January 30

Introduction to the Series

Roger Dunsmore

Bio:
Roger Dunsmore came to the University of Montana in 1963 as a freshman composition instructor in the English Department. In 1964 he also began to teach half-time in the Humanities Program. He taught his first course in American Indian Literature, Indian Autobiographies, in 1969. In 1971 he was an originating member of the faculty group that formed the Round River Experiment in Environmental Education (1971-74) and has taught in UM's Wilderness and Civilization Program since 1976. He received his MFA in Creative Writing (poetry) in 1971 and his first volume of poetry, *On The Road To Sleeping Child Hotsprings* was published that same year. (Revised edition, 1977.) *Lazslo Toth*, a documentary poem on the smashing of Michelangelo's Pieta was published in 1979. His second full length volume of poems, *Bloodhouse*, 1987, was selected by the Yellowstone Art Center, Billings, MT for their Regional Writer's Project.. The title poem of his chapbook, *The Sharp-Shinned Hawk*, 1987, was nominated by the Koyukon writer, Mary TallMountain for a Pushcat Prize. He retired from full-time teaching after twenty-five years, in 1988, but continues at UM under a one-third time retiree option. During the 1988-89 academic year he was Humanities Scholar in Residence for the Arizona Humanities Council, training teachers at a large Indian high school on the Navajo Reservation. A chapbook of his reading at the International Wildlife Film Festival, *The Bear Remembers*, was published in 1990. Spring semester, 1991, (and again in the fall semester, 1997) he taught modern American Literature as UM's Exchange Fellow with Shanghai International Studies University in mainland China. (Ten poems from *Tiger Hill*, an unpublished manuscript of poems written off these two China trips, received an Individual Artist's Fellowship from the Montana Art's Council in 2001.) In 1997 the University of New Mexico Press published *Earth's Mind: Essays In Native Literature*, a volume combining his decades of involvement with American Indian People and their literatures, with his experience of the Montana landscape. His poems and essays have appeared in many journals and anthologies. He is on the board of the Montana Big Open, Inc., a non-profit group working for the restoration of wild bison on 9,000,000 acres in east/central Montana. He is grateful for the years spent with the peoples and places of the Northern Rockies and Plains.

Speaker's Suggested Readings:

The Marriage Of Heaven and Hell, William Blake
Black Elk Speaks, John Neihardt and Nickolaus Black Elk
Selected Poems, Robinson Jeffers
Earth Household, Technical Notes and Queries To Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries, Gary Snyder
Break The Mirror, Nanao Sakaki
Pretty Shield, as told to Frank Linderman
The Changing Face of the Unknown, Victor Lieberman (unpublished)

Introduction: 22nd Annual Wilderness Lecture Series
The Poetics of Wilderness
Roger Dunsmore

There are a number of places to start to supply a context for this lecture series if one simply picks up the daily newspaper here, the Missoulian, or in any town in the U.S. One could start with the announcement Sunday of plans to clone human beings, to be offered "only to couples who cannot bear children." Or with the five prominent bills drafted by a "working group" of industry representatives of real estate, timber, trade groups, and mining to "reform" or "streamline" (we might say, "significantly weaken") the Montana Environmental Policy Act of 1971, a "landmark Montana Environmental law designed to help determine whether and under what conditions a proposed project such as a mine, a timber sale, or a land exchange goes forward," that are under consideration during the legislative session in Helena right now. We could point to the person that our non-President has selected for his Secretary of Interior, Gale Norton, Ms. National Lead, Inc. We could consider the impact on the fisheries of the Pacific Northwest of the energy debacle in California, as power conglomerates increase water flows through hydro-electric generators on our major rivers, lowering stream flows below levels necessary to maintain wild fish populations. But this wilderness lecture series was planned before the most recent elections last fall, which brought to power those for whom the wild environment far too often means postcard perfect picture windows looking out on their favorite mountain-scape, and resources to be developed for jobs. It will most likely be a difficult time for the wild, and an active constituency for wild lands, wild species, and wild thinking is more necessary now than ever. But I want to start with an item about high-tech research from the January 19th, 2001 Missoulian.

> MANIPULATING LIGHT, PHYSICISTS STOP PARTICLES
>
> Physicists say they have brought light particles to a screeching halt, then revved them up again so that they could continue their journey at a blistering 186,000 miles per second.
>
> The results are the latest in a growing number of experiments that *manipulate* light, the fastest and most ephemeral form of energy in the universe.
>
> Eventually, researchers hope to *harness* its speedy properties in the development of more powerful computers and other technologies that *store information* in light particles rather than electrons.
>
> The experiments were conducted in separate laboratories in Cambridge, Mass. by groups ...of Harvard and the Rowland Institute of Science...and... the Harvard-Smithsonian Institute of Astrophysics. (Emphasis added.)

This sort of news item is not all that unusual these days. Our children and grandchildren will live in a history where the "harnessing" and "manipulation" of the physical universe, including the genetic material of all forms of life, including human life, will be ongoing at an ever increasing rate and touted as "for the benefit of all humankind." In fact, we already inhabit such a history. One is reminded of Heidigger's comment, in reference to the explosion of the first A-bomb, that the "terrible has already happened" in our hearts and minds long before it was physically expressed in the bomb. The irony of this fact is that technology itself will increasingly create its own "wilderness" area as we try to respond to the social, political and moral implications of its so-called advances. I want to set this news item and its implications for our history before us as a reference point as we inquire into the wilderness theme this semester. And I would like to suggest that one aspect of the wild is this energy within human beings to understand and control their environment. Neither the speed of light nor the gene pool itself are safe from the wild desire to bring it all under our domination. Our desires themselves are a form of wildness.

The historian, social critic, and founder of eco-psychology, Theodor Rozak, in his 1992 book, *The Voice of the Earth*, defines ecology as "the science of connections." We seem to be fairly well along to understanding the nature of connections in biology, in the web of life of which we are a part. But there are other sorts of connections that are much less understood or valued: for instance, the connection between wilderness and civilization. In this particular binary it is extremely difficult not to set up a response wherein civilization and wilderness are opposed, where we feel drawn towards the "purity" and "naturalness" of wilderness and away from the commercialization, competition and pollution of civilization, at least here in Montana.

Quoting from a recent article in the Wild Duck Review by our first speaker, Florence Shepard, however, we find a different perspective on this connection: "Paul Shepard saw quite early in his work that the opposite of wilderness is not civilization; the opposite of wilderness is domestication, the process by which gene combinations in living organisms have been interrupted and redesigned for cultural purposes. Civilization, on the other hand, is a condition of society including arts and sciences and the accouterments of a culture."

This way of re-envisioning the connection between wilderness and civilization so that they are not necessarily opposed permits us to take a second look at cities. It could be argued that the connections are such that our wilderness areas will be only as healthy and sustainable as are our cities. I try to make this wilderness/city connection in my piece on the volcano and the river (which I'll read later)--bringing it all back home to town. As our cities become ghettoized, left to impoverished minorities, filled with the noise of machines of all kinds, and layered over with the harsh dullness of concrete, a social, economic, spiritual structure is created wherein many of those who are able to do so leave the cities for the towns, for the rural areas, for the wild. The wild cannot withstand the pressure of the flight from crumbling cities. It will be overwhelmed unless our cities become beautiful and satisfying places to work, to live, and to raise our families. The abandonment of the cities goes hand in hand with the turning of wilderness experience into yet another commodity to be bought and sold in the marketplace of overconsumption.

Gary Snyder, writing about East Asia in his wonderfully inclusive essay, "Blue Mountains Constantly Walking," puts it this way:

> "If Zen stands for the Far Eastern love of nature, Hang-zhou (the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty, China, 960-1279 C.E.) stands for the ideal of the city. Both are brimming with energy and life. Because most of the cities of the world are now mired in poverty, overpopulation, and pollution we have all the more reason to recover the dream. To neglect the city (in our hearts and minds for starters) is deadly...`mountains and waters' is a way to refer to the totality of the process of nature. As such it goes well beyond dichotomies of purity and pollution, natural and artificial. The whole, with its rivers and valleys, obviously includes farms, fields, villages, cities, and the ...dusty world of human affairs.... the place of greed, lust, competition, commerce, and intoxication....All beings are `said' by the mountains and waters, even the clanking tread of a Caterpillar tractor, the gleam of the keys of a clarinet." (*The Practice of the Wild*, p. 114.)

This is similar to Paul Shepard's comment on civilization as a place, ideally, of human culture. On April 10th, Peter Berg, of the *Planet Drum Foundation*, Mr. Green City, as I like to call him, will have more to say on this issue. But to repeat the point, wilderness is connected to the city in essential ways that necessitate our attending to our cities as places of beauty and satisfaction, if wild land itself is to be sustainable.

A second connection I want to mention regarding wilderness has to do with the wilderness within us humans. We carry wildness inside as a part of our own perplexing, creative nature. Our dreams,

madnesses, fantasies, our unconscious--all contain it. All of our hatreds, irrationalities, all that is forbidden, taboo, condemned, denied, rejected, all that is cruel, perverse, shameful, all that for which traditional religion tells us we can only be forgiven by god himself, is part of the wilderness within us. (Which is why I put *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* by William Blake and Victor Lieberman's quotes from Carl Jung on the "suggested reading list.") And as the saints of all religions and the depth psychologists of our own day tell us, not to deal with this dark or shadow side of our selves is to feed it, to give it a power far beyond what the rational side of us can imagine and handle. The saints also give testimony to the positive, mystic, visionary side of our wild nature, to wild humor and zany dreams. Rozak's eco-psychology speaks to this area of wilderness within us in these more positive terms. And he "challenges psychology itself to extend its boundaries of the human mind to include the natural environment." For, he says, "psychology can never hope to define sanity in the insane context of urban-industrial society," and, in an interview in Adbusters magazine, goes on to say that he realized that "many environmentalists find... guilt-tripping, shaming, and scaring (other people) emotionally gratifying.... one of the most important roles for eco-psychology would be to ask environmentalists to examine their own motivations for what they are doing." To look within as we look outward, to stop the war inside ourselves, to face our attraction to violence, was the way we put it in the old anti-war movement.

This concern about the potential for a righteousness in the environmental movement that would demonize those on the other side of issues appears in our 6th speaker's (Will Baker's) Tony and the Cows, a True Story from the Range Wars. Baker closes his disturbing account of the suicide of a likable Earth Firster who appears to have shot numerous head of cattle on ranches in New Mexico, by exploring the dilemma of all of our participation in MAC-America, which supplies us with "sheet-rock, and hamburgers, and a piece of the American pie, while at the same time we dream of a purer life lived simpler, close to nature." He closes this account with:

> "Maybe the best we can do is recognize the courage and sincerity of ...wrestling with issues that get more excruciating all the time, and bear away a lesson or two for ourselves. First, that the primary uncharted and untamed wildness lives in our own hearts, and the salvation of the world may indeed depend upon coming to terms with that revelation. And second, that if we are to save ourselves and this little atom we inhabit, we must do so together." (Tony, p. 119.)

(I always like to add at this point in these discussions Snyder's comment from Nanao Sakaki, the Japanese wandering poet---"No need to survive. And not just the race. The whole universe. No need to survive. It doesn't matter." Nature will do just fine without us. It is so much vaster in time/space than our whole species history or than what we can imagine- we don't even know what this is, this universe we inhabit. The Mayans claim this is the ninth solar system they have navigated and mapped. Now that's an interesting mind to walk around with. We need to balance our immersion in our own history with a perception of the infinite, mysterious, terrible, beautiful universe we inhabit.

> "...We do not easily *know* nature, or even know ourselves. Whatever it actually is, it will not fulfill our conceptions or assumptions. It will dodge our expectations and theoretical models. There is no single or set "nature" either as "the natural world" or "the nature of things." The greatest respect we can pay to nature is not to trap it, but to acknowledge that it eludes us, and that our own nature is also open, fluid, and conditional." (Snyder, No Nature, "Preface.")

Of course these two issues- the interconnections between wilderness and cities and coming to terms with the wilderness within us are not the only ones we will be exploring this semester. Wilderness as a source of deep nature to guide and heal us, wilderness as existing for itself, and, of course the need to protect, restore, and preserve wild nature from the juggernaut of urban/industrial society. I simply want to underscore the two afore-mentioned, too often ignored issues.

I want to leave you with two voices, one a student from last semester, and one... well, more Gary Snyder, the well-known west coast poet and elder of the environmental movement. The student, in her final essay last semester, wrote:

> "My education is dead. We look at dead specimens that are pungent and rotting. I listen to teacher after teacher reading out of lifeless textbooks about the scientific process and the biology of life that have no intrinsic meaning. I become depressed with the realization that I am learning how to manage wilderness rather than how to preserve it *and to keep it holy*."

This lecture series is called the *poetics* of wilderness not because we will read and talk about some poems in here, and even have a poet or two as presenters. It is called the "poetics" of wilderness because we want to emphasize the primary need to keep our education and our lives alive. We have tried to bring in speakers who are people with vision who have worked to realize that vision in the world, and who will speak directly and reflectively from their experience, who will tell the stories of what they know through living with the struggle to make a difference beyond the academy. And this series is called the poetics of wilderness because, as this student said, we need to learn how to keep it holy. Such holiness perhaps is the beginning of wholeness in our sciences and society.

The second voice, Gary Snyder's, wrote the poem we used last fall on the flyer when we first advertised this series. This poem is a description of a child, his son, meeting the mountains for the first time. He has been brought there by his parents who are wise enough not to instill fear of the mountains in him, wise enough to let him find his own relationship with the mountains, and to let him lead them through his own spontaneous, organic ritual face to face with the mountains and waters. As ritual it is exploratory, playful, respectful, and ecstatic.

Meeting The Mountains

He crawls to the edge of the foaming creek
He backs up the slab ledge
He puts a finger in the water
He turns to a trapped pool
Puts both hands in the water
Puts one foot in the pool
Drops pebbles in the pool
He slaps the water surface with both hands
He cries out, rises up and stands
Facing toward the torrent and the mountain
Raises up both hands and shouts three times!

[KA EE! KA EE! KA EE!]

VI 69. Kai at Sawmill Lake

(Those last three exclamations are not a part of the poem, but I have always felt that I wanted to shout three times at the end of this poem, as if it asked for our participation in some way.) I have called this poem a description of the creation of an organic ritual. I want to present a comment on the importance of ritual, this by Delores LaCapelle:

> ...during rituals we have the experience, unique in our culture,
> of neither opposing nature nor trying to be in communion with nature;
> but of finding ourselves within nature, and that is a key to a sustainable culture.

This seems particularly so of ritual that is not so much formalized as it is residing in our capacity to create it, like in Kai's spontaneous action.

I want to bootleg a third voice in here too, the voice of a Crow Indian elder, quoted in The Practice of the Wild. Think of the implications of this statement for our mobile society. It is a precise statement for place, for what is now termed bioregionalism:

> "You know, I think if people stay somewhere long enough–even white people— the spirits will begin to speak to them. It's the power of the spirits coming up from the land. The spirits and the old powers aren't lost, they just need people to be around long enough and the spirits will begin to influence them."

River of Ashes

You [students]will be asked to write short responses to ten out of our twelve lectures. We would like your written pieces to be experiential, to connect what you think or have read to what you have in some way lived. By way of example, I offer this piece I have just written on the connection between the wild and the urban.

In May of 1980 I was with a group of students on a four-day trip down the upper part of the wild and scenic stretch of the Missouri River--Fort Benton to Judith Landing. Shortly before the trip the other faculty member had to bow out for reasons I don't recall. I was terrified at the prospect of being wholly responsible for the trip without another teacher along. I couldn't sleep, my stomach was upset--I called my therapist. On the surface my fear had to do with students drowning. The first year of the Wild River's Program, 1977, we had a canoe turn over in the Flathead River during spring runoff. Two students had to be pulled out and were hypothermic. I remembered the blue color of their skin.

We loaded canoes on top of the vans, picking them up from various student residences until one a.m. in a solid rain. A couple of students seemed especially competent and willing to share the work, wet and late. And they knew better than I how to tie the knots on the ropes holding down the canoes. We slept in the city park in Fort Benton and put the boats in right there by mid morning the next day.

The first three days have disappeared into the dust of memory. The night of May 18th we camped where Slaughter River joins the Missouri, at a state camp ground. The next day was my 42nd birthday. I remember wondering what that day would bring. The previous year on my birthday I had been present at the birth of my youngest son, Jack. This year I didn't expect anything to come even close to that. In the morning we would explore the prairie dog town across the river and then cruise down to Judith and drive home in the dark. I was awakened a couple of times at night by the sound of rocks careening down the cliff across the river.

