kinds and functions, of the component species. This interdependence between the complex structure of the land and its smooth functioning as an energy unit is one of its basic attributes.

When a change occurs in one part of the circuit, many other parts must adjust themselves to it. Change does not necessarily obstruct of divert the flow of energy; evolution is a long series of self-induced changes, the net result of which has been to elaborate the flow mechanism and to lengthen the circuit. Evolutionary changes, however, are usually slow and local. Man's invention of tools has enabled him to make changes of unprecedented violence, rapidity, and scope.

One change is in the composition of floras and faunas. The larger predators are lopped off the apex of the pyramid; food chains, for the first time in history, become shorter rather than longer. Domesticated species from other lands are substituted for wild ones, and wild ones are move to new habitats. In this world-wide pooling of faunas and floras, some species get out of bounds as pests and diseases, others are extinguished. Such effects are seldom intended or foreseen; they represent unpredicted and often untraceable

readjustments in the structure. Agricultural science is largely a race between the emergence of new pests and the emergence of new techniques for their control.

Another change touches the flow of energy through plants and animals and its return to the soil. Fertility is the ability of soil to receive, store, and release energy. Agriculture, by overdrafts on the soil, or by too radical a substitution of domestic for native species in the superstructure, may derange the channels of flow or deplete storage. Soils depleted of their storage, or of the organic matter which anchors it, wash away faster than they form. This is erosion.

Waters, like soil, are part of the energy circuit. Industry, by polluting waters or obstructing them with dams, may exclude the plants and animals necessary to keep energy in circulation.

Transportation brings about another basic change: the plants or animals grown in one region are now consumed and returned to the soil in another. Transportation taps the energy stored in rocks, and in the air, and uses it elsewhere; thus we fertilize the garden with nitrogen gleaned by the guano birds from the fishes of seas on the other side of the Equator. Thus the formerly localized and self-contained circuits are pooled on a worldwide scale.

The process of altering the pyramid for human occupation releases stored energy, and this often gives rise, during the pioneering period, to a deceptive exuberance of plant and animal life, both wild and tame. These releases of biotic capital tend to becloud or postpone the penalties of violence.

This thumbnail sketch of land as an energy circuit conveys three basic ideas:
(1) That land is not merely soil.
(2) That the native plants and animals kept the energy circuit open; others may or may not.

(3) That man-made changes are of a different order than evolutionary changes, and have effects more comprehensive than is intended or foreseen.

These ideas, collectively, raise two basic issues: Can the land adjust itself to the new order? Can the desired alterations be accomplished with less violence?

Biotas seem to differ in their capacity to sustain violent conversion. Western Europe, for example, carries a far different pyramid than Caesar found there. Some large animals are lost; swampy forests have become meadows or plow-land; many new plants and animals are introduced, some of which escape as pests; the remaining natives are greatly changed in distribution and abundance. Yet the soil is still there and, with the help of imported nutrients, still fertile; the waters flow normally; the new structure seems to function and to persist. There is no visible stoppage or derangement of the circuit.

Western Europe, then, has a resistant biota. Its inner processes are tough, elastic, resistant to strain. No matter how violent the alterations, the pyramid, so far, has developed some new modus vivendi which preserves its habitability for man, and for most of the other natives.

Japan seems to present another instance of radical conversion without disorganization.

Most other civilized regions, and some as yet barely touched by civilization, display various stages of disorganization, varying from initial symptoms to advanced wastage. In Asia Minor and North Africa diagnosis is confused by climatic changes, which may have been either the cause or the effect of advanced wastage. In the United States the degree of disorganization varies locally; it is worst in the Southwest, the Ozarks, and parts of the South, and least in New England and the Northwest. Better land-uses may still arrest it in the less advanced regions. In parts of Mexico, South America, South Africa, and Australia a violent and accelerating wastage is in progress, but I cannot assess the prospects.

This almost world-wide display of disorganization in the land seems to be similar to disease in an animal, except that it never culminates in complete disorganization or death. The land recovers, but at some reduced level of complexity, and with a reduced carrying capacity for people, plants, and animals. Many biotas currently regarded as 'lands of opportunity' are in fact already subsisting on exploitative agriculture, i.e. they have already exceeded their sustained carrying capacity. Most of South America is overpopulated in this sense.

In arid regions we attempt to offset the process of wastage by reclamation, but it is not only too evident that the prospective longevity of reclamation projects is often short. In our own West, the best of them may not last a century.