Next morning I awoke at first light and noticed my sleeping bag was covered with ash. "Shit, we didn't douse the campfire thoroughly and I've slept down wind from it and its ash and smoke have drifted over me all night," I thought. I got up to put it out before the students woke up. But it was cold, damp, thoroughly doused. As I woke up more, stood up from the fire ring and looked around at the day for the first time, I saw that the ashes covering my sleeping bag also covered everyone else's bags, and the canoes, and were in the air around us. I turned in all directions and looked straight up into the sky. We were completely enclosed in a thick cloud of ash in every direction as far as the eye could see. "Wow," I thought. "So the gods have sent ashes for my birthday this year. Completely covered us in ash."

By now some of the students had gotten up, come over to me and were asking what I thought it was.

"What do you think, Rog? It must be Mount St. Helens. The volcano must've blown."

"Could be. It just doesn't seem likely. We must be a thousand miles away and it wasn't making any rumbling when we left. I don't see how it could have come this far in just three days, especially this much ash." I answered, having zero experience with volcanos.

"What do you think it is then?"

"I don't know. Maybe the big war has started. There are hundreds of missile silos around here on

this side of the mountains. Maybe it's finally started and some of those silos have been hit. But that seems too dramatic and we would have heard the explosions. Maybe it's just a big ole Eastern Montana alkali dust storm and we're right smack in the middle of it."

But the air was still, not a bit of wind. The dust storm theory didn't seem likely either.

"What should we do?"

"Let's eat quickly, break camp, and get on the water. If we don't stop at the prairie dog town or any of the homesteads on this stretch we can be off the river by mid-afternoon. Then we'll find out."

We soaked our bandanas in river water and wore them over our faces like outlaws, to filter out some of the dust or ash. Once out on the water we stuck together by instinct, just like the year before when we'd paddled all day into a driving, late spring snow storm, and sang the whooping crane song to keep going, all five canoes carried along by the song until we got to the take-out and people actually collapsed on legs numbed by the cold in the aluminum boats. It was eerie, like being on the moon, someone said. Nothing moved. Not a sound. Not the least motion of insect or bird, leaf or deer. Only the thick blanket of ash enclosing us---the sound of our paddles in the water. People spoke in whispers. Our handkerchiefs dried and had to be re-moistened.

It seemed like forever to reach Judith Landing. I worried about how they were doing at home. I had not wanted to leave on Jack's first birthday, my birthday too, and had promised we'd have a good party when I got back on the 20th. Finally, Judith. This was before the bridge over the river. There was a ferryboat here, with the little homestead for the ferryman and his family. Some people came down to greet us.

"What happened? What's this ash we've been in all day?"

"It's the volcano, Mount St. Helens blew up. On the 17th and the ash cloud drifted over this way."

"Anyone hurt?"

"Yeah. It killed over a hundred people."

It was mid-afternoon now and we discussed our options as we hauled our boats and gear up out of the river.

"I'd like to get home tonight. I've got a year old baby there and I want to get back to him and my wife as soon as possible. How does that sound to everybody?"

"Well, you might have trouble," the ferryman chimed in. "There's supposed to be no traveling, except emergency vehicles. The highway patrol has roadblocks set up. Besides, they say this ash is so fine it'll go right through your air-filter and ruin your engine. Best to stay here and wait it out."

"It's my son's first birthday. I promised him I'd be back tomorrow. I guess we'll take our chances with the ash and the road blocks."

As I back my van out of the parking space I run over his cat, killing it. Christ! I get out.

"God, I'm sorry. I never saw him. Guess I got in a hurry."

"It's OK," he said. "We've got more cats than gnats around here. Seems like all the strays in this part of the country show up. Don't worry about it."

I worry about it but get back in the van and start to drive the forty of miles of dirt back to the highway. We are pretty quiet, except to express our astonishment that the volcano could have blown and the ash traveled this far just since we left three days ago. Somewhere along that forty miles we spot a small herd of antelope off to the east. It is the first thing we have seen alive and moving since yesterday. One, presumably a buck, stands broadside to us a couple of hundred yards away. Five or six smaller ones run away from the road. When they have gone a ways, he turns and follows. Little puffs of ash spurt up from their hooves like smoke as they run. I wonder what this ash is doing to their eyes and lungs? They are unusually beautiful, even for antelope, running in the ash.

At Big Sandy we stop at a parts store, buy new air filters for all the vans, then head out in the near dark. There is no traffic, especially no highway patrol, and no roadblocks. We make it home in good time: the vans run smooth as ever.

II Home

Next morning I am out hosing down the lilac hedge along the street that runs by our house. The city and state have asked people not to drive unless it is absolutely necessary. Cars stir up clouds of the ash which it is unhealthy to breathe. Stay indoors as much as possible. Hose down your own living area to minimize the dust where you live. My wife tells me how she saw the dust cloud come like an immense, dark dragon, like a storm, over the hill south-east of town. And took the baby inside and closed the windows.

I hear a car two blocks away, come into the corner turn fast, spin a 360, sending a plume of ash a hundred feet into the air, then come roaring up our street, churning up ash all the way. I step into the street on our side to try to slow him down–he must be doing forty miles per hour by the time he reaches our place. I juke at his car, he swerves slightly as he goes by, I give him the finger with both hands. He slams on his brakes–another plume of ash way up in the air–stops, gets out, car door open, engine running.

"OK, Cowboy!" He yells. "I'm gonna to kick your f—k-n ass. No one flips me off."

I start talking to him as he strides toward me:

"You're not even supposed to be driving, except for emergencies. You're hurting other people stirring up all this ash. It's illegal. There's a state of emergency with this volcano."

"I don't give a shit! My girlfriend ran out on me last night. I'm pissed and I don't care. The only state of emergency is your f--k-n ass, Cowboy."

I grip the hose with both hands. He's covered about half the distance between us. I will slash him hard right across the face with the brass nozzle at the end of the hose if I have to. I am surprised to discover I am not afraid. Usually I am a coward when it comes to conflict of any kind, especially physical. I will avoid it at all costs, even run. Now there is no fear. I have been to the river. I have been through the volcano. I stand with my home and my family, my year old child and wife, at my back. I stand on my own ground. Besides, I've been called a lot of things, but no one has ever called me "Cowboy." Sounds like a compliment to me, like he takes me seriously–on his terms. "OK, Cowboy," I like it.

I don't move a hair. I don't take my eyes off him an instant as he comes on in repeating his mantra about how he's going to kick my f--k--g-ass. He's about my size, only built husky. Jeans, plaid shirt, boots.

He marches straight up to me, hands knotted into fists, stops with his nose, his face, two inches from my face, squinty eyes staring hard into mine, breathing heavily.

"I've got a baby in the house and I don't want all this ash stirred up for him to breathe."

"Nobody, f--k--g nobody, gets away with flipping me off, Cowboy."

Another long moment of stare-down, breath-burn in my face.

"OK. Cowboy," he says, backing away. "You're a lucky Cowboy. I could kick your ass so easy. You have no idea. You're one lucky f--k--g Cowboy, mister."

He repeats it over and over, like a charm, backing his way to his car, as if he is afraid I will jump him from behind if he turns his back. I stand on the bank by the lilacs and watch him back into his car, tell me what a lucky, f--k--g Cowboy I am one last time, slam the door and peel out, sending another ash-plume up into the sky. I blow him a kiss for calling me "Cowboy."

For me, wilderness at its best does this--tests us, helps us work through our fears, gives us a clearer sense of ourselves, brings us home to a ground that we can actually stand on. Had I not been to the river in spite of my fears, had I not been through the uncertainty of the volcano, had I not witnessed the little puffs of ash rising like smoke from the hooves of the antelope, I would not have found what ground there was for me to stand on, the garden hose in my hand, the lilacs at my back. I knew I was one lucky Cowboy---those beautiful ashes for the day of my son's birth.

Roger Dunsmore

Student Response to Introduction by Roger Dunsmore

1)

Ike didn't look up as I tried to sneak back into the dish room. His voice carried down the hall.

"So I hear dem men are gonna take some pictures of ya."

I cringed and hesitated before offering a mumbled reply about money. My words sounded shallow and I thought of the river with its water level sucked down by drought and fire. Last night the idea seemed harmless enough after my boss John volunteered to act as my "agent," I told the head L.L. "Beaner" that I would model the next day. Modeling seemed like easy money next to waitressing. Sure, I made bank working at this private flyfishing ranch on the Yellowstone River in the Paradise Valley, but I also worked hard, long hours contributing to its effortless yet exclusive atmosphere. I was especially tired after dodging the spilled drinks and drunken propositions of a table of ten men from L.L Bean visiting the ranch for a special spread on flyfishing southwest Montana's rivers. One asked if I had an older sister. Two whispered and nudged elbows as I leaned over to refill a wineglass. Another slurred, "Don't pay 'tention those two, their minds…in gutter, in the gutter. Is yours?" Waitressing not only demands thick skin but quick wit for comebacks that amuse, confuse, or defuse. While mocking the modeling idea all night provided distraction, finally accepting their offer allowed me the verbal diversion to direct their drunken asses out of the lodge and towards the guest cabins. Ike and I needed to clean up and close the kitchen.

Ike's tone of voice foreshadowed the whole episode. I kick myself for quieting my own intuition. The thought of two hundred bucks for one hour of work…if I could only keep my mouth shut…

* * *

I can balance an awkward water pitcher with two glasses on a tray if I'm not moving. Standing for nearly 45 minutes and doing so tires me. The ranch uses tall, thick bottomed glasses for water and a pitcher fills seven glasses. The photographer altered the shot every two minutes with the only constant remaining me, my tray, and the glasses of water. After dismissing the two women in the shot, he settled on two men at an outside table with me between and behind them serving glasses of ice water. He asked me to take off my sunglasses. I asked why the two guys were allowed to wear sunglasses. He ignored me. Between pouring and repouring the water, balancing the heavy tray, and forcing smiles while squinting in sun and ash, I caught snatches of the conversation between the two male models. They rarely addressed me but their exchange of words seemed largely for my benefit as it consisted chiefly of the most bizarre boasting of guiding success I had ever heard. Although both arrived with L.L. Bean, they claimed to be guides from the Bozeman area. I had to question these jokers. Our guides were either guys my age that had already picked flyfishing over at least three girlfriends or quirky older fellows that attached flies on at three different parts of their shirt. These middle aged guys looked as if they stepped off the Delta flight in Bozeman with a copy of *A River Runs Through It* poking out of the pocket of their leather laptop case. Not only was their arrogance out of place, but they were both unfamiliar with my hometown less than fifteen miles northeast of Bozeman.

"Hon, you look so nervous…relax, we're in this business too."

"Yeah, we're really river rats."

The photographer interrupted, "My god, this is the money shot but she's in the gutter."

"She's in the gutter?"

"Of course she's in the gutter," the bastard laughed, alluding to the gutter remarks made the night before while I was waiting on their table.

Oblivious to the way the term "gutter" is used in the layout of a magazine, I focused on their laughter and all the crude comments of the night before rolled through my mind. I slammed the tray on the table, drenched the two bastards, and told them to fuck off as I ran towards the lodge.

* * *

Ike looked up from his carving knife. I met his eyes as I stormed into the back and fired his favorite pan into the wall with the flick of the wrist before repeatedly slamming my fist into the freezer door. Metal rang in the bones of my hand. I cursed through a flood of choked sobs. Three Beaners swarmed to the swinging kitchen doors jabbering at Ike to let them through to talk to me.

"No guests in da kitchen."

As one moved to push the door open, Ike stepped out from behind the island. He repeated, "No guests in da kitchen" while turning the handle of his seven inch carving knife in his palm.

"Tell them I want my contract, Ike."

* * *

Ike was training this summer for an executive chef position at the ranch's sister resort in the Bahamas on Ike's home island of Andros. Ike explained to me that the people of his island no longer tolerate white chefs and white flyfishing guides profiting from the recreational exploitation of their island. After the L.L. Beaners left and I returned to work, Ike and I split a six pack one night after dinner. The night was warm and a red haze still glowed on the ridged horizon. We sat in the dry grass and watched the dark river.

"I heard what dem men say to you. Do not take it to heart. Dem no understand. Dem have no sensitivity to what we know."

The Yellowstone is my family's river. I know every inflow creek, fork, eddy, and hole from Corwin Springs to Meditation Point to Chicory to Mallard's Rest to the Highway 98 Bridge. Nevertheless, I'll listen patiently to their stories of familiarity with the river and the trout. I'll open their ninety dollar bottles of wine, I'll wipe up their spilled beer, I'll clear their dishes, I'll scrub their toilet, and I'll change their sheets. However, if my serving female form occupied the gutter of L.L. Bean's money shot, so did the exhausted river at my back and the smoky summit of Mount Delano above my head. Less than two miles from where I stood a USFS sign marks the boundary of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Woman, river, mountain, and wilderness filled the gutter below the pleated, pressed khakis of Beaners and their $349.99 dollar rod. I'll die before I sell that image to the world.

Anne M. Stone

February 6th

Riding The Bear

Florence Krall Shepard

Introduction:
When we first began to plan for the Wilderness Lecture Series I knew I wanted to start with someone who could put the last twelve thousand years of human history into its place in the much longer human prehistory, and into the even longer prehistory of evolving life on our planet. There was one very obvious choice for this role: the highly regarded human ecologist Paul Shepard. I knew little of Shepard's work, but remembered his lectures here at the University of Montana in 1983. But he was dead now, of lung cancer in the summer of 1996. One of my students told me, however, that Shepard's wife, Florence Krall, who had edited his last two books, *Coming Home to the Pliestocene and Encounters With Nature, Essays by Paul Shepard*, after his death, and published her own collection of essays, *Ecotone, Wayfaring on the Margins*, would be a good choice. I got her phone number from the information computer and called. She'd been having bear dreams. Paul Shepard had focused on the bear as a prominent bearer of cultural symbols and a primary figure in the human unconscious during the last decade of his life. She'd shared his bear pilgrimages during those years. And so we had our starting place for the series, a concrete way to connect human history to a primary ancestor with whom we still share our life, to the bear, and through that connection to imply the rest of it: the millions of years long fabric of genetic relationships that we embody.

Florence Shepard's bear dreams, as readers will discover, are powerful, true experiences from the unconscious and from the Bear. They are Bear's gifts to her, and from her to us. They permit us to stand with her and her magnificent bear-husband and cubs, staring at the undulating curtain of green light filling our field of vision, and with nothing to fear. They permit us to hold in our own arms the strange-shaped bear bones found in the dream-meat, one that is wish-bone shaped and looks like a butterfly. We are permitted to remember, even, that the nursing Madonnas that are so prevalent in the art galleries of the West once had bear heads. And all this without breaking faith with the real, live wild bears and their need for wild land, not breaking faith with the bear in its phenomenal, biological reality. The real bear and the dream bear together. Florence Krall Shepard is, literally, "The Woman Who Married The Bear."

Brief Bio:
Florence R. Shepard, a teacher, naturalist, and writer, is professor emerita in Educational Studies at the University of Utah where she taught educational and environmental studies. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wyoming in zoology, a master's degree from Washington State University in biology, and a Ph.D. in education and ecology from the University of Utah. She has published her personal narratives of place in journals, anthologies, and a book, *Ecotone* (Suny Press, 1994) and edited *Coming Home To The Pleistocene* (Island Press, 1998) and *Encounters With Nature* (Island Press, 1999), books written before his death in 1996 by her late husband, Paul Shepard, a scholar of human ecology. Returning to her home state where she was raised on a sheep ranch, she spends most of each year in a cabin in the Hoback Basin, Bondurant, Wyoming and the winter months at her home in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Speaker's suggested Readings:

Ecotone, Florence Shepard
Coming Home To The Pleistocene, Paul Shepard
Encounters With Nature, Paul Shepard

Riding the Bear
Florence R. Shepard

Consider this a testimony to *Ursus arctos.* I have ridden the great brown bear. The language written in its body and behavior penetrates the deepest recesses of my being, "nudges my imagination," enters my dreams, and carries me to greater understanding. Each morning it draws me into the possibility of its presence in the high country surrounding my cabin. Each night *Ursa Major* circles the starry sky framed by my window and helps me navigate dark waters. Seen through the lens of Eastern mythology, the bear is my "vehicle," a companion animal such as Hindu deities rode on transformative journeys. The great brown bear, *Ursus arctos,* is my "living metaphor" and my "vehicle."

Through the millennia we have become accustomed to watching and avoiding bears. In the past, when we were sharing the same food and terrain, it was necessary to do so in order to survive. We still watch bears carefully, but for different reasons, some of which are deeply psychological. Not human, yet faintly familiar, the bear arouses in us feelings we reserve for fellow beings, including the ambivalence we often feel toward those we admire but can't quite trust. Notwithstanding scientific explanation, its extraordinary adaptation for sleeping through the darkest months astounds us.

In the Greater Yellowstone Bioregion where I reside, newspapers report the number of cattle or sheep killed by bears. A marauding or mauling bear that is identified, relocated, or killed makes the headlines. At the same time conservationists struggle to keep the grizzly's endangered status, and animal rights activists protest its hunting. Meanwhile, ordinary people of all persuasions gather along roadsides in parks whenever a bear, sometimes baited, appears. Formerly an object of torment, the bear persists in modern culture as a vicious threat and a cuddly friend. But in the now forgotten past, it was lord of the animals, had super-human qualities, heard everything that was said, and sustained itself in winter merely by licking its paws. Most importantly, its life cycle exemplified spiritual renewal: it descended into the underground during the darkest time and emerged with spring and light and new life by its side.

In this self-sufficient, technological society, are bears still significant to our lives? What difference would it make if they disappeared from the face of the earth? These questions come out of limited personal experience but deep reflection on the extraordinary explanations supporting the significance of the bear to Northern Hemisphere peoples offered by the late Paul Shepard.

Before his death, Paul admitted to having spent most of the last twenty years of his life in an intermittent meditation on the bear. With him for the last ten of those years, I can verify that overriding interest. Following his path to the bear, however, is like tracing its circuitous foraging path each day. Paul was not an ethologist, a scientist who studies the behavior of animals, he was a human ecologist, one who uncovers the relationships of humans to their environment, including its creatures. After spending the first twenty years of life questioning the origins or our environmental perception, in mid-life Paul shifted to hunters and gatherers. As he attempted to reconstruct their original orientation to the earth, he began to see the importance of our evolutionary helpmates, those Others, the many animals with whom we share our ecological past.

Trying to get under our great psychological attachment to animals, he first researched representations of animals in pop art --stories, illustrations, film, advertising, and cartoons. He was astounded by the presence of animals in every nook and cranny of our lives and psyches, but most amazing to him was the extent to which they enter our everyday language. We use their names as verbs, a kind of shorthand that conveys complex ideas concisely and clearly. (To illustrate this economy of language, he often quoted a sign he had seen above a low doorway that read, "Duck or ram and grouse.") Having opened a very large can of worms, he next set out to trace our evolutionary association with one of these "kindred spirits." The bear, our companion in evolution who shares our omnivorous view of the world, was, of course, the leading candidate.

As with his other studies, Paul's interdisciplinary research on the bear surprised him with its many linguistic links. He found over forty meanings of "bear" and many words like *bier, barn, burden, bring, bright,* and *bereave* that on the surface seem unrelated, but etymologically show connections. Paul

had previously concluded that humans devised the fundamentals for speech, song, dance, and performance by mimicking animals. He now conjectured that the term "bear" came into use at a time when language was just being born, a time when close attention to bears was essential for survival. In those days words were in short supply, so we used animals to convey the meanings for which we had no vocabulary. The bear was then, as it is now, the most charismatic of all the large animals ---the most visible, the most feared, the most respected ---the one whose every movement grabbed our attention, penetrated our consciousness, and conveyed meaning. The one most like us. In his last years, Paul was intrigued by what he facetiously called, "The Natural History of Imaginary Bears," the bear as guide, messenger, and healer, told in stories and art based on its ecology.

Like the bear, Paul was a metaphysician of sorts, yet his message is difficult for me to fathom. It requires that I embrace the image of the animate bear in order to penetrate its meaning. This riding the bear is a transformative journey. To bear relates to the act of carrying ---an object, a burden, a message, a bequest. Transformation asks not that I hitch a ride but that I carry on, traverse life's terrain, taking what comes as the bear does on its path to its winter den.

Since Paul's death I have been occupied with his papers, editing and publishing his last manuscripts and organizing his archives, and in the process, have set aside his work on the bear. At the end of last summer, I decided to delve into this material. During September I typed transcripts of Paul's many talks on the bear, including some given here in Missoula in 1983. As I listened and typed in the loft of my cabin, the sun sank lower in the south. Aspens on the butte turned from gold to gray when strong winds blew their leaves away. Willows along the ditch banks and the Hoback River took on burnished hues. Flaming ground maples in Hoback Canyon and golden willow torches along the Snake River went out. By October the landscape was draped in bland beige.

It was raining hard the morning I packed my car with down sleeping bag, winter clothes, snacks for survival, and bear spray. I had been looking forward with great anticipation to meeting friends in Yellowstone. My head was swirling with Paul's words and voice. I needed grounding; I needed real bears. As I packed, the great dark cloud hanging over the Hoback Basin descended upon me. I suddenly felt old and alone. I was weeping as I locked the cabin and headed down the road. The Grand Tetons were cloaked in mist as I proceeded teary-eyed along their base. In Yellowstone Park where an understory of saturated mauves and crimsons backdropped the white and black memorials to the great fire, the colors were heartbreakingly beautiful. Descending into Mammoth, I maneuvered the hairpin curves cautiously, wary of the ease with which I could miss a turn. And I crept slowly over the high bridge that crosses the Yellowstone River, trying my best to ignore the dark reaches below.

My friends Bernie Krause, a bio-acoustic master who has recorded the sounds of thousands of habitats, and Katherine Krause, an invaluable work partner and helpmate, met me at Soda Butte. In the warmth of their van and friendship my loneliness eased. We drove back down the road past wildlife watchers, took a turn-off, and hiked a trail pock-marked with wolf and bear scat, overturned rocks, and diggings. On the crest of a ridge, under a sheltering Douglas fir filled with playful Canada jays, we scanned the landscape that dropped into the multi-colored grand canyon below. With no bears or wolves visible, we headed back to my car. Darkness descended as I trailed their van past bugling bull elk and their harems. After a good meal in a tiny cafe in Cooke City, we went to the motel and said good-night. My room was cold, and I was exhausted. I cranked up the heat, spread my sleeping bag over the covers, and hopped into bed. In the warm cocoon of my body heat, I soon fell sound asleep. I had a dream.

Bernie, Kat, and I were attending a lecture on bears. The man who was to give the talk walked in with a huge bundle wrapped in a bear skin that he placed on a table and began to unfold. He explained that instead of lecturing on bears he had decided it would be more useful if we ate the bear he had just killed and roasted. So we gathered around and began eating, picking up the pieces of meat with our fingers. We ate on and on and on, never seeming to get our fill of the delicious, tender, succulent meat. Embedded in the meat I kept finding bones, big beautiful bones, smooth as ivory and luminescent as pearl. A long bone that seemed to be a penis bone, an oosik, *as it is called in Alaska; another that was*

wishbone shaped only thicker that looked somewhat like a butterfly; a lovely spiral-shaped disc; and a bone shaped like a ladder. As I plucked them out I tried to fit them into my knowledge of anatomy to determine their function but none seemed to fit. The bear skin was rather motley and was set to the side. I picked it up and wrapped it around me as I ate on. Suddenly, like a door slamming shut, our stomachs could not hold another morsel. The man, seeing this, announced that we could take anything that remained. "Anything?" I asked. "Yes, anything." Since no one else seemed interested, I took the bones in my arms and wrapped the skin around me. They infused me with a sense of security and well-being.

The next day we sought the sounds of bugling elk. In late afternoon we joined other animal watchers and were rewarded with grizzly and black bears and the Druid wolf pack feeding on a dead moose. Stopping for every moving creature, I took most of the following day to drive home. I was blessed with more bear sightings: A mother black bear and two cubs along the roadside preparing for hibernation focused solely on berry eating. A grizzly mother and her two cubs moving across a ridge, overturning rocks, grazing on moths and digging for roots. A huge lone grizzly, impatient with being watched as it snacked along the roadside, suddenly loped across the highway directly in front of me and vanished into the forest. Down the road I stopped to watch moose in final stages of courtship as they vied for a place in a wallow that the bull had dug and profused with urine and scent. They looked spent but satiated as if they, too, had been eating bear meat.

Back at my cabin, I was settling back into work, when the telephone rang. It was Roger Dunsmore wanting to know if I'd like to participate in the Wilderness Institute's lecture series. "We'd like you to address Paul's work as well as your own." "Well, actually, Roger, I've been thinking a lot about bears. I had a dream." "People usually address what they're most interested in at the present. Will you participate?" Agreeing, I immediately realized I was stuck. I'd have to continue my bear work. I decided to begin by going back, to dredge my memories for bears.

My childhood home was a sheep ranch in southwestern Wyoming with meadows, clumps of cottonwoods, and willows scattered along the Hamsfork River that meandered through it, an oasis in a vast expanse of sage brush/ bunch grass steppe. A shy, skinny girl born between two gregarious sisters, I occupied the edge, listening and learning. I loved adult conversation, especially the on-going dialogue between my mother and father. He was a poor Italian immigrant without any schooling; she of immigrant Italian homesteaders, the responsible oldest child in a family of nine and with only a smattering of eighth grade education. Together they talked their way through devastating depression and drought, debts and deaths, two aliens contriving together a way of life that would be acceptably American, but was, as I learned later traveling in their homeland, very Italian.

One summer day after returning from a visit to the sheep herds on our forest allotment in the Wyoming Range, my father was reporting back to my mother who was working in the kitchen preparing for visitors expected the next day. Dominick, the camp jack, was treed by a bear that had been killing sheep. After the bear finally went away, Dominick got his gun, tracked the bear down, and killed it. As my father talked he unwrapped a huge roast, not a leg of lamb as my mother anticipated, but leg of bear. Bear? My mother was doubtful. Although her mother, a Piedmontess, had taught her the art of cooking delicious meals from simple ingredients, she had never cooked bear meat. My father assured her that it would be very good, but he warned her that they shouldn't tell the guests what they were eating until they had finished the meal.

The next afternoon sitting at the big round table in the breezy dining room used only on hot summer days, I watched the guests with interest as I ate slowly and thoughtfully, rolling each tasty morsel on my tongue. When everyone had finished and was thanking my mother for the delicious meal, one of them asked as an afterthought. "By the way, Tillie, what kind of meat was that?" "Bear." "BEAR?" A long silent pause was followed by animated conversation on the bear and the sheep herder, bears in general, and eating the bear. It was obvious to me, even at the age of about ten, that this was no ordinary event, but one to which deeply felt prohibitions were attached.

Other than brief encounters with bears in fairy tales, as teddy bears, and occasional real Yellowstone bears (Ranger Rick and Yogi had not yet come into being), I had no other memorable bear encounters as a child. As a young mother with children, before bear maulings were common, we camped without tents and watched a black bear run through our camp one morning, and we often heard bears noisily over-turning garbage cans in campgrounds during the night. But later in life as a professor at the University of Utah, when I was struggling with the politics of our department, I had my first remarkable dream:

With a child in my arms, I was walking along a ridge crest with tundra falling away below. A man walked at my side. Two yearling bear cubs were following close behind. The man, seeing that I was watching them warily, assured me I had nothing to fear. It was twilight, but suddenly an undulating, green curtain of light spread across the sky. I turned to the man and in his stead was a magnificent bear with close-set eyes and a head so large that it filled my entire field of vision. Standing there together -- he on his hind legs swaying ever so slightly -- we watched the spectacle of light.

Months later at Candlemas, half-way between the winter solstice and spring equinox, I received a note from Paul Shepard whom I had never met, but from whom I had ordered his remaindered books for my classes. He would have a few hours lay-over in Salt Lake City on his way to Jackson Hole, Wyoming where he was presentng a humanities symposium and wondered if I might meet him at the airport for lunch. I wrote back offering him a stipend if he would come one day early and speak to my graduate seminar where we were mulling over his recent book, *Nature and Madness.* He consented, and, after his lecture that evening, I took him to dinner with friends. When he mentioned he was just completing a book on bears, they asked me to tell him about my dream. He listened intently as I repeated it, and, when I had finished, he looked at me with very blue eyes and said simply, "Well, Flo, that says it all." I hadn't the slightest idea what he meant. He left the next morning for Jackson and from there to India for a four month Fullbright lectureship.

A few weeks later, Walter Prothero, a former student, professional hunter, and outdoor writer, stopped by my office with an offer to accompany him to the Arctic in late summer. Longing to see the Alaska landscape, yet terribly afraid of bears, I agreed.

Paul returned in June from India and tracked me down at my sister's cabin in the Hoback Basin in Wyoming where my grandson and I were enjoying a brief vacation, he fishing and me resting after a hectic quarter. Paul stayed on for several days, and he left assuring me this time he would be in touch. Our friendship deepened during the next months. As the time approached for my Arctic trip, Paul was silent. Although sensing his disapproval, I couldn't turn back.

So at the end of the summer, I stood on a sandbar on the upper Sheenjek River in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge quaking in my "Bean boots." Our gear, which we had quickly unloaded was stacked in a heap and included a 50 gallon steel drum filled with the provisions I had brought according to Walt's instructions. We were 350 miles north of the Arctic Circle. The bush pilot, who has since died in a crash, had taken off leaving instructions about where to meet him in a little over three weeks. The sand bar was covered with grizzly and wolf tracks. Why, I asked myself, was I taking part in this hair-brained adventure?

I'm still not sure how I survived the trek into the Brooks Range following that Pleistocene hunter. Thankfully, I did, and I carry with me memories of a lovely, weathered, pearl-gray landscape sometimes with grizzlies silhouetted on the horizon, their snouts lifted to pick up scents. We stayed in the high country for ten days living on a mountain sheep that Walt shot, and then returned to the Sheenjek River and began our float to my pick-up point at Lobo Lake. One evening, after hiking solo all day, Walt walked into camp and came toward me with something in his hand. "Here," he said, "give this to your friend." In my hand he placed a bear's bloody penis.

The next day, along with helping Walt prepare the bear skin, I boiled the penis and removed and cleaned the *oosik* that I would have prepared as a pendant for Paul when I got back to Fairbanks. That evening we cooked the first of the bear meat. Although it was as delicious as the bear my mother had

prepared, I had a very difficult time swallowing it. After reading *The Sacred Paw,* a gift from Paul, from cover to cover several times, I understood more fully the significance of the prohibition I sensed as a child. We were eating a sacred being. But we didn't know the ceremonies.

After this last declaration of independence on my part, I took up with Paul Shepard for better or worse. He found in me a willing traveling companion, and in the next years we journeyed repeatedly in search of further evidence of the importance of animals in human lives. More particularly, "old honey paw" was always on his mind. We began in Britain. After a month of traveling in the northernmost reaches, wandering among standing stones and staring into barrows, we settled into a flat in London. It was then I observed Paul for the first time in his serendipitous research mode. He had wide-ranging interests stemming from an interdisciplinary academic background, and was blessed with abilities not unlike those of a hunter. He was a good tracker and patient in the face of frustration. Keen selective vision helped him pick up on multiple clues. He had the gifts of phenomenal memory and focused attention. His long list of books, artifacts, and art objects for investigation never grew shorter; as he crossed off items, he just kept adding more. At the British Museum, which was his base, he was like a marauding bear ransacking the great halls for significant icons that he studied with absolute concentration. He poured over illuminated manuscripts. And in the grand reading room with its ethereal blue domed ceiling, he sat in leather chairs at polished desks assiduously reading and taking notes.

Later in Greece, Sicily, and Italy, with a carefully marked map at hand, we visited ancient worship sites, focusing especially on Artemis and Demeter temples. Paul was convinced of the "bearishness" of both these goddesses and was seeking direct evidence in the iconography. The fascinating search took us to places like Eleusis where rites to Demeter were celebrated. There we sat on the edge of a minor temple to Artemis and looked up the pavement to where great gates opening into a cave had left their mark in the stone. Processions of priestesses and holy women came here walking all the way from Athens, carrying offerings and preparations for the sacred "mysteries" of death and rebirth reenacted in the temple. At Brauron, bronze dragonflies danced in the sun by the spring and standing pillars marked the place where young girls in saffron robes dressed as bears celebrated puberty rites before Artemis.

Other than a few bears decorating a sarcophagus here and there, and illustrations of Callisto being changed into a bear and banished into the sky, we found very few bears in Greece or Southern Italy. Nonetheless, convinced of the bear's lingering presence, Paul surmised that as bears disappeared from the Mediterranean landscape, they were replaced by human deities, the gods, goddesses, and cultural heroes in classical Greek mythology, later co-opted by the Romans. Etymologically, Artemis leads to bears and she was from Arcadia, which was known as bear country. As midwife, huntress, and virgin she embodied the ambiguous roles, androgynous as well as maternal, that the bear suggests. Demeter also has bear leanings. She was the terrible mother who lost her daughter, Persephone, to the underworld, and in her great grief, sent the earth into perpetual winter. Finally relenting, she permitted spring to return only when Persephone was allowed to come back to the middle world each year. Her story reenacts bear hibernation and the renewal of spring. And the bear lingers in mythologies of heroes like Salmoxis, Odysseus, and Orpheus who imitated the themes of death and renewal through banishment and exile and return as well as by their descent into caves for fasting and meditation and enlightened emergence.