The combined evidence of history and ecology seems to support one general deduction: the less violent the manmade changes, the greater the probability of successful readjustment in the pyramid. Violence, in turn, varies with human population density; a dense population requires a more violent conversion. In this respect, North America has a better chance for permanence than Europe, if she can contrive to limit her density.

This deduction runs counter to our current philosophy, which assumes that because a small increase in density enriched human life, that an indefinite increase will enrich it indefinitely. Ecology knows of no density relationship that holds for indefinitely wide limits. All gains from density are subject to a law of diminishing returns.

Whatever may be the equation for men and land, it is improbable that we as yet know all its terms. Recent discoveries in mineral and vitamin nutrition reveal unsuspected dependencies in the up-circuit: incredibly minute quantities of certain substances determine the value of soils to plants, of plant to animals. What of the down=circuit? What of the vanishing species, the preservation of which we now regard as an esthetic luxury?

They helped build the soil; in what unsuspected ways may they be essential to its maintenance? Professor Weaver proposes that we use prairie flowers to reflocculate the wasting soils of the dust bowl; who knows for what purpose cranes and condors, otters and grizzlies may some day be used?

Land Health and the A-B Cleavage

A land ethic, then, reflect the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity.

Conservationist are notorious for their dissensions. Superficially these seem to add up to mere confusion, but a more careful scrutiny reveals a single plane of cleavage common to many specialized fields. In each field one group (A) regards the land as soil, and it function as commodity-production; another group (B) regards the land as a biota, and its function as something broader How much broader is admittedly in a state of doubt and confusion.

In my own field, forestry, group A is quite content to grow trees like cabbages, with cellulose as the basic forest commodity. It feels no inhibition against violence; its ideology is agronomic. Group B, on the other hand, sees forestry as fundamentally different from agronomy because it employs natural species, and manages a natural environment rather than creating an artificial one. Group B prefers natural reproduction on principle. It worried on biotic as well as economic grounds about the loss of species like chestnut, and the threatened loss of the white pines. It worries about a whole series of secondary forest functions: wildlife, recreation, watersheds, wilderness areas. To my mind, Group B feels the stirrings of an ecological conscience.

In the wildlife field, a parallel cleavage exists. For Group A the basic commodities are sport and meat; the yardsticks of production are ciphers of take in pheasants and trout. Artificial propagation is acceptable as a permanent as well as a temporary recourse--if its unit costs permit. Croup B, on the other hand, worries about a whole series of biotic side-issues. What is the cost in predators of producing a game crop? Should we have further recourse to exotics? How can management restore the shrinking species, like prairie grouse, already hopeless as shootable game? How can management restore the threatened rarities, like trumpeter swan and whooping crane? Can management principles be extended to wildflowers? Here again it is clear to me that we have the same A-B cleavage as in forestry.

In the larger field of agriculture I am less competent to speak, but there seem to be somewhat parallel cleavages. Scientific agriculture was actively developing before ecology was born, hence a slower penetration of ecological concepts might be expected. Moreover the farmer, by the very nature of his techniques, must modify the biota more radically than the forester or the wildlife manager. Nevertheless, there are many discontents in agriculture which seem to add up to a new vision of 'biotic farming.'

Perhaps the most important of these is the new evidence that poundage or tonnage is no measure of the food-value of farm crops; the products of fertile soil may be qualitatively as well as quantitatively superior. We can bolster poundage from depleted soils by pouring on imported fertility, but we are not necessarily bolstering food-value. The possible ultimate ramifications of this idea are so immense that I must leave their exposition to abler pens.

The discontent that labels itself 'organic farming,' while bearing some of the earmarks of a cult, is nevertheless biotic in its direction, particularly in its insistence on the importance of soil flora and fauna.

The ecological fundamentals of agriculture are just as poorly known to the public as in other fields of land-use. For example, few educated people realize that the marvelous

advances in technique made during recent decades are improvements in the pump, rather than the well. Acre for acre, they have barely sufficed to offset the sinking level of fertility.

In all of these cleavages, we see repeated the same basic paradoxes: man the conqueror versus man the biotic citizen; science the sharpener of his sword versus science the searchlight on his universe; land the slave and servant versus land the collective organism. Robinson's injunction to Tristram may well be applied, at this juncture, to Homo sapiens as a species in geological time:

Whether you will or not
You are a King, Tristram, for you are one
Of the time-tested few that leave the world,
When they are gone, not the same place it was.
Mark what you leave.