Farther north in the Italian Alps in the Val di Non, my father's homeland, we found the sanctuary of San Romedio, which delighted Paul no end. Here in a cul-de-sac on a high limestone promontory over-looking a jagged gorge forged by a rushing stream, a hermit monk once lived with a bear he had tamed. The many stairs, leading to the chapel at the very top of the structure where a picture of the saint with the bear hangs over the altar, are lined with crutches and tokens of thanksgiving offered by supplicants in testimony to their miraculous cures. The bones of the bear and of St. Romedio are venerated in crypts and, through a grill in the floor, one can look down into the cave where they once lived. Down below along the stream, European brown bears are kept in a sanctuary.

On into Switzerland, at Drachenloch, high above the valley floor, we looked up at caves where cave bear remains were discovered. Caves such as these that contain remains of the great cave bear,

Ursus spaleus, that roamed the Earth for almost 300,000 years, have been found throughout Western Europe. It became extinct with many other animals at the end of the Pleistocene about 10,000 years ago. According to experts such as Valerius Geist, the cave bear, about the size of a polar bear, was mostly vegetarian and had evolved very large molars and powerful jaws to grind roots to accommodate its carnivore digestive system. Its enormous canines suggest that it was fiercely territorial and used these for threat in defense and mating rather than for preying on other animals. They hibernated in caves in the winter and in the spring, followed the greening. Ancient humans used the vacated caves for shelter. Over the millennia great numbers of bones accumulated as bears died in hibernation, a critical time in the life cycle when mortality is the highest. Paul, like other researchers, saw human intentionality in the placement of these skulls and bones in the caves, but this supposition is controversial. He nonetheless was convinced that for thousands of years Neanderthals and Cromagnons worshipped the bear as a divine being. The goddess, he insisted, was created later out of patriarchic agriculture's obsession with procreation and fertility.

In Berne, the great bear city, we found a profusion of bear images dating back to Medieval times, in portals to the museum and stained glass, in pedestals and paintings, chalices and vases, and flags, crests, seals, and coats of arms. European bears are kept in the famous bear pit, a stone basin twelve meters wide and four meters deep, where bears were fought. Amidst this profusion of bear images, Paul found particular significance in one artifact, Dea Artio, a small bronze archeological object, found in 1832, which has been dated around the second century A. D. The object was found in an ancient Gallo-Roman villa in what may have been a chapel or a temple of a religious group. A seated statuette of a goddess holding a plate of fruit is offering it to a large bear facing her. Paul believed that this object showed the important shift from belief in animal power to humanized deities who had absorbed the sacredness of the bear. In the Montane wilderness of what is now Switzerland and northern Italy, the Greco-Roman culture came up against the indigenous Celts as well as rites to the sacred bear lingering on in isolated pockets of the Mediterranean. This artifact, he insisted, acknowledges the transition from bear deity to the human form.

Later we traveled in India seeking depictions of animals in Hindu temples and religious sites. Animals were everywhere, both in representations and in the flesh. Monkeys chattered and scampered across walls and entrances to temples where, with a gentle tap of their trunks, elephants bestowed blessings on the bowed heads of pilgrims. Although the bear was not a prominent figure, one of my most poignant memories was seeing a muzzled and leashed bear standing on its hind feet by its master begging along a roadside. This debasing sight, emblematic of the abuse we have heaped upon bears, filled me with sadness. In the not so distant past, we placed bears in pits where they had to fight bulls, lions, and dogs to the death. And today we chase and tree them or bait and kill them for sport. We make circus animals and beggars of them. Because of the healing qualities of their organs and body fluids, we cage them and tether them with tubes as if they were machines. And we kill them and use their parts to enhance our health and sexual pleasures. But even in these debasing roles the bear's superiority stands against our addictions and dependencies. Our reliance upon them for our well-being and gratification attests to their power, not ours.

In Scandinavia in the fall of 1993, when Paul's last explanation of *The Others was* in its finishing stages, as was his last statement on hunters and gatherers, he became more focused on the bear. After consulting with experts on the bear cult in Norway and Sweden, we found in a museum in Lulea, Sweden, a wonderful illustration of the *Bjornfesten* by Ossian Elgstrom prepared in the early 30s that sets out the very complex steps in this slain bear festival: the discovery of the hibernating bear in its den, the ceremony of its killing, the complicated cross-gender celebration when the bear's spirit is invited to participate, and, finally, the return of the skull, bear bones, and skin to the mountains where sites are appropriately decorated.

The slain bear ceremony, set out in this graphic form, astonished me with its symbolism and meaning. About 10,000 years ago when climate changed, grazing herds decreased, and settlements became more permanent, harsh winters must have been difficult for foraging people. The discovery of a hibernating bear, much less dangerous than when roaming about, must have been a motherload, a great

store of fat and meat, bones for implements, and a wonderfully warm pelt, at the time when these things were so needed. In those days, as is still the case today, hunts were reenacted around campfires in preparation for the new hunt to take place. It isn't difficult to imagine how old hunting stories retold from year to year were embellished and reinterpreted by wise elders. The mysteries of death and the life of the soul must have been a problem for our ancestors, just as they are for us. The same existential questions plagued them: Why are we here and what happens to us after death? Some sort of great creator seems necessary to set this whole stew into motion. But how did we as individuals and as a group come into being?

Cosmologies, stories of how the world began, grew out of such questions as well as origin myths, that explain the beginning of particular tribes with their emerging heroes and hunts. Slain bear rituals rendered these stories into one grand ceremony of renewal. With the bear as the model, it isn't surprising that similar stories and celebrations developed circumpolarly among people separated by great distances. The common theme, coming out of the life cycle of the bear, was that out of darkness and death comes life and renewal.

Integral to the ceremonies was a myth about a woman who marries a bear. It goes something like this: A young woman is either abducted or seduced and carried away by a bear. She lives with him in a cave and has children that are half bear and half human. When her brothers finally come to her rescue, her bear husband accepts that he is to die and offers his life, but he first instructs his wife in the ceremonies that must be followed to honor his death.

Modern folk tales with similar themes grew out of these myths. A young woman, sometimes poor and sometimes a princess, is carried away by a bear/man, a bewitched prince, and she lives with him in a cave where she gives birth to bear children. Eventually, dissatisfied, she escapes. After facing many travails and tests, she reunites with him, he is returned to his manhood, and they live happily ever after. Norwegian folktales like "White King Valemon" and "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," and other variations told throughout Europe emerged, and in the United States "White Bear Whittington" found its way into the American Ozarks. Reading these tales, I now understand what Paul meant when he said about my dream, "that says it all." In that first bear dream there were the leading characters found throughout the world in bear myths and folktales about the woman who marries a bear.

As the bear disappeared from Europe, the theme of the slain bear persisted in Greco-Roman mythology and was passed on in folk tales and fairy stories into modern times. Paul saw the presence of the bear continuing in Christian ceremonies. Communion wherein the flesh and blood of the Lord brings new life, or when his dead body is resurrected, have a bearish quality about them. The emphasis, he conjectured, has changed in modern religions. In celebrations of the slain bear, the bear was honored for bestowing food and spirit in the continuing great cycle of life in a difficult but "gifting" world. In modern religions our planet is seen as a place of tests and travails and the emphasis is on escaping to somewhere else, a garden paradise of eternal happiness away from the Earth's dirt and grime. But the bear persists metaphorically as well as in iconography. Nursing Madonna's are the most familiar art object in galleries. They once had bear heads. And our modern Madonna's as well as the holy family are often associated with caves or grottoes, the hang-outs of bears. The celebration of Candlemas on February 2 and the feast of Saint Blais on February 3 are Christian observations that followed pagan rituals of the coming of light that also honored the bear's emergence from hibernation in southern Europe.

On another cold cloudy day in October, home from the doctor's office, Paul and I stood in the hallway and embraced tearfully. Incredulous as it seemed, he had just been diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer and had only months to live. At the same time that this tragic event put an end to his search for the mythological bear, it brought into focus the dimensions of bear biology that had brought spiritual renewal to our primal ancestors. During the last months of his life, Paul visited a shaman in New Mexico and wrote about that experience:

> Looking to the bear will not restore me to those distant ancestors who preceded by hundreds of millennia all that negotiation and debasement of the spirit, but it may open my heart and mind to

the double gift of the bear as feast and physician. In its role as the killed and renewing deity, whose grease, once tasted is supremely relished over any other 'fat of the land,' and whose wildness reminds me of my wildness, the bear sustains me. The bear gives physical sustenance and spiritual healing. Recently in search of health, I entered a native healer's house. In a fire-lit room, he was ready in traditional regalia, surrounded by a rich array of paraphernalia. The ensuing smoke, teas, chants, dances, and songs washed over my senses. As the hours passed I drifted in the nexus between physical body and spiritual reality… Then I was aware of being embraced by dark, hairy arms… In my ear was an unmistakable snuffling. The twofold gift of the bear was fulfilled.

The bear slumbered in me until I met Paul Shepard. Like the new relationship with him that demanded such commitment, it entered with such force I had to look away in order to keep my footing. And lately, as I've struggled with Paul's last writings on the bear, I also struggle to save myself from extinction. I have to resist putting my whole being into the study. Time is running out for me; I have my own life to live and I must make choices. And good friends have been no help. They keep asking me, actually badgering me, "Flo, where's your next book? You need to do your <u>own</u> writing." Insight to my dilemma came to me recently in another dream.

I was in a rather dilapidated house that seemed to be going back to earth, as most human-made structures are destined to do. It was one huge room and I was trying to bring the place to order which was a great task since in each of the corners were bears in flimsy, cage-like structures. The bears were not happy about being contained in this way. They were roaring, huffing, and gnashing their teeth, striking at the structures and setting up a ferocious clammer. Busy with householding tasks, I worked away in the center of this cacophony, ignoring them as I might a child having a temper tantrum. A man approached me and warned that I had better pay attention to the bears. So I left my work, went the rounds of the bears and lectured each in no uncertain terms to be good, lie down, and stop the noise. They bared their teeth, threatened and feigned attack, but eventually settled down -- except for the last bear who was especially recalcitrant. It resisted my commands, would not be contained, and finally broke out, came charging at me, and caught me tight in a terrific bear hug, growling and snarling all the while. I talked to it gently, but the grip remained firm. Only after I had stopped resisting its hold did it settle into a murmuring repose and release me -- and then I didn't want to leave.

I have to listen to my dreams. Seen through a Freudian lens they represent erotic fantasies or sexual repression. Modern scientific analysis explains them as a matter of brain chemistry, a natural way our bodies have evolved in times of stress to consolidate our thinking and heal our taxed minds and emotions while we are resting in sleep. Jung's collective unconscious offers still another explanation in terms of the universal content of dreams. My dreams were undoubtedly about me and my present state, but, I insist, they were also about bears. That last bear that held me tight was not a bewitched prince or Paul---It was a bear. In our culture, the bear in its phenomenal, biological reality is something, but it also means and stands for something. *Ursus arctos* is a magnificent wild creature, but it is also a primordial sign-image, a "living metaphor" that brings to bear the meaning of life for our culture so preoccupied with death.

Helen Keller said that at the time she was swimming in a dark sea of chaotic emotions with no sense of herself and the world, her dreams brought her hope and introduced possibilities. I resonate with her explanation for in my darkest hours, my bear dreams explain the bear as well as where I am. They help me see possibilities and in that way bring hope, a hope arising not from a human constructed world but from the wildness that still resides in me.

Between my bear dreams and Paul's mythologyzing, is there a middle ground where we and real bears can meet in equanimity? I think not. But rather than stop on that pessimistic note, I ask you to come with me. For a moment let's ride the bear and let it take us to where we need to go, into the high mountains.

On some shady slope, let's dig in, let the snow cover us over, and meditate for a while. When spring awakens us, let's emerge, enlightened ---with a management plan for ourselves that follows all the good advice we've been giving. First of all, let's get out of bear territory and give their habitat back to them. Let's create zones and corridors that buffer and join their habitats so that their genes can mingle and remain viable and wild. And back in our homes, let's follow mandates of simple living to curb our population and our greedy appetites. When we hunt bears, let's kill them fairly and selectively and celebrate their meat with others in great thanksgiving for the full and glorious moments of life and death. And why not return the bones and skins to the wild and place their skulls in trees? This shouldn't be too hard. We've been practicing it for millennia. What do we have to lose? If wilderness continues to be exploited and destroyed, the bear will surely vanish. If the bear goes, wildness will disappear from our earth, from our stories, and from our dreams. A land without bears would be a Disney World, an anywhere and everywhere world. Such a tamed world without bears would be no place at all.

Epilogue: After my sojourn in Montana, meeting with students and teachers, I was tired but filled as if I had been dining on bear meat once more. The news that we would first go to Great Falls before heading south upset me as I boarded the plane ---but then I remembered the Missouri River. Airborne only a short time, glued to the window, I saw the Rocky Mountains level off and the Missouri begin to meander, a golden ribbon glistening in the setting sun. After a short stop we were airborne once more, heading south, as darkness descended. Little clusters of lights flickered on here and there below us in the great expanse of forest and mountains buried deep in snow. Down there somewhere bears in bough-lined dens, slightly aroused yet drowsy, were turning over and going back to sleep. The three worlds lay before me in equisite detail: the upper world, the sky, the breath of life, the medium for spirituality, for birds ---and planes; the middle world, a place where lives are lived and life cycles completed; the underworld, a holding place for denning, for the dark recesses of our psyches, and for rest after death. As we approached Salt Lake City, multi-colored lights glistened through jagged rents in gray clouds that blanketed the basin. Just before we dipped into them for our landing, I spotted *Ursa Major* in the north sky, tracing its interminable course around Polaris, staying our course, turning the world.

Florence R. Shepard

Student Responses to Riding the Bear by Florence Shepard

1)

They said it needed to be dried. I held the slimy end of the cord in one hand, and walked in the opposite direction from the man standing in front of me. I walked until there was resistance from the intestines we were stretching out. They were about the length of half a football field. A green tint lingered around the inside of the bull's stomach. Residue from recently eaten grass. I thought I would be able to smell the stench from the next village over. Covering my mouth and nose with the sleeve of my shirt, I used my other hand to grab another handful of slimy insides. It reminded me of the Halloween haunted houses I would go to in middle school. The older kids would make you put your hand in an unknown wet concoction, while telling you it was the mangled insides of some unknown object.

It was my first slaughter and it bothered me that the head was left intact as we destructed the body. The eyes weren't even closed. I wanted to run my fingers over its eyes to close the lids. It was more of a priority to keep my mouth covered than to close the eyes, and my other hand was full of glop. They asked me to reach for the heart. This was a task that involved two hands and a good amount of pulling and tearing. I was the one who was removing that vital organ. I removed it with force. It was warm and still as it lay in my hands. I was expecting it to throb, to give one last beating convulsion. Some sign of life. But it was just warm. I felt it get cold as the goosebumps traveled up the sides of my arms.

There was a dance revolving around me standing in the middle, holding the body mass. It looked more like a round object than the shape of a Hallmark heart. When the singing faded I followed the women to the cooking hut to help prepare it. It was a relief to be away from the carcass. I was not in the mood to further dismantle the legs or the remaining insides. That was for the men. The women take what is to be found inside, and the men butcher the remains. It was a process of working from the inside out.

Florence Shepard had mentioned that killing was an experience that women didn't need. The feeling of taking a life. Perhaps you do not know the value of life until you have taken away one or brought life to a being. The ceremonies and rituals, whether big or small, have an impact on all other beings. You learn to separate the living from the dead, or perhaps even attach a greater value to the things that are still breathing. For these people it was a normal practice. It was common practice, yet it still involved honoring the life that was taken.

When we bury a human life, we honor it with a funeral. But in American society, it is rare that we honor many of the things that we have killed. We butcher in masses, killing our daily meat in inhumane ways because nobody has the time to set things straight. In this hurry we do not see that the world has limits. We keep pushing our way through, knocking down whatever may come in our way. It is for these reasons I think it is important to hold on to the rituals that still remain. Whether we are killing a cow or a bear, there is always something to be gained from each different experience. In order to renew life, we need to kill life. Maybe the second time around we will let it proceed in its own way, with fewer disturbances.

Nina Kahm

2)

Bear Dreams

I have never dreamed of bears. Without bear dreams, and without a personal sense of deep connection to the bear, I found that Florence Shepard's lecture left me with many questions- struggling as I grappled with my own sense of the role of animals and of nature in human consciousness. While I find the motions of the bear, its mass, and its bulky agility, fascinating, frightening, and beautiful, I find that I lack a sense of some essential "bear connection." I do not consciously identify with the symbolic importance of the cyclical renewal that characterizes its yearly hibernation. But the patterns of the bear's cycle are one of many undulations which, no doubt, do have profound influence in human mythology, language and consciousness: the emerging, growing, and falling of leaves, the migration and return of birds, the waxing and waning of the moon.

The anthropological investigation of Paul and Florence Shepard into the influence of the bear, their revelation of the etymological importance of an animal whose name is the root for over 40 words, is revealing. Such influence communicates a certain metaphorical and symbolic significance. What I wonder, is how much these referents continue to bear the sense of the connections which spawned them, and how much such meaning, such patterning, has been lost, sealed under layers of concrete, locked out by double doors, made invisible by the blinding glow of lights, and silenced by the grinding blare of machinery.

In a world where a sense of connection to the cyclical workings of nature is increasingly obscured, are we becoming alienated from the roots of our language, of our mythologies, or our sense of our mortality? What do we lose when we forget the origins of our languages, when we forget the ways in which the emotions of the bear remind us of something which we then gave its name? While I do not personally experience the figure of the bear, specifically, as having more importance "than any other animal in the Northern Hemisphere," as the "icon and poetry of wilderness," Shepard's personal narrative indicated the animal's central role in her own consciousness. She also offered convincing evidence for the animal as a predominate iconic figure in the minds of others. Arguing for its preservation on account of such symbolic importance is an interesting technique. Perhaps, if the bear had not been physically pushed to small isolated islands and far northern reaches of our planet, it would not be confined to such a narrow location in my mind. If I lived with the bear, I would dream of the bear, I would dream of the bear. I want bear dreams.

Shasta Grenier

February 13th

The Wild and It's New Enemies

Jack Turner

Introduction:
Coming upon Jack Turner's essay "The Abstract Wild" in the early 1990s, before it was a whole book of essays, I remember thinking: I haven't felt this strongly about a piece of nature writing since coming upon the early Gary Snyder in the mid 1960s. Turner's voice was that passionate, that clear and compelling and deep. I didn't need to agree with him. I needed to hear someone wholly committed in language and practice to the body and soul of the wild world. I knew then that I would read what he wrote, teach him to my students, and try to find a way to bring him to Montana. When he got off the plane in Missoula last February he said to me. "I want you to know that I come here as an evangelical, samurai, hit-man for the wild." And indeed he did. He spoke and answered questions for over four hours, and carried on afterwards at the Oxford Café over a very late dinner for another hour or two. The next morning, in a Hawaiian shirt, he engaged the Wilderness Program students for an hour and a half. They questioned him vigorously, especially about comments that expressed a depth of anger over what is happening to wild nature under the impact of post-industrial consumptive appetites. On the way back to the airport he inquired about the possibility of teaching with us in the Wilderness Program the following year. "It was the students," he said. "Their questions were so serious, came from such deep places, they moved me."

Now, months after his presentation here in Missoula, reading parts of *The Abstract Wild*, the book, that I had neglected, I still find his work eliciting from me a Wow! or a Whew! every few pages. What is it? It is that most important of combinations= a powerful mind allied to an intense, honest spirit, that has the courage and foolishness to follow its own experience wherever, and to insist on the integrity of mind/spirit/experience---to honor the outrage it feels at what is happening to wild nature by writing rants that have the quality of mantra. In short, Turner's written work and human being have the cast of authentic intelligence, of that very thing that he values so much in the world, and struggles to preserve, the power of untrammeled presence, the wild.

Bio:
Jack Turner was educated at the University of Colorado (graduated cum laude) and Cornell University, and taught philosophy at the University of Illinois. He was a Woodrow Wilson National Fellow and has served on the Rhodes Scholarship Committee for the State of Wyoming. He has lead over 45 treks and expeditions to Pakistan, India, China, Tibet, Nepal, and Peru. He has climbed in the Teton Range for forty years and worked for the Exum Guide Service for twenty-five years. His book of radical environmental essays *The Abstract Wild*, was published by the University of Arizona Press in 1996. His memoir of the Tetons entitled *Teewinot: A Year In The Teton Range*, was published in June, 2000 by St. Martin's Press. He is working on another book for St. Martin's-*Travels In The Greater Yellowstone*, another collection of essays, and a trio of novels set in Jackson Hole.

Speaker's suggested Readings:

Fragile Dominion, Simon Levin
The Natural and the Artefactual, Keekok Lee
The Hidden Forest, Jon R. Luoma
The Runaway World, Anthony Giddens
"Why the Future Doesn't Need Us," Bill Joy, Wired Magazine, April, 2000.
Wild Duck Review, Winter, 2000.

The Wild and It's New Enemies[1]
Jack Turner

Turner: Because I'm here I'll read something from the Alliance for the Wild Rockies—one of my favorite organizations. Join them. Give them money. This is from their website: "Our wild land realm will be safe only when conservationists succeed in capturing America's heart and soul. By convincing its citizens that wild nature is intrinsically good, and wondrous, and vital to the well being of native wildlife and us humans too." I believe that's true. How are we to do that? I think the answer, roughly speaking, lies in the realm of art.

I have maintained for a long time that Abbey's The Monkey Wrench gang did more for the environmental movement than all the spikes that someone (certainly not me!) drove into trees, all the wire cutting, etc. Abbey's book was more important. So, those of you who are studying all of that hard environmental stuff and are trying to learn to express yourself, well, the battle depends on you. If you can't convert the citizens of this country to the love wild nature then, in the long term, we will lose. People don't come to love things through arguments and statistics; they come to love because of contact and art.

I had the good fortune to go down Glen Canyon before it was dammed, or, rather, damned. I went there because of Eliot Porter's book, The Place That No One Knew; not the book, really, but the incredible photographs. I am asked by people to go kayaking on Lake Foul, but I don't go, primarily because of the ugliness of it all but also because I think it is an inappropriate reaction to an atrocity, like picnicking at Auschwitz. I have a cold, hard fist of hatred in me for the people who built that dam, and it will not go away. I hope we prove wise enough to remove it. I think it is important to resist its presence. What is resistance? I remind you that in Emerson's eulogy for Thoreau he said that Henry made Concord known and loved to all reading people. And that is a thing to which I hope you will aspire, whether with writing, poetry, painting, or photography: to make what remains of the American West known and loved. As a final note, I will suggest to you read Thoreau's great essay on resistance. It is usually entitled "On Civil Disobedience." But that's not the title. If you look in the Princeton edition of Thoreau's complete writings, you will discover that Thoreau entitled it "Against Civil Government." That's a little bit different isn't it?

Also note that Henry wrote two essays supporting the abolitionist John Brown's attack—armed attack—against the U.S. Government at Harper's Ferry. Thoreau was more radical in the area of environmentalism than anyone after him. He makes most Earth Firsters and people like me look pathetic. He wrote, lectured, resisted. I leave you with that final word: Resist. As they say: Resist much, obey little. Thank you very much.

I'm yours. Questions?

(Audience)

Turner: The question is: Why should we prefer the wild to artifice?
As someone who spent his last vacation in Paris visiting museums, who is a part-time painter, and who tries to write novellas and short stories, I don't want you to go away thinking that I am opposed to artifice. The makings of human beings are often delightful and wonderful. It's just a matter of over-extension.

It's OK with me if people want to render themselves cyborgs, but to interfere with other species always seems to me at best unfortunate, at worst pernicious. Unfortunately, the question of wild vs. artificial is like the abortion argument. If somebody loves artifice and doesn't like wild things, they just

[1] Jack Turner elected to include primarily the Question and Answer section from his presentation in the *Proceedings*.

don't like wild things and there is not much you can do to change their mind, especially since, increasingly, many people have no contact with wild nature.
I have urban kids in my climbing classes who fear all bugs. All bugs. A grasshopper lands on them, they freak out, they have a hissyfit. They don't make distinctions between grasshoppers and black widows. They ask questions such as, "What do we do if it rains?' I say, 'You know, two billion peasants work in the rain, you can walk in the rain." They don't like being outside in the rain. Nor do they want to be away from their music, TV, movies, their email. They abhor solitude. They are, as we say, born digital. You can't convince them that the wild is better. The best you can hope for is to get them to accept that there is plenty of room for both on the planet.

(Audience)

Turner: The question is: What do I say to scientists; they are obviously very much involved in the creation of transgenic beings.

I don't have anything against science. I read Scientific American. I read Natural History. I own binoculars. Modern science is miraculous. And we are not going to do away with nanotechnology or genetic engineering.

But you have to say to them, "Look, I think what you're doing is great. I'd just as soon have a smart drug than a dumb drug. I've spent a lot of time in Asia, so I've spent a lot of time on drugs. Cipro, I love Cipro. You spend months in the Himalayas and you come to love Cipro. But lets hold onto limits." Unfortunately, scientists don't like limits; but then, nobody does.

There should also be limits on what we can do with animals. I read today that monkeys can't learn to swim. Well, one way of testing that is to get some monkeys and throw them in the water and watch them drown. I don't think we should do things like that.

There are all kinds of limits, and with any new technology, we need to establish where those limits are; it's something we do, a task. Certainly, risk assessment has something to do with it, but who are we to evaluate risks when even the so-called experts disagree? I just seems reasonable to me to be cautious and modest, and that's what I like to find in a scientist: someone who loves their work, indeed is fanatical about it, and also accepts that they have obligations, not only to other people, but to other species and the earth and are willing to accept limits. And there are scientists like this.

I can't tell you where those limits should be. I hope you agree that there should be limits, and then you can immerse yourselves in a discussion about what those limits should be.

I hope I haven't said anything tonight that says no genetic engineering, no nanotechnology. But I certainly don't want nerds releasing all those little machines and eating up kudzu and growing transgenic pine trees, because our pine trees are fine just as they are. Let's bring back our own forests. Why construct them artificially?

To take another example, some say we need genetically engineered Atlantic salmon to feed the world. I reply, "Well we have a way of feeding the world: remove the dams on the salmon rivers. The salmon will return and we will have massive, successful fisheries. We know from historical studies that we couldn't even eat all the fish." Why not let nature run itself rather than increasing artifice with all its unintended, unknown, and often irreversible consequences?

We have lots of choices and options. In conclusion, I must admit I am not a Luddite. I have a hot little Dell Experion 8000 computer with lots of RAM. I'm no Luddite.

(Audience)

Turner: The question is: Do I draw a line somewhere, about where violence is appropriate or not?
Of course. I have been accused of being a fairly violent guy. As I was telling Roger this afternoon, one of the glorious experiences of my life was breaking through a line of US Marshals and National Guardsmen at the Pentagon in 1968 with Cornell's SDS and charging up the ramps at the North end of the Pentagon

and fighting hand to hand with US Marshals while they fired tear gas at us. That gives you some idea where I stand on that subject.

There is indeed a line, but I can't tell you where the line is. And I won't. I think violence is very personal, even intimate. Both my Zen teachers are pacifists, I'm not. I've had arguments with them on this subject, but I still believe that one has a right to express what you believe in—whatever it is—to defend it, yourself, and your loved ones. And if necessary to fight for what you believe in. I'll give that even to skinheads. I also think one has the obligation to accept the consequences of violence and not complain. I think violence should be rare, I also think at times it's perfectly appropriate. I have acted on that all my life. I hope you will find your own line and do the same.

(Audience)

Turner: The question is: How can we build into the process of accepting new technologies a little more critical discernment? Two things. First, a story.

Seventeen years ago I computerized the Spence, Moriarty & Schuster law firm in Jackson. It was the first law firm in Wyoming to be computerized. I was a big expense for them. When I finished, this is about 1986-7, I had a meeting with the partners. I told them there was a new technology coming down the line, a so-called fax machine. "You ought to get a fax machine in addition to the computers," I said, "because lawyers generate a lot of paper and your secretaries are always going to the post office, and…." They stopped me short. "Turner," they said, "we spent a half million dollars on computers and we're not gonna buy a damn fax machine." Well, you know the rest of the story.

Some think we can slow technology down. I don't. The best we can do is redirect it and limit it. If you want to call that discernment, fine.

Ten years ago, nanotechnology was close to science fiction. Now the government is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on it. You can't stop that. What we can try to do is limit it in certain areas, and redirect it in others. But, as I said, you're not going to stop nanotechnology. You're not going to stop genetic engineering.

And second, most people don't want to. So are you going to force them, coerce them into your idea of utopia? The trouble with liberty is that it's a double-edged sword.

One of the most distressing things for me when I worked in the Himalayas twenty five years ago—with people around K2 whose per capita income was $73 a year—was what people do when they get some money and have access to modernity and its gadgets.
Instead of the usual porter wages of thirty cents a day, I paid them six dollars a day. I thought I was a good guy.

I helped destroy their economy. That six dollars a day meant they made 180 or 200 bucks a month. Guess what they concluded? Why should I take care of my goats and my sheep, and so on and so forth? I'll work for a mountaineering/trekking organization.

What did they do with their $200? First thing they bought, the first thing, was a boom box to play Indian music. Here are these men dressed in homespun woolens, and the first thing they buy are boom boxes. Next? Kerosene lanterns and stoves. Since kerosene is expensive, they would soon be dependent on wages. And so on. In my experience, people who are exposed to technologies adopt them. To ask them to abstain is hypocritical. As they would ask: "Do you have a boom box?" "Well, not exactly a boom box, but…"

I used to take boxes of Marlboros to the Hindu Kush for bribes. I've seen grown men fight over the empty box. They could fill it with Pakistani or Afghan cigarettes. Why? Because it symbolized the West, technology, the Marlboro Man, power.

So it's not just us. The only reason traditional peoples didn't screw-up the environment is that they didn't have the means. Jared Diamond draws similar conclusions from his anthropological work in New Guinea: as soon as people have access to tools that allow them to do something more, they do it. You may find isolated human beings who won't, but by and large we take advantage of advantage. You

can limit it, you can restrict it, you can refine it, but the idea that you're simply going to stop technology is a lost cause, and I think that a devotion to lost causes is a waste of life.

Furthermore, you won't stop technology in this culture because it is driven by corporations and big money. Consider the now famous article in Wired Magazine by Bill Joy, who's the chief scientist at some place like Oracle. And he expressed, in Wired Magazine, many reservations about nanotechnology and genetic engineering and how the two are synergistic in a scary way.

There was a blizzard of responses. You can't have someone at one of these paragons of modern technology, Oracle, raising questions about technology. Hence the blizzard of dialog and articles, back and forth, against Joy's worries, his attempts at what you want to call critical discernment, against the precautionary principle that we ought to be cautious and modest. That was referred to by his persecutors as a neo-Luddite view. Not much room for discernment there. Joy is a very bright and highly respected scientist. He didn't think we could do away with genetic engineering and nanotechnology; he merely suggested we needed to look very, very carefully at what we're doing and the consequences of it. No way. *Atlantic Monthly* published a commentary on Joy's article in which someone said, basically: "The only way you're going stop genetic technology, genetic engineering and nanotechnology, is to stop capitalism." Nice idea, but another lost cause.

Furthermore, genetic engineering is easy and cheap. Unlike nuclear engineering, or nuclear weapons, or nuclear power, all of which cost a lot of money, the material's difficult to get, is dangerous, etc. in comparison to this, genetic engineering is nothing. High school kids are doing it. A graduate student in molecular biology can create transgenic germs, toads, whatever.

Then too, we adapt all too rapidly to the outrageous, especially if it benefits us. This past week there was a long article about human cloning in the New York Times. Only several years ago we thought it would be a hundred years before we could clone humans; now it's one to five years away. Initially people were horrified, now people aren't so horrified. We've cloned cows and monkeys. Soon we will clone our pets. Soon someone will appear on television with their cloned dog. They will scratch its head; it will wag its tail. What's the problem? All this conditions us for the acceptance of a new technology, and eventually it will seen less than horrible. We adapt readily.

The articles report that lesbian couples, childless couples, people that lost a child and preserved the embryo or froze the embryo or have frozen genetic material, they want a child. Various religious groups see cloning as a form of reincarnation, they have money and are funding research. If it becomes illegal here, they will do it in Switzerland.

For a long time we have destroyed the natural, now we are replacing the natural with biological artifacts—trees, fish, or people. And some, many, people are delighted. It's not a matter of discernment, its wholehearted acceptance.

(Audience)

Turner: The question is: People are planning to capture grizzlies, radio collar them, put them in nets, and fly them down from Canada and put them in the Bitterroot mountains of Idaho. Will that diminish the wildness of an area?

Yes it will. As Thoreau says, "Whatever has not come under the sway of man is wild." Capture, radio collars, flying…sounds like "sway" to me.

I went through this on wolves. I supported getting wolves back to Yellowstone. Then at the last moment there were a bunch of political shenanigans and the powers that be decided to introduce the wolves as an experimental population. They radio collared them and brought them down from Canada. The wolves were in cages, tiny cages. The press, and Mr. Babbitt, and all the environmentalists were preening each other and patting themselves on their shoulders, smiling for the cameras and the television crews. And the wolves were biting the cage bars, hysterical, betrayed by those that allegedly loved them. I found it utterly abhorrent.

I don't care whether it's wolves or grizzlies, I simply think it's not the right way to treat wild creatures. On the other hand, I'm not saying there's no instance where we should use a radio collar.

There might be cases. I don't know, but I'm willing to be open-minded about it. But radio collars are now part of the institution of wildlife biology; it's what you're taught to do in graduate school, it's what you do if you're a wildlife biologist, it's your job. You radio collar everything form birds and frogs and lizards to moose and wolves and grizzlies. You create data. It is now the norm. Science normalizes and scientists conform.