The Outlook

It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense.

Perhaps the most serious obstacle impeding the evolution of a land ethic is the fact that our educational and economic system is headed away from, rather than toward, an intense consciousness of land. Your true modern is separated from the land by many middlemen, and by innumerable physical gadgets. He has no vital relation to it; to him it is the space between cities on which crops grow. Turn him loose for a day on the land, and if the spot does not happen to be a golf links or a 'scenic' area, he is bored stiff. If crops could be raised by hydroponics instead of farming, it would suit him very well. Synthetic

substitutes for wood, leather, wool, and other natural land products suit him better than the originals. In short, land is something he has “outgrown.”

Almost equally serious as an obstacle to a land ethic is the attitude of the farmer for whom the land is still an adversary, or a taskmaster that keeps him in slavery. Theoretically, the mechanization of farming ought to cut the farmer’s chains, but whether it really does is debatable.

One of the requisites for an ecological comprehension of land is an understanding of ecology, and this is by no means co-extensive with ‘education’: in fact, much higher education seems deliberately to avoid ecological concepts. An understanding of ecology does not necessarily originate in courses bearing ecological labels; it is quite as likely to be labeled geography, botany, agronomy, history, or economics. This is as it should be, but whatever the label, ecological training is scarce.

The case for a land ethic would appear hopeless but for the minority which is in obvious revolt against these ‘modern’ trends.

The ‘key-log’ which must be moved to release the evolutionary process for an ethic is simply this: quit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

It of course goes without saying that economic feasibility limits the tether of what can or cannot be done for land. It always has and it always will. The fallacy the economic determinists have tied around our collective neck, and which we now need to cast off, is the belief that economics determines all land-use. This is simply not true. An innumerable host of actions and attitudes, comprising perhaps the bulk of all land relations, is

determined by the land-users' tastes and predilections,, rather than by his purse. The bulk of all land relations hinges on investments of time, forethought, skill, and faith rather than on investments of cash. As a land-user thinketh, so is he.

I have purposely presented the land ethic as a product of social evolution because nothing so important as an ethic is ever 'written.' Only the most superficial student of history supposes that Moses 'wrote' the Decalogue; it evolved in the minds of a thinking community, and Moses wrote a tentative summary of it for a 'seminar.' I say tentative because evolution never stops.

The evolution of a land ethic is an intellectual as well as emotional process. Conservation is paved with good intentions which prove to be futile, or even dangerous, because they are devoid of critical understanding either of the land, or of economic land-use. I think it is a truism that as the ethical frontier advances from the individual to the community, its intellectual content increases.

The mechanism of operation is the same for any ethic: social approbation for right actions: social disapproval for wrong actions.

By and large, our present problem is one of attitudes and implements. We are remodeling the Alhambra with a steam shovel, and we are proud of our yardage. We shall hardly relinquish the shovel, which after all has many good points, but we are in need of gentler and more objective criteria for its successful use.

APPENDIX B:

Author Website, Interviews and Articles

Iola Fuller (Goodspeed McCoy)

Avery and Jule Hopwood Awards Program: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/hopwood/

Books

Fuller, Iola (1940). *The Loon Feather*. N.Y.: Houghton/McMillan.

Fuller, Iola (1943). *The Shining Trail*. N.Y.: Duell, Sloan, & Pearce.

Fuller, Iola (1957). *The Gilded Torch*. N.Y.: Putnam.

Fuller, Iola (1966). *All the Golden Gifts*. N.Y.: Putnam.