I think as a general practice collaring should be severely limited. I'm for old style naturalists. People say, "Well we don't know what the sheep are doing up in Granite Canyon." I say, "Gee, why don't you read Leopold or Murie and figure out how they found out what sheep were doing," i.e., get a pair of binoculars and walk up Grant canyon and look at them. Stunning idea.

So, I'm very much opposed to the kind of reintroduction you describe and I hope you fight it. I'd like to have lots of grizzlies, but not that way.

A bigger problem is that most people in Idaho don't want grizzlies in their state. They will fight it and you need, again, to resist. Be careful. The Wyoming director of the Nature Conservancy was run out of the state about fifteen years ago after his life was threatened many times.

I wrote an editorial against Louisiana-Pacific logging old growth whitebark pine that supported, with lots of numbers, the closing of their mill in Dubois. I got death threats.
About the same time, a wolf reintroduction supporter was invited to town of Dubois to lecture on wolves and wolf reintroduction. When she agreed to go, her life was threatened. The idea was to intimidate people in the environmental community, intimidate them to the point where they simply wouldn't give a talk, or would leave the state.

My reaction was to put my semi-automatic in a briefcase, put my Remington model 870 shotgun with an eighteen inch barrel in the car, and go to Dubois with my friend. She gave her lecture.
The audience was divided. All the conservationists sat on one side of the room, and all the these big men, mean as hogs, sat in their overalls on the other side—you know, Wendell Berry's heroes, farmers, ranchers. I sat right in the middle of them.

I'm obnoxious in general. When I'm armed, I'm really obnoxious. After the lecture there was a time for questions, but the men on my side didn't ask questions—they weren't interested in answers, facts, or information. They'd raise their hand and say, "My grandfather killed all the Indians and the wolves and the grizzlies in this valley and ain't no young woman from back East gonna come here and tell me what to do." I'd smile and shake my head. Or, "You know in Wisconsin, they don't got no more deer. The wolves ate all the deer in Wisconsin." And I'd say, "Man, you're an idiot." We drove home with our eyes on the rearview mirror.

OK? That's what I think you ought to do about getting and keeping grizzlies in Idaho. Resist. And if you have to arm yourself for protection, do it. Don't let them shut you up. And get a concealed-carry permit while you're at it so you are perfectly legal.

(Audience)

Turner: The question is: Where do we trace—perhaps I can put it this way—the aesthetic roots of the conservation movement?

We find it in the Romantics, the poets and painters, especially the British painter, Turner. I think this is a very much-underestimated aspect of the history of the conservation movement, the matter of art and preservation. As an example, take the watercolors Thomas Moran made of Yellowstone as a member of the 1871 Hayden Expedition. They were shown in Congress and played and important part in the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. Moran had gone to England early in his career and copied Turner, had studied him assiduously. And so you do have a connection between the establishment of our parks and Turner's painting.

Now Turner, in turn, was much influenced by the idea of the sublime. You can push that idea further back into German Romantic philosophy, especially Kant, Schiller, and Goethe, at which point aesthetics intersects with other intellectual issues. Ultimately, the idea of the sublime goes back to the Greeks. German Romanticism was the intellectual basis of Transcendentalism, the philosophical beliefs

of Thoreau and Emerson, and hence, for the foundation of the modern conservation movement. If you want a source, I would pick the moment in Kant's Third Critique when he clearly distinguishes between a machine and an organism. Much of the intellectual debate since then can be seen as a difference of belief between those who see the world as a machine and those who see it as an organism and who value things accordingly. It leads, for instance, to two very different conceptions of biology, one steeped in the study of genetics and DNA, the other emphasizing form, complexity, and interdependence. The best presentation of the latter is probably Brian Goodwin's How the Leopard Changed Its Spots.

Finally, part of the aesthetics of our movement can be traced to the influx of ideas from the Asia. Both Thoreau and Emerson were smitten with Asian philosophy and its worship of nature. At roughly the same time, the first Buddhists and Hindus came to America, and the first connoisseurs' collections of Asian art. But that's a very complex subject. The point is: There are aesthetic and intellectual roots to conservation and we will better express and defend our beliefs and values if we master this literature.

(Audience)

Turner: The question is: I've admitted in the past my lack of compassion for ranchers and loggers and people with fifteen kids. And here I am a Buddhist and Buddhists are devoted to compassion, right? So, what am I doing? And what do I have to say about sitting down at the table with these folks and talking. I think that one should bargain from a position of power and strength. I'm willing to sit down at the table as long as I'm fairly powerful there. If I don't have much power, then I'm not really interested in sitting at the table.

But, to try to be more honest: In my Zen group people can't agree about what kind of tea to have in the morning. Even that requires discussion, consensus, mediation. I have many friends who are devoted to these process. I am not. I don't believe anything deep, of substance, can be decided by talk. I realize this is not a popular view. Its means I'm not a liberal, because liberals believe you can talk almost anything through. We live in a therapeutic, talky-talky society. Our democratic institutions are based on the idea that if we all get together and have what Richard Rorty calls a conversation… well, that's the best we can do.

But it is also clear that there are issues, like abortion and nationhood in the mid-East, that can't be talked through. I think the preservation of the natural world is like abortion and nationhood. But I may be wrong; I'm not talented in such matters.

People who do believe in talk tell me that what you have to do is you have to find people on both sides who share something, who want something better. You start with them as a nucleus and build from that. Eventually you get a number of people who, although they may disagree quite radically, also share something.

Now, I have some cowboy friends, and I lived on a ranch down on the Mexican border for five winters. One of my friends, Drum Hadley, ranches there. Drum is a great defender of ranching and grass banks in addition to being a keen environmentalist. And he's a really good human being. He's also an old hippie who went down there because of Gary Snyder's ideas in The Real Work.

Drum can sit down and talk with ranchers. He spent a lot of time with Mexican ranchers and cowboys, loves border culture and is fluent in Spanish. He can work on problems that I would think, in my narrow, laser-like manner, wouldn't have a chance of being worked out. And Drum succeeds. I wouldn't. I just don't have the right experience or values; and since compassion requires identification and sympathy, I just don't feel any. Sorry, my failure.

I once wrote, commenting on Daniel Kemmis's book Community and the Politics of Place, that what community amounts to is shared values. That if you have a place where people share values, then you can have something like a community and you can have Quaker-style town meetings and decide things.

At a certain time in the history of the West people did share a large number of values. But now, if you want to look at, for instance, where I live, Jackson Hole, you find the value structure of a third world nation. Teton County is the richest county in the United States, which means, probably, in the world. The

average price of a house is $1,250,000. We have the president of the World Bank, Vice-president Cheney, movie stars… Amazing place.

And on the other hand you have Guatemalans living under plastic tarps in the trees up in the side canyons. You have a large number of these working class people just making do, lots of people who are wealthy and live in the valley half-time (if that much), and in between you have thousands of jocks, dirt-bag climbers and skiers, and an infrastructure of professionals and service providers. Can they talk things out? No. Our local newspapers are histories of the never-ending debate between development and preservation, between jobs and nature. Development continues to win, and will, in the end, win. That's what I think happens to issues of substance: somebody wins.

I don't go to meetings or join groups because I get angry. I blow up. I want to hit people. My mate says, "You're 59-years old and I have to worry about you getting into fistfights. That is ridiculous." I agree, it is ridiculous. Other people can work with mediation and consensus, and they do it well. Drum Hadley is somebody who's done it well. He's helped save, and is in the process of saving, nearly a hundred miles of the Mexican border ecosystem. I have the utmost respect for such people. It's just that I'm not any good at it. "Know your own bone," Thoreau says, "gnaw at it, bury, unearth it, and gnaw it still." For better or for worse I am a bit of a hermit, an intellectual, and a writer. My capacity for compassion is limited. So I don't do meetings.

Jack Turner

Student Responses to The Wild and Its New Enemies by Jack Turner

1)

Artifacts of Loss

When I was in high school, my parents tired of suburban life and bought a second house in northern Michigan. Every Friday we piled into the mini van and joined the steady stream of SUVs heading north.

I watched my parents' weekend behavior blossom into obsession. My father spent hours in the garage, building a cover for a well that didn't exist. The strange structure, with its empty, dangling bucket, still sits on the front lawn. My mother went to craft shows that sold things designed to decorate empty spaces. She filled the house with fish themed objects: a fishing pole coat rack, a fly fishing moose cookie jar, a rainbow trout phone.

The décor is perfectly acceptable for a cottage in the north wood. It's just a bizarre theme for our house. Even though we have a carefully assembled library of fishing guides, I've never seen any member of my family actually go fishing. My mother won't even swim in the lake because of the fish. I asked her about this contradiction, and she looked at me like I was crazy not to know the difference. The fish on the wall are cute. The fish in the lake are disgusting, slimy creatures that brush past your leg when you least expect it.

My childhood contained adults grappling to find the natural world with only a vague idea of what it actually looked like. They chose symbolic representations of nature and plastered them over their lives. In the suburbs, all of the mothers I knew, including my own, liked teddy bears and geese—strange pink and blue ones that wore vests and held umbrellas. In the North, their favorite symbols were ceramic, smiling black bears, wooden ducks and paper mache trout.

On Sunday night we'd return to the suburbs in a frenzied panic, lurching our way south with the rest of the weekend refugees. Then the stress of everyday life would consume my parents until the next Friday, when we headed up North once again. The suburbs, once the bright hope of well-balanced futures, are now something to be endured until the weekend.

The residents of suburbia are lost, wandering between a world they knew and the world that remains. They can't afford to leave because they have already found the American Dream. So they buy a cottage, a cabin, a lake house, and recreate the natural world with artifacts.

We say that we've lost trees and open spaces, but what we mean is that we have lost a connection to each other and our landscapes. I see our desperate need to reestablish this connection in every piece of shiny rainbow trout paraphernalia. I see it in the growing popularity of iron-gated communities and our fear of the inner cities.

We've come so far that no one is sure of how to get back. So each of us does our best to recreate something that we have lost, moving further and further away from the actual loss. If we continue to surround ourselves with manufactured artifacts while ignoring the natural world, then artifacts will be all that we have. Each of us will be left with a magnificent well built for water that will never come.

Meagan Boltwood

2)

Drinking Thomas

Thomas fell into the glacier on July 24, 1999.
He fell into the glacier and they put fiber-optics cable
into that glacier
looking for his body.
His dad was a sergeant in the Army, they tell me that is why
he has them feed the cable through

into the ice below—
in went nine-teen hundred feet of wire with
        a light
        and a camera
        on the end.
NINE-TEEN HUNDRED FEET! but no body.

Again I am on that glacier and I wonder
what would a sergeant do
with a son's body
        besides put it into a box and
        in the dirt and
        under a stone with
                words and
                        how much weight does that carry?

The sergeant was mad, I was there, he screamed
and wondered why his son slid away
into that glacier and
now he is left
without even
        a body
it has to be somewhere.

I wasn't there
when Thomas slid into the glacier
but I know exactly where
        he is.

Again I am on that glacier and I know where Thomas is
        that is enough for me.
I still drink the water from this ice
        I know that I may be
                drinking Thomas
but this
is how it should be.
I look around
        my body
this morning on the island of
glacial moraine
surrounded by waves of ice.
        Just rocks on the ice.
This morning brought sun and from my spot
that I slept
the sun points out
the milky white of bones near my face.
I slide my fingers towards
the milky white
shining
and touch the bones of the mouse
I morphed the bones into a mouse-like shape,

praying
for it and for Thomas
who is somewhere
underneath me
and the mouse
and now
part of this ice.

Again I am the moraine
just rocks on the ice
next to the bones of a mouse
just bones on the ice
I am feeling a small part of the whole.
I wish the sergeant was here because
I am
hearing Thomas
this morning.

The sergeant is from somewhere like New Hampshire
this was his first time to Alaska
to that glacier
He said he hates it
and won't come back
It is my home
and I said
I hope I'm as lucky as Thomas when
it is my time
to go
He didn't understand what I meant.
I wish I could offer him a
drink
from the water
of that glacier
and that would be
enough.

Rachel James

February 20th

Film: THE PLACE OF THE FALLING WATERS

Roy Big Crane and Thompson Smith

Introduction:
We live, work, and study on Indian land, usually without realizing it. The Hellgate Treaty of 1855 took place just a few miles west of Missoula. Isaac Stevens, Govenor of Washington Territory, and who did the treaty-making, had clear orders from Washington, D. C. to extinguish tribal sovereignty, to make the Indian Confederacy here surrender some 23, 000 square miles of territory in Montana and Idaho for a reservation of 2,000 square miles. There were many Indian complaints about the Treaty, most notably about Article 11 which the Salish believed guaranteed them their right to their homeland, the Bitterroot Valley. The unpublished letters of a Jesuit missionary who was present at the Treaty, Father Hoecken, reveal the basis for the frustration of the Indians: "'Not a 10th of the council was actually understood by either party,' due largely to incompetent interpreters. Not only were the words incompetently translated from Salish to English and from English to Salish, but the Salish mentality was completely missed." *

We do not know the original name of anything here, not the name of this river, of these hills, these cottonwoods or bulltrout or chokecherries or dragonflies or stars. We cannot know where we are or how to best conduct ourselves in this place when everything and every place has a European name or a settler's story associated with it. There are seven reservations and ten tribes in Montana, but we need to get particular to being right here along these rivers and in these valleys. It is more than a question of elemental justice in recognizing that we had taken the land from people who had lived on/with it for tens of thousands of years. It is a question of whether or not our tenure on the land ever will be in direct response to it, to its rich life and spirit. Will the culture emanating out of Europe ever actually reach so-called North America, or will we continue not to recognize and understand where we are? What better guides to discovery of where we actually are, of what actually is here, and of how to behave appropriately here with all these other beings, than the Native people, so different from the Corps of Discovery being so widely acclaimed today? There is something maddening about the assumption that we know best how to live here, as if material wealth and military power make other considerations moot. The Flathead Culture Committee is involved in a place-name project, that will eventuate in the publication of a volume with maps that will give the old name and stories to this place called Western Montana.

Tompson Smith and Roy Big Crane have collaborated on a film about the building of Kerr Dam in the 1930s on the Flathead River. It is a powerful film, with extensive interviews with elders from the Salish, the Kootenai, and the Pend D'Oreilles tribes, often speaking in their native languages, with English subtitles. The voices of the indigenous people right here are given full hearing. I remember the feeling I had the first time viewing the film: I felt as if I were being literally bathed by the tones of those old voices from this very place. Tom and Roy were willing to talk frankly about the history and consequences of the dam from the point of view of the tribes, and answer any questions that they could. I also wanted to present an example of successful collaboration between equals from the Indian and White worlds, the possibility of that. Perhaps the most telling statement in the whole film that evening was the one where the head of Montana Power Company in his speech at the ceremony opening the dam said how the water which has flowed "uselessly" here for thousands of years had now been harnessed for good use: that assumption that the utilitarian value of anything is the most important one.

* Quote from *In The Name Of The Salish and Kootenai Nation*, ed., Robert Bigart and Clarence Woodcock. Pp. 122-23.

Bios:
Roy Bigcrane was born in St. Ignatius, Montana on the Flathead Indian Reservation to John Bigcrane and Alice Hawk. He is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Roy has five brothers and two sisters. His grandparents were Frank and Susette Cocowee Bigcrane and James and Eva Michel Hawk. Upon receiving his GED in 1975 at the Dixon Alternative School which is now the Two Eagle River School, he went on to school at Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, Kansas, and Southwestern Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

After going to these schools he came back to the Flathead Reservation and started school again, this time at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana. After going to school there a couple of years learning about videography, work finally came into the picture and he was hired full-time in 1988 at the SKC/Media Public TV Center. It was through this work that he came into contact with the elderly people on the Reservation. They were generous with their knowledge about the history of their lives, and about the reservation and the cultural knowledge that they learned and were willing to share. Some of the people were his relatives that he didn't know about or were people who knew his grandparents and so on. Currently he is employed at the Salish Kootenai College Media/Public TV center and has one son and one daughter who live part time with him in Dixon, Montana.

Thompson Smith has worked on the Flathead Reservation since 1983, first at Salish Kootenai College, where he worked on "The Place of the Falling Waters" with Roy Bigcrane. Since 1991, he has worked for the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee on tribal history and ethnogeography projects, including a forthcoming four-volume history of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille people consisting largely of direct excepts from oral histories told by elders. He earned his B.A., M.A., and M.Phil. at Yale's American Studies Program, where he is a Ph.D. candidate, and has written numerous articles on tribal and environmental history, including the history of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille in Volume 12 of the Smithsonian's Handbook of North American Indians (Tom notes that the entry was badly edited by the Handbook!).

Tom also served as Executive Director of the Flathead Resource Organization, a local environmental group, from 1998 to 2001. He is a 2001 fellow in the national Environmental Leadership Program. He lives in Charlo with his wife, Karin Stallard.