Frank Waters

Frank Waters Foundation: The Frank Waters Foundation: http://frankwaters.org/

Books

Waters, F. (2002). *Pure Waters: Frank Waters and the Quest for the Cosmic* (B. Waters, Ed.). Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (2002). *The Dust Within the Rock: A Novel*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (2000). *A Frank Waters Reader: A Southwestern Life in Writing* (T. J. Lyon, Ed.). Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1999). *Mountain Dialogues*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1998). *Brave Are My People: Indian Heroes Not Forgotten*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1993). *To Possess the Land: A Biography Of Arthur Rochford Manby*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Waters, F. (1989). *Mexico Mystique: The Coming Sixth World of Consciousness*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1987). *Pike's Peak: Mining Saga*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Waters, F. (1987). *The Woman at Otowi Crossing*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Waters, F. (1987). *Flight from Fiesta*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1985). *The Colorado*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1985). *The Lizard Woman*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Evans-Wentz, Y. W. (1981). *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains* (F. Waters, & C. L. Adams, Eds.). Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1973). *Pumpkin Seed Point: Being Within the Hopi*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Waters, F. (1972). *Midas of the Rockies: Story of Stratton & Cripple Creek*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1970). *The Yogi of Cockroach Court*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1950). *Masked Gods: Navaho and Pueblo Ceremonialism*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1942). *The Man Who Killed the Deer: A Novel of Pueblo Indian Life*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Waters, F. (1941). *People of the Valley*. Athens: Swallow Press.

Other Sources of Information

Ohio University Press, Swallow Press: http://www.ohioswallow.com/author/Frank+Waters

Reviews from University of New Mexico, Writing the Southwest: http://www.unm.edu/~wrtgsw/waters.html

e-Notes: http://www.enotes.com/topics/frank-waters

Margaret Craven

Books

I Heard the Owl Call My Name

Again I Hear the Owl Call My Name

Other Sources of Information

A Swimmer's Tale
Time Magazine, January 28. 1974

I HEARD THE OWL CALL
MY NAME
by Margaret Craven
166 pages. Doubleday.
$4.95.

ENGAGINGLY ENOUGH, the first new bestselling work of fiction in the U.S. for the new year of 1974 turns out to be a fine, small, odd book set in a Canadian Indian village. It was written more than eight years ago, and considering the delay, one might assume that the manuscript, scribbled by some tribal chieftain, had perhaps moldered under a totem pole until discovered by a nosy anthropologist or Royal Canadian Mountie. Not so. The author is an energetic, white-haired American woman, now 72, named Margaret Craven. The history of her book, from benign neglect to some national celebrity, offers wry commentary on the ways of commerce and the world of publishing.

Nine years ago, dutifully wearing a skirt because she'd been told that Canadians can't stand American women in slacks, Miss Craven journeyed north by small boat from Vancouver into the Queen Charlotte Straits of British Columbia in search of adventure and material. Her trip ended at the top of King-come Inlet, in a village of the Kwakiutl Indians. Kingcome is a place of icy water, deep, fir-trimmed inlets, returning salmon, foraging killer whales, overwhelming beauty and, for the once proud Kwakiutls, overwhelming sadness. Even the young are not sure they can face going "outside" to school and trying to live like white men. But they all know that the old tribal ways are dying.

Margaret Craven, a journalist and short-story writer, stayed on for weeks at Kingcome: listening, interviewing, and taking notes. Like many another writer in similar circumstances, she resolved that she would get it all down before it was gone forever. What she finally produced was I Heard the Owl Call My Name, a blend of fact and imagination that can better be described as a prose elegy than a novel.

Boiled Candlefish. The device that transforms the book into fiction is rude enough. Everything that Margaret Craven swiftly experienced and loved about the Kwakiutls is gradually learned by a young Anglican vicar, Mark Brian. He is fatally ill but does not know it, and has been sent to the village by his bishop to "learn enough of life to be ready to die." Much of Mark's story is presented as a marvelously compact and compelling semi documentary. The reader meets the old and the young of the village, learns that much of

the tribe's food is customarily spread with a kind of butter called gleena, made from slow-boiled candlefish, and is convinced that the elders mysteriously know whenever a stranger is coming. The Book of Common Prayer and Indian rituals reinforce each other as Mark helps the Kwakiutls transfer their tribal dead from a dilapidated tree-house burial site to newly hallowed ground.

Toward the end, creaky moments occur (Mark, for example, eventually learns that he is about to die, but he is killed off through a highly fortuitous landslide). No matter. As the book progresses, the plight of the Kwakiutls, poised on the edge of an uncertain future with only memories of the past to guide them, poignantly parallels and illuminates Mark's fate (and indeed the fate of Everyman) at the point of death. He finds himself trying to draw metaphorical comfort from the cycles of nature, and such recurring experiences as the fact that often when the boat that he and an Indian friend used to visit distant parishes seemed headed straight into a steep island cliff, "at the last moment they found some little finger of sea waiting to lead them on." Mark's only close kin is a twin sister, and he learns that the Indians, who revere the salmon and refer to it as "the swimmer," regard twins as somehow magical and call them "swimmers" too. Briefly he ponders the salmon's mysterious movement across the world to a fulfillment that occurs only at the moment of death.

These are ancient consolations. For the most part without undue bathos, Margaret Craven lends them a somber dignity and even a kind of resigned joy that seems neither foolish nor delusive.

Yet when she finished the book in 1966 and her agent offered it around, New York publishers did not want to buy. It was "beautifully written," they said, but also offbeat, old-fashioned, occasionally sentimental, not very dramatic. Clarke, Irwin, a Toronto publishing house, did buy it, however. Launched with little publicity in 1967, it eventually sold 48,000 hardback copies—a considerable success in Canada.

It was not until 1973, after the General Electric Theater bought the film rights, that New York publishers finally became interested. The U.S. edition was planned for the late spring of 1974 until CBS and the G.E. Theater announced a pre-Christmas TV showing, and I Heard the Owl Call My Name was rushed into bookstores in late December. The movie was not shot in Kingcome, and as Mark Brian, British Actor Tom Courtenay mainly conveyed the kind of constrained sanctity that gives religion a bad name. Almost overnight, and for the wrong reasons, an indifferent film helped turn a good book into a bestseller.

Margaret Craven, who is at work on a new book in Sacramento, Calif., where she has lived for 22 years, says she does not need "huge amounts of money." But she is naturally glad that more people are going to reflect upon Kingcome village and its people. Like Mark Brian, she is a "swimmer." Her own twin brother Wilson died in 1971 after a long fight with cancer. In I Heard the Owl Call My Name, an old woman, probing back into the lost customs of her childhood, recalls: "And the young men strolled through the village singing

the old love songs, and the songs were always of absence and of sorrow, and they spoke from the heart." Margaret Craven understands that kind of love song very well.

Kingcome Inlet: http://www.vancouverisland.com/regions/towns/?townID=4028, Retrieved 8/12//2013.

Leslie Marmon Silko

Poetry Foundation Website: http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/leslie-marmon-silko

POETRY AND SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS

- *Laguna Woman: Poems,* Greenfield Review Press (Greenfield Center, NY), 1974.
- *Western Stories,* 1980.
- *Storyteller* (includes short stories), Seaver Books (New York, NY), 1981.
- *Voices under One Sky* (poems) Crossing Press (Freedom, CA), 1994.
- *Rain* (poems), Library Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art and Grenfell Press (New York, NY), 1996.
- *Love Poem and Slim Canyon,* 1996.

NOVELS

- *Ceremony,* Viking (New York, NY), 1977.
- *Almanac of the Dead,* Simon & Shuster (New York, NY), 1991.
- *Gardens in the Dunes,* Simon & Schuster (New York, NY), 1999.

OTHER

- (With Frank Chin) *Lullaby* (a play adaptation of a story by Silko), produced in San Francisco, 1976.
- (With James A. Wright) *Delicacy and Strength of Lace: Letters between Leslie Marmon Silko and James Wright,* Graywolf Press (Minneapolis, MN), 1985.
- *Yellow Woman* (criticism), edited by Melody Graulich, Rutgers University Press (New Brunswick, NJ), 1993.
- *Sacred Water: Narratives and Pictures,* Flood Plain Press (Tucson, AZ), 1993.
- *Rooster and the Power of Love* (correspondence), Norton (New York, NY), 1995.
- *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today,* Simon & Schuster (New York, NY), 1996.

- *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko,* edited by L. Arnold, University Press of Mississippi (Jackson, MS), 2000.
- *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir,* Viking (New York), 2010.

Other Resources and Information:

Emory University, English Department, Post-Colonial Studies:
http://postcolonialstudies.emory.edu/leslie-marmon-silko/

Alexie Sherman

Author Website: http://www.fallsapart.com

Poetry Foundation Author Website: http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/sherman-alexie

POETRY

- *The Business of Fancydancing*, Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, NY), 1992.
- *I Would Steal Horses*, Slipstream, 1992.
- *First Indian on the Moon*, Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, NY), 1993.
- *Old Shirts and New Skins*, UCLA American Indian Studies Center (Los Angeles, CA), 1993.
- *Water Flowing Home*, Limberlost Press (Boise, ID), 1994.
- *Seven Mourning Songs for the Cedar Flute I Have Yet to Learn to Play*, Whitman College Press, 1994.
- *The Summer of Black Widows,* Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, NY), 1996.
- *The Man Who Loves Salmon*, Limberlost Press (Boise, ID), 1998.
- *One Stick Song*, Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, NY), 2000.
- *Il Powwow della fine del mondo* (parallel translations in English and Italian), QuatroVenti, 2005.
- *Dangerous Astronomy*, Limberlost Press (Boise, Idaho), 2005.
- *Face: Poems*, Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, NY), 2009.