Speakers' suggested readings:

Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest, Francis Jennings
Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonialists, & the Ecology of New England, William Cronan

The Place of the Falling Waters
Roy Bigcrane and Thompson Smith

The Place of the Falling Waters
(We selected only the first seven pages of the transcription of the three-part film to give readers a small taste of what the audience saw.)

English Script

Introductory Sequence

Includes Narration, Interviews, and Subtitles.
[Please note: **Narration is in bold face**; most interview clips are in normal typescript; *interviews clips which are translated into English from Salish or Kootenai are in italics*; some interviews alternate between English and *Salish or Kootenai*.]

Interview: Dolly Linsebigler:

"We treasured our mountains, the water, the animals, the birds, everything. That's what our life is as Indian people."

Narration:

"When the United States government first created the Flathead Indian Reservation in 1855, the mountains and valleys of what is now western Montana remained an Indian world, where people lived by Indian ways.

"These sacred falls on the Flathead River were known by the Kootenai word *Kwataq'nuk*, and by the Salish word *St'ipemetqw*. This was the Place of the Falling Waters."

Interview: Joe Eneas:

"Well, of course it was good, but we didn't know it was that good. [Laughs] That's ---that's ---things are good, but you don't realize."

Narration:

"But eighty years of assaults on the sovereignty of the people led to the construction of this massive dam by the Montana Power Company.

"Now the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are preparing to take over Kerr Dam for the first time. But the question remains: Is this dam inherently destructive of the traditional native cultures? Or can the tribes use it to help regenerate the way of life it helped destroy?"

English Script for
"Part One ---Before the Dam"

Narration:

"Since the time when Coyote made the world safe for human beings, Indian people have inhabited the mountains and valleys of what is now western Montana.

"It is a land generously blessed by the Creator.

"The Kootenai, the Pend d'Oreille, and the Salish or Flathead -- -- each of these three tribes had its own homeland and its own distinctive culture, and for many thousands of years, the people lived well by their traditional ways."

Interview: Ron Therriault:

[subtitle reads "Ron Therriault / Salish Kootenai College"]

"The people of the tribes used approximately twenty-two million acres of western Montana, and in that twenty-two million acres, the Salish, and the Kootenai, and the Kalispel or Pend d'Oreille, they travelled a life cycle. And that life cycle allowed them to live freely."

Narration:

"The natural world was more than a collection of `resources' to be used. Everything of this earth was alive with spiritual power, and the people lived upon the land with careful respect."

"But beginning in the 1850's, non-Indian people would impose a very different way of life upon this region. During a brief ninety-year span of time, this tribal world of hunters and gatherers would be displaced by an industrial market economy —a transformation that would ultimately lead to the construction of Kerr Dam on the lower Flathead River. In many ways, the story of this dam is the story of conflict and exchange between deeply opposing ways of life."

"Kerr Dam stands as the product of an eighty year invasion of the Flathead Reservation —an invasion whose origins may be traced to the Treaty of Hellgate in 1855. U.S. officials, led by Governor Isaac Stevens of Washington Territory, were seeking to confine Indian people throughout the region to reservations, and to take the rest of the land for white settlement."

Interview: Ron Therriault

[subtitle reads "Ron Therriault / Salish Kootenai College]

"But when you take the treaty and consider the Reservation —it's one million, two hundred and forty-some thousand acres, and you pull the people back into that kind of acreage, there's no way you could live in the old life-style."

Narration:

"The tribal leaders ceded 22 million acres of what became western Montana to the United States; in return, the U.S. promised the Indians peace, sovereignty, and the perpetual right to live by their traditional ways.

"But the chiefs also *reserved from cession* some of the tribal lands, including what is now called the Flathead Indian Reservation. Still, this was a small piece of the tribal landbase; The Treaty of Hellgate of 1855 can be seen as the first step on the road to Kerr Dam."

"For many years after the treaty, however, many of the Indian people continued to inhabit the ancestral lands outside the reservation. For much of the nineteenth century, we were able to live largely by our traditional ways —moving with the cycles of nature, and taking a varied and rich sustenance from the land."

Interview: Tony Mathias:

[subtitle reads "Tony Mathias / Kootenai Elder"]

"I could remember them things. A lot of these old people, like these women folks, rather —they'd go out, and in the summertime they'd get chokecherries, and service berries, like, bitterroot in the springtime, and, also, uh, camas. That's all we used to live on."

Narration:

"Bitterroot, camas, an abundance of game and water fowl, rivers and streams teeming with fish — the people remained in harmony with this great abundance because we lived together as tribes: we shared much and owned but little as individuals, and so never exhausted the natural world around us."

Interview: Agnes Vanderburg:

[subtitle reads "Agnes Vanderburg / Salish Elder"]

"Well, my Dad used to take nine families. They have their own tepees, their horses. Each tepee had a bunch —big family. Nine tepees....So when they get meat, they pass it to every tepee, until everybody gets enough for the winter."

Interview: Tony Mathias:

"Here it's the same way, down there a long time ago. When you go huntin', and get one, you feed people, you know. That's how come the people used to get something to eat every day. Never get hungry, because they help one another."

Interview: Larry Parker:

[subtitle reads "Larry Parker / Salish/Nez Perce Elder"]

"That's why, in the old days, we did have, uh, an awful lot of fishes in the, in any kind of a fresh body of water, and the prairies and the woods and everywhere was full of game birds, and wild game animals. That was because we conserved them.....because we were trying to save them for the future."

Narration:

"These elders grew up in a world that was far from the wage labor and industrialism that would be brought to the Flathead Reservation by Kerr Dam during the 1930's. Their lives were shaped by their tribal connection to one another and by a powerful spiritual connection to the land. In the traditional value system of the people, nothing was more taboo than waste or disrespect."

Interview: Louise McDonald:

[subtitle reads "Louise McDonald / Salish Elder"]

"The people don't waste the meat, them days. They clean the hide, they scrape the hide from the inside the meat. They dry that, they fix it ---even the head."

Interview: John Peter Paul:

[subtitle reads "John Peter Paul / Pend d'Oreille Elder"]

"Even the bones ---when they really come back, the women pound that....cook it. That's where they get this tallow, what they call it. They never waste anything, those days."

Interview: Louise McDonald:

"All the people really take care of their deer.... ....they take care of the bones good, tie it up and hang it up, whatever they not going to use. That's what they do. That's what I know."

Narration:

"The cultural and spiritual world the elders speak of has survived into the present day in spite of a Jesuit missionary effort that began in the Bitterroot Valley in 1841."

Interview: John Peter Paul:

"You know, before ---before the priests they call `Black Robes,'....they pray to the sun or things like that. That's all they lived by, long time ago."

Interview: Ignatius Dumbeck:

[subtitle reads "Rev. Ignatius Dumbeck, S.J."]

"I mean our effort was to in---was to instruct them in our faith. And so the Indian faith was very secondary in....it didn't really....I mean we didn't make much effort to learn it. `Cause we were trying to teach them the, uh, the, uh, the new, the gospel and all of that, and our whole effort was in that, in that, uh, direction."

Narration:

"There were many pressures upon the people and the traditional way of life during the late nineteenth century, and all of them ---even the religious efforts of the Jesuits ---were part of the road that led eventually to the construction of Kerr Dam."

Interview: Betty White:

[subtitle reads "Betty White / Salish Historian"]

[subtitle during newsreel footage reads "Mass at St. Ignatius, 1930"]

"I think that the Jesuit way of viewing their religion as the only way, the one true religion, is very

ethnocentric. But I think that constitutes cultural invasion. When you determine that your way is superior to another group of people, and you go in, no matter what way, whether it's as a missionary or as a soldier, and you decide that you're going to eradicate someone else's religion or someone else's culture because you deem that yours is superior and theirs is inferior, that's invasion."

Narration:

"Many of the people, especially among the Salish and Pend d'Oreille, strongly embraced the Catholic religion. But most also maintained their traditional spiritual practices. And very few chose to change their tribal ways of hunting and gathering while they were still able to take these foods from a bountiful environment."

Interview: Joe Antiste:

[ID subtitle reads "Joe Antiste / Kootenai Elder"]

"The Indian people would go to Libby, around that area,
and that's where they hunted, a long time ago.
They all had horses.
They would stay there for about a month.....
Three family members would kill about 100 deer.
They would return home
with a lot of game that was dried.
That's what the Indians lived on, meat!"

Interview: Joe Eneas:

[ID subtitle reads "Joe Eneas / Salish/Spokane Elder"]

"It was good a long time ago.
"When you come home, you have meat tied on --
packed on your horse was deer, dry meat!"

Narration:

"Despite this abundance and the obvious happiness of the people, the Jesuits intended to convert their subjects to a very different way of life."

Interview: Betty White:

"Very shortly after the Jesuits arrived, they became convinced that the only way to convert the Jes --the Salish was to --well, for one, to get them from wandering around, or running around or chasing the buffalo as the terms that the Jesuits use, and to have them settle in one spot so that they could teach them Catholicism, but also, uhm, to provide their needs for sustenance, have their culture based on agriculture. You know, replace the hunting way of life with an agricultural basis of life."

Narration:

"But while it was still feasible to hunt and gather for their subsistence, the people had no desire to abandon their traditional ways for agriculture."

Interview: Larry Parker:

"The Indians had no occasion to be hungry at all times because the food was growing so uh, in such great quantities in the country. In the old days if an Indian was told, `You'd better start raising cattle and grow your own, you know, garden,' it would be like telling you to uh, dig a well when there's running, mountain running water on both sides of your house, so you have drinking water."

Narration:

"By the 1880's, however, with non-Indian farmers, ranchers, and miners pouring into western Montana, the tribes were faced with a newly restricted resource base. Some tribal people finally began to turn to agriculture to supplement, but not replace, their hunting, fishing, and gathering."

Interview: Mary Smallsalmon:

[ID subtitles read "Mary Smallsalmon / Pend d'Oreille Elder"]

"About the food, we had a garden, a big garden.
My Dad planted a garden --
potatoes,
beans,
corn,
carrots,
cantelope, watermelon,
squash.
All this was in my Dad's garden
at Crow Creek, where we had our house.
We had a big garden."

Narration:

"It was not until the 1890's that most of the native people of the region were forced onto the Flathead Reservation: the Kootenai pressured out of the Tobacco Plains area to the north, the Salish removed from their ancestral Bitterroot Valley.

"By the turn of the century, the native people were being forced to alter their lives, but they had not yet lost all control over the pace and direction of change."

Interview: Ron Therriault:

"The tribal people that had taken to farming were doing pretty well for themselves. They had nice farms, they good workable land, and they also had the promise of the irrigation system, and all of this lent to success as such ---not a corporate-type success, but individually, a number of the tribal people were doing well."

Interview: Mary Smallsalmon:

"I said us Indians, we were poor.
But we were not really poor -- we had gardens,
we had deer meat, and we make deer dry meat.

My father's mother, my brother Peter,
they would make deer dry meat."

Narration:

"At the same time, now that many of the people were in towns or on farms, the Catholic church was beginning to exert a much stronger influence. Enormous boarding schools were built around the town of St. Ignatius, and children were required to attend by the U.S. Agent, by the Priests, and increasingly by the Indian parents themselves."

Interview: Margaret Finley:

[subtitle reads "Margaret Finley / Salish Elder"]

"I learned lots from them. I learned how to cook, I learned how to....to....to do things, they, you know....in the white man's world, you know."

Interview: Agnes Vanderburg:

Agnes:
"The Black Robes at the Agency were nice.
All the Indians went to the school."

Agnes's daughter Lucy Vanderburg:
"You said they were mean!"

Agnes:
"The ones who were at St. Ignatius, they're all down below!" [Laughs]

Interview: Ignatius Dumbeck:

"Well, see, we had a school here, and, uh, see, most our schools were boarding schools. Then there were very few day scholars, because day scholars would live at home. And one of the main things is that they must learn to talk the English language. And if they're living at home, why, they're talking Indian all the time...."

Interview: Agnes Vanderburg:

"When we would get together and talk our language,
we would have to stand in the corner.
The Black Robes would tell us, "Do not talk your language."
Sometimes they would make us stand up together and they would spank us.
And that's why I said they're all down below now."

Interview: Larry Parker:

"Well, believe you me, that sure put a hardship on my, uh, schooling there, because I did not know a word of English. It would be just like you going to China or Russia or somewhere and attending school there, and not knowing your language at all. You'd be completely lost."

Interview: Ignatius Dumbeck:

"But they took on after, oh, I would say, six months, uh, or more, they would be oriented to the white ways; because the first ones that we had, it took time to get them to, uh, take on the white man's ways. But once they came in, well then, then, when they were in school, they would help change the mentality of the students, so, their playmates, one thing or another."

Interview: Agnes Vanderburg:

Agnes's daughter Lucy Vanderburg:
"Is that the reason the people forgot the language?"

Agnes:
"That's why the ones who were growing up quit talking Indian."

Narration:

"The turn of the century was a time of great pressures for the people here. Epidemics of European diseases continued to sweep through the area, taking heavy tolls among tribal elders. People were harassed and even killed for hunting off the reservation, even though this right was guaranteed by treaty. And throughout the country of western Montana, non-Indians were beginning to settle and control the land."

(end film transcript)

(Discussion with the filmmakers preceding the showing of *The Place of Falling Waters*)

Tom: We always do this --try to think of where to start. I'm thinking of this film in terms of your series on wilderness and society, and the environmental history of Western Montana. One of the things we tried, that was really part of the project of this film, was to record voices that had been left out of the historical records --not only relating to Kerr Dam, but what this film tries to do is set the history of Kerr Dam into the larger history of cultural change, economic change, and ecological change, and other kinds of change too.

The whole period between the time of the treaty that Roger mentioned and World War II is really a period of astonishing change and in many ways laid the foundation for the way things are now --the kind of social structures of the dominant society in Western Montana and the industrial market economy that has dominated here. It's really something to think that in 1850, in fact later than that, western Montana, the social order, the economic order, the cultural order that predominated was the one that predominated here for tens of thousands of years. It was a tribal way of life, and in many ways it was not only different from the market industrial systems that came in afterwards and which, in many ways, Kerr Dam was a culmination of, it was not only different from those things, but in many ways oppositional to them.

And so the thing that people always say is that history gets written by the victors, and in that process you often get a very poor understanding of that history. So what this film tries to do is recover the missing voices to some degree, and it's a small contribution in that direction. There's certainly endless more work to do in that way, and I think it's indicative of that, that many of the voices you'll hear in this film are voices that some of you may have never heard, that is, *languages* that you have never heard. We tried to record quite a number of the interviews in the Salish and Kootenai languages, and we

worked with the culture committees --the Kootenai Culture Committee and the Salish Culture Committee --so these are quite literally voices that have been completely left out of the record for the most part --not completely, but for the most part.

One other thing that hooks into your comment about the treaty, Roger. You mentioned that the railroad was surveyed two years before. Isaac Stevens was appointed to be the new governor of the newly formed Washington Territory, and so he made his way from Minnesota, Ft. Smelling, Minnesota, across northern North America, through what is now Montana, and was then the sovereign territory of many different tribes, to Washington, where he became the first Territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs. And on the way, he surveyed the route for the Northern Pacific Railroad. It's important to note that there's no mention in the treaty of railroads.

One of the things that Roy and I still joke about is that I was always trying to make this thing longer.

Roy: That's the joke.

Tom: And Roy, with much greater wisdom, always insisted that we try to make it shorter, and it probably should be shorter than it is.

But one of the things I never could quite wedge into it was the story of the railroad. That's one of the most interesting documents, I think, in 19th century Montana history, and it was reprinted in part in *The Last Best Place,* that is the minutes of the negotiations for the railroad right-of-way across the Flathead Reservation. Throughout those negotiations, the US officials told the Tribes that they didn't even need to negotiate, that they already had the right to put the railroad through there. And tribal member after tribal member stood up to say that, "No, the treaty only provided for a trail to go through the reservation." And that whole debate went on around the railroad, and of course the railroad isn't even described in the treaty. And that came up again with Highway 93 recently, because if in fact the tribal understanding was correct, which I think it was, of the way it was translated, there was no right-of-way for roads of any kind to be built through the reservation.

I better shut up.

Roy: I hope that you, when you watch this video, that you'll be able to learn something from it about our people. We've been in Roger's class a number of times, and one of the questions I end up asking a lot of times is how many people realize that there's a reservation 15 miles north of here. When you're going up to Flathead Lake to go boating, or if you're going to Big Mountain to go skiing, and you're zooming through, how many people realize that they are going through a reservation? That our people have been here for a long, long time. And you know, sometimes maybe a hundred years is a long time for some people, sometimes two hundred, but our people have been in this area for tens of thousands of years. And there's a lot of places where we have people buried, where people have raised families, have laughed, got hurt. But where you are at now, this Missoula place, this was also one of our places where we lived, and gathered and done a lot of things not that long ago. Before K-Mart got put in, our people were over there gathering bitterroots. Probably some of you people who have been here for a while, maybe your parents might remember seeing Indian families camping out there in the spring and gathering our foods like we've been doing for a long time. So I hope that you will get a sense of our people being human beings with a culture, with a spiritual life, with feelings.

A lot of times, I don't think people know too much about us unless they read something in the *Missoulian* or see some pitiful person under the bridge or something, passed out, or car wrecks or whatever. But our people are not all like that. Our people that are struggling, we feel for them too, they are lost and they're hurting, they don't know really what they are doing, their spirit is gone. But there's a lot of people, our ancestors, our grandmothers and our grandfathers right now who have done a lot of things so that we might be standing here doing these things, keeping these things alive for us, so that we can insure that our berries, our roots, our medicines, when we hunt that the animals will be there for us.

And a lot of people who have the dignity and the pride, without being boastful about it, who kept these things alive for us.

So some of these people who you will see on this video, they are caring people, and they don't care just for their own families or they don't care just for Indian people, they have a genuine concern for white people, black people, yellow people, peoples around the world. There are the ceremonies that help insure that we're doing the best that we can keep this world going the way the Creator has meant for it to go. That's what we do.

And we can do those things also ---play with computers and sit in a car, and we do that. And some people say, when Indian people talk about Indians going back to the old ways and going back to the traditions, that people can't go back to hunting buffalo and sitting in your teepee. We're not thinking like that. We're thinking when the human beings and the land lived, had one heart, and whenever we got sick mother earth gave us the medicine to cure and the medicine people knew and could communicate and could tell us what we could do to heal ourselves, and that happens today still. I don't want to say too much about that, because it's not my expertise, but those things happen today.

So when you watch this, you will get an understanding of our people ---Salish, Pend d'Orielle,and Kootenai people ---and see us maybe in a different light, as the environmentalists that we have been and still are, and that we will be, as human beings. And some of us are struggling, and some of us have our feet on the ground and our roots and we know where we're going, but some of us are lost and confused. So that's about all I have to say. You can watch the film and think about some questions you might have.

(Questions and answers following the showing of Part I of *The Place of Falling Waters*)

(Audience)

Tom: The question has to do with native languages in the film, and you refer to native languages in the Wisconsin area, where there are some cases of native speakers being thought of by the older people as not speaking properly. You're wondering if these people are regarded as speaking their original language.

Roy: The language is always evolving. I think there's ---Thompson works on it with the culture committee, they talk about it everyday ---and I think there, what little I know, it evolves, and what they're trying to do now evolved, there got to be words where there were a lot of shortcuts in words, slang, part of the word cut off. Now they are trying to make sure that the whole word is said right. And there gets to be a little bit of conflict, because I think maybe one group might think another group is not saying it right in another area. The Salish and Pend d'Oreille is pretty close ---there are differences, but I remember being involved in producing a language video, and it came to a stop one time just because some of the people couldn't agree that the word was said right. He said it was right, they said it wasn't right, and so it stopped for awhile. So some people said that there is differences even in the same language. Maybe a family might say it this way and somebody else will say it that way. And I don't know if I answered your question. There are some words, though, that we didn't have maybe, that we had some French in there, a French word for a particular object because we didn't have the word or didn't have that particular thing.

Tom: Well, one thing to add to that Roy, also there's a lot of difference between individual speakers. Just like in English, there are some people we regard as Shakespearean speakers of the language. There are certain elders that the linguists, some of the linguists that developed close relationships with the elders, have gravitated towards a few elders, John Peter Paul, who's in this video who just passed away a couple weeks ago, a few weeks ago now, was a remarkable speaker and a gifted linguist in his own right really. But I think Roy got to a lot of the question there.

(Audience)

Roy: He asked if they began building the dam before they asked us. I think they talked amongst themselves and they had their mind made up and it seems like they had everything already planned out, and that they assumed that what the BIA, that they were going to do it anyway no matter what we thought or said. And that still happens, I think, today. But as far as I know, I think they had their mind made up that they were going to build it. We had some help though. I mean we're lucky that they didn't just take the land and do it. The land is still tribal land where it is now. The dam is Montana Power's, the land is ours.

(Audience)

Roy: He asked if the dam has been turned over to us. No. A lot of these questions you are asking will be seen in Part II. We made a 30-year agreement which expires in 2015, right?

Tom: Yeah, I think so.

Roy: But they offered, if you read the papers, almost two years ago, I think, Montana Power was offering to sell the dam back to us, a couple years ago. We didn't take the offer, and I don't know what exactly went on with that then.

Tom: One thing too about it ---the earlier question was whether the tribes had been asked permission before building it, and when the initial deals were being developed for the dam. You'll see some of this in Part II ---some of this goes by kind of quickly, so you can keep this in mind watching Part II. Initially, all the money from the dam was to go to the white water users of the irrigation district and the BIA, and the Tribes were left out entirely. Even when they were included, it was only certain Tribal voices. One of the things this film tries to do is to get at are those perspectives and communities within the tribe that were left out of these deals, so that we try to bring out the views of the traditional people in particular and those kind of cultural perspectives and spiritual perspectives of the people. The argument in the official circles was over how much money would come out of the deal, and who gets what, rather than whether it should be built, so that's some of the stuff that Part II goes into a little more.

(Audience)

Tom: The question was what was the legislation that allowed whites to go onto reservation land.

There was an omnibus bill passed in 1887 called the Dawes Allotment Act, or the Dawes Severalty Act, which applied to all reservations in the country. But then specific bills had to be passed for each reservation because of the legal particularities around each treaty. So the general act in 1887 set this thing up. The aim was to dismantle tribal ownership of land and institute individual ownership of land, and competition and the whole thing, and then for any land left over, as this section pointed out, to declare it surplus and open it to whites under the Homestead Act.

Then the Flathead Allotment Act in particular was passed in 1904. And there are other bills, the Cherokee Reservation in Oklahoma, for instance, the opening of the Cherokee Reservation, which they celebrated in the musical "Oklahoma." (One of my students, this was years ago, wrote a new musical from the tribal perspective which was pretty interesting.) But anyway, in the time from 1887 on through about 1910 there were different bills passed for specific reservations. But the legality of it, I mean, that's another good question.

Roy: We don't think it was legal, but we don't sit on the Supreme Court, not yet anyway. No, we don't think it was legal. There's a lot of things that have been done that we don't think are legal, but what can we do? We try what we can. Like Sam Resurrection, whose photograph is in here, he was a person back around the early 1900's who went back to DC trying to tell the government about things that shouldn't

have been done, like the canals, the building of the canals, probably the homestead act too. Him, and there's been other people.

(Questions and answers following the showing of Part II of *The Place of Falling Waters*)

Tom: What was Kerr's motivation? The gentleman back there was saying that he was really struck by the clip we found of Frank Kerr speaking at the future sight of the dam. Actually, that was 1930. And before the dam was built and he described the water as "having fallen idly for ages," and you were wondering how the people there on the reservation felt about that kind of attitude. Your first question was about motivation. That's pretty obvious, it was about money, they were businessmen and they were out to make money. They saw something that was pretty lucrative. (To Roy) But for the rest of it, maybe you want to address that.

Roy: One of the sad things about that is that there are still a lot of people who think exactly that still -- that if you're not using it, then -- if you're not, you know, ripping it up and changing things around -- then it's not being used. But to us it's being used. That water, that particular area was being used, I think, in part. Somebody said that they used to go fishing there, and it has been told by a few people too that it was a place where the spirits was at. How do you explain something sacred, something holy, to a person or a people about these things, who don't believe that? How do you explain that the water is medicine, that the water talks to you and the trees, that these things communicate to you, how do you explain that to somebody that doesn't understand that? It's probably not in the language, for one thing. The English language probably doesn't explain those things and the translation from Native language into English probably doesn't do a good job either. And so it wasn't idle for us. It was gathering roots and berries on particular areas that didn't look like it was being used for grazing. It was being used, it wasn't idle. That's one of the great comments of the whole thing. It just shows strongly the difference in the way of thought about nature. But like I said earlier, the sad thing is that there's some people that still think that way.

Tom: One thing about Kerr's statement there is that to me it really echoes back to one of Ron Therriault's comments in the first part of the film, when he was talking about the way that a lot of non-Indian people in Western Montana before the Allotment Act were looking at the reservation, and seeing the whole reservation as basically being not utilized as it should be. And that's part of what spurred the desire for the Flathead Allotment Act and putting that land to "good use." I think Ron said something like, "They looked up here at the Reservation and thought, here's all these Indians and they don't know what to do with this land."

You see this back through non-Indian documents, all the way back through the historical record, right to Lewis and Clark --the kind of invisibility of tribal ways of life to non-Indian observers. It looked like they had no economy, that they had no culture, that they had no language. They would say, "They don't know how to speak," because they didn't have the way of life they had, they didn't have the language they had, they didn't have the economy they had. And because it was different, it was invisible.

And I think that the tribal mode of subsistence - sure, it looks like by today's standards that they weren't using the resources to the full extent that they are today. But who knows? Maybe over the long term, that was the limit of what was sustainable. Something for us to ponder. This way of life has only been present in Montana for 100 years. That's not very long, and it sure doesn't look like it can last for 12,000 years.

I also just wanted to make a brief comment about that filmstrip. One of the things that was so fortunate while we were working on this film was running across that stuff. To find rough footage like that from 1930 with soundtrack is literally like a needle in a haystack. Something like 5% of recorded film before the mid thirties has survived, and a tiny fraction of that had sound on it, and an even tinier fraction of that survived, of the stuff with sound. And this was at the University of South Carolina of all

places. So that was pretty fortunate. And of course, there are those short recordings of some of the statements from the chiefs. Those are pretty interesting. Wish we had more.

(Audience)

Roy: He's asking who controls the land and gives access to it.

Today, me. No. It's communal, communal ownership. We have different departments that do specific things. Legal department, Wildland Recreation department, Natural Resources department. And they all give probably advice to the Tribal Council, and then the Tribal Council makes the rule, closes a certain area, opens a certain area, logs a certain area, decides not log a certain area, and so on and so forth.

(Audience)

Roy: The question is, how about access, how are you letting people into the land, and are we having conflict?

I think there's a lot of people, people I know, who think that there is too much access to particular areas. There are places that are set up so that only tribal members can go. But there's a lot of places that are open for use if you have a tribal permit. One of the problems that we're seeing right now is blatant disregard or ignoring our wishes of particular areas to be closed to those four wheel things, ATV's. There have been some gates torn down, people riding out there, tearing up the land. Riding in these particular areas, kind of sage-brushy areas, where there isn't a lot of vegetation anyway, so these things don't heal fast. So there's that danger, there is attention that some of our people have that there are people coming in and they're not respecting that, if we want to close down an area so that it can heal up, whether it's from ATV's or whatever. There are people who don't, you know --either they're antagonistic towards us, or they feel like nobody can tell them what to do because they don't care what. They just want to go there and ride their machine, they just want to go there. We've had someplaces blocked off by big rocks so that you can't drive in there. They get moved away so people drive up there and they do what they want. People bring pack horses up there and we let them up there and pretty soon they're cutting down trees, making nice little places that they know, places that we try to keep in a good way so that our people can go there and be, be with nature. To go to these places and remember being with their families, their mom, their dad, their grandmother. They can go there and they can feel everything that happened at that time with their ancestors. So I don't know how long--we talk about closing off some areas sometimes and you should hear the outcry from the non-Indian people saying, "Why, how can they do that, why Indians are my best friends, why should they keep me out?" And even I have some friends, and I know that they treat the land right, they take care of it too, they don't bring in litter, they don't decide to chop down these trees to do what they want. They take care of it also. But they still believe that we don't have the right to shut it off if we want too. If we think that things are being abused we try to take care of it. Not just because we can, but because we have a responsibility, not given to us by the US government, not given to us by the county government, but given to us by the Creator. The Creator told us, put us here on this land and said, "Now you take care of it. You have this responsibility. That's what you do."

And that's how we do, even though, like I said before, we might be wearing a three-piece suit sometimes and playing on the computer or whatever, but there's a lot of us who will do, who still remember the responsibility given to us by the Creator. And that's a real thing, that's no sentimental, romantic notion. I don't think it is. I take that responsibility seriously, and I know a lot of people do, because the spirits tell us that you better listen or you'll get spanked, bad. If we go into a particular sacred area and say, dump in the middle of a particular place, that's no good, you'll get spanked. Some of these areas are old knowledge to us. Not that somebody just dreamt up 20 years ago or something, it's something that's been handed down. Particular areas where the spirits like to gather, we know that.

So there is some of that, a little bit of tension, and it happened, just a couple of years ago about closing off certain areas and there was a big outcry. But there were some non-Indians that supported us too, even though they might not like the idea, they still supported us. That's what I have to say about that.

(Audience: What are the origins of communal property status on the reservation now, since it seems like the allotment act extinguished that? How can there be tribal land now?)

Tom: The short answer to that is that when FDR was elected and the New Deal came in, there was a part of the New Deal that addressed Indian issues called the Indian Reorganization Act, and it immediately put a stop to the Allotment Act and provided a means for tribal governments to basically reconstitute themselves, and the Salish-Kootenai were the first in the nation actually to do that. And there was a process under the IRA by which lands that you anticipated in your question that were never allotted reverted to tribal collective ownership. Tribes in fact are corporations in a legal sense, under the IRA, although they aren't just private businesses, as we think of a corporation. They're also sovereign nations, still under the treaties. Anyway, the land went back to the tribes through the means of the Reorganization Act, and it's gradually and painstakingly been added to.

But one of the things that the IRA provided for in the Reorganization Act was for Congress to appropriate money to tribes so that each year they could buy back more of their land from willing sellers -- try to piece the reservations back together that had been hit hardest by this. And certainly the Flathead Reservation was one of the ones that was hit hardest. But they've never really appropriated any money for that, and I've been thinking lately that in 2004, it will be the 100th anniversary of the Flathead Allotment Act, and what more appropriate way to mark that than to maybe get a bill through Congress that would appropriate some money for that purpose. Something for us to think about.

Roy: I just want to say something first for those of you that are still here. I'm glad that you stuck around. I know that the others had something to do and beers to drink and studying and whatnot, but you're here to ask the last few questions.

(Audience: Have there been any differences in the deregulation?)

Roy: Go ahead Tom, you know everything.

Tom: Well, not yet. I guess the lease for running the dam went from Montana Power to PPL Montana, which is Pennsylvania Power and Light. Some people might think it's Pacific Power and Light, but it's Pennsylvania Power and Light Montana. They still have to abide by the same terms of the deal from FERC (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), and the whole thing coming up in 2015, where the Tribes have the option to take it over.

So it hasn't yet, but I imagine it will, just because the whole market for electricity has became so completely unpredictable. Who knows what's going to happen? And a lot of it depends on what the Montana legislature does, if anything, to deal with the situation. And what happens in other states too, since the whole power grid is connected.

And there's other things coming down the line in energy, too, that could make the whole thing, you know, difficult to predict. For instance, some people think that fuel cells will be developed in the next ten to fifteen years to such an extent that individual homes and businesses and whatever will have their own individual hydrogen-powered fuel cells to supply electricity to that building, similar to the way that cities a hundred years ago, tenements and homes, were supplied by one central power heat provider that piped heat to all these different buildings; then, when furnaces became cheap enough for people to have in their individual homes and buildings, they went to that. It became decentralized. So that's another type of unpredictability. But nothing's happened yet.

Roy: Our people did negotiate a long term energy thing where you'll see prices rising everywhere else, but on the Reservation, the price of electricity will stay down. This is because they negotiated with something a little while back that ensured that the prices wouldn't go through the roof, so we're lucky that way.

(Audience) [regarding the newsreel film clip of speeches at the dam-site in 1930]

Roy: It was pretty scripted out, the whole thing there, because both sides were reading from little cue cards in their hands, and I don't know if Kerr even heard what Chief Koostahtah told him. I don't think he did. I think he only heard what the translator told him, which was all scripted out.

Like I said, when you watch the whole thing like we've seen it, not broken up like we've put it on here, you see. . . We actually had someone translate what was said, because it was different than what the translator was reading back at the time. So Kerr didn't hear that the Chief was raising a little hell with him, saying that, "This man was rich, and I'm going to make him more rich." And he wasn't too happy about the whole thing. Our people were pretty much being forced to accept ---you know, we tried to stand up and make things, tried to hold on, you know, to stand our ground, but the BIA's not helping us, and the US government's not helping us, and our Chiefs are trying to make the best decision, but I guess it must come to the point where they must realize that it's going to happen.

Tom: Yeah, I think it might be giving Kerr too much credit in 1930, to really understand what Koostahtah was doing in his speech. You know, there's a lot of things that we left kind of implicit in the film, rather than analyze it to death, and let each viewer kind of get out of it what you will. But