OTHER

- *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (short stories), Atlantic Monthly Press (New York, NY), 1993.

- *Reservation Blues* (novel), Grove/Atlantic (New York, NY), 1994, published as *Coyote Spring,* Atlantic (New York, NY), 1995.
- (With Jim Boyd) *Reservation Blues: The Soundtrack* (recording), Thunderwolf Productions, 1995.
- *The Indian Fighter* (radio script), National Public Radio, 1995.
- *Because My Father Was the Only Indian Who Saw Jimi Hendrix Play the Star-Spangled Banner at Woodstock* (radio script), aired on *This American Life*, National Public Radio, 1996.
- *Indian Killer* (novel), Atlantic Monthly Press (New York, NY), 1996.
- *Smoke Signals: Introduction, Screenplay, and Notes,* Miramax (New York, NY), 1998.
- *The Toughest Indian in the World* (stories), Atlantic Monthly Press (New York, NY), 2000.
- (Author of introduction) Gwendolyn Cates and Richard W. West, *Indian Country,* Grove/ Atlantic (New York, NY), 2001.
- (Editor) *Scribner's Best of the Fiction Workshops,* Simon & Schuster (New York, NY), 2002.
- (Author of foreword, with Robert Hershon) *The CLMP Directory of Literary Magazines and Presses,* Manic D Press, 2002.
- (Author of introduction) Percival Everett, *Watershed,* Beacon Press (Boston, MA), 2003.
- *The Business of Fancydancing* (screenplay), Hanging Loose Press (Brooklyn, NY), 2003.
- (With others) *The Business of Fancydancing: Music from the Movie* (soundtrack), 2003.
- *Ten Little Indians: Stories,* Grove Press (New York, NY), 2003.
- *Flight* (novel), Black Cat (New York, NY), 2007.
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (young adult novel), Little, Brown (New York, NY), 2007.
- *War Dances* (stories), Grove/Atlantic (New York, NY), 2009.

Geraldine Brooks

Author's Website: http://www.geraldinebrooks.com/

Foreign Correspondence (1998). NY: Anchor Books, Random House, Inc.

Nine Parts of Desire (1995). NY: Anchor Books, Random House, Inc.

*People of the Book (*2008). NY: Viking Press, Penguin Group (USA)

A Year of Wonders (2001). NY: Penguin Group (USA)

March (2005). NY: Penguin Group (USA)

Caleb's Crossing (2012). NY: Viking Press, Penguin Group (USA)

Other Sources of Information

2011 Boyer Lectures:
http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/boyerlectures/boyer-lectures-2011-the-idea-of-home/2947332

ABC Interview Transcript with Geraldine Brooks on *Caleb's Crossing*:
http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bookshow/geraldine-brooks-calebs-crossing/2913120

2011 NY Times Book Review for *Caleb's Crossing*:
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/15/books/review/book-review-calebs-crossing-by-geraldine-brooks.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Louise Erdrich

The Books

Novels

Love Medicine

The Beet Queen

Tracks

The Crown of Columbus (with Michael Dorris)

The Bingo Palace

Tales of Burning Love

The Antelope Wife (1997; revised edition, 2012)

The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse

The Master Butchers Singing Club

Four Souls

The Painted Drum

The Plague of Doves

Shadow Tag

The Round House

Stories

The Red Convertible: New and Selected Stories, 1978 – 2008

Poetry

Jacklight

Baptism of Desire

Original Fire

For Children

Grandmother's Pigeon

The Birchbark House

The Range Eternal

The Game of Silence

The Porcupine Year

Chickadee

Nonfiction

The Blue Jay's Dance

Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country

Other Sources of Information

Birchbark Books Website Media Videos and Radio Reviews (Recommend Listening to the Dartmouth Interview on the Occasion of the Montgomery Fellows Endowment Award.)

New York Times Review of The Round House: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/books/review/the-round-house-by-louise-erdrich.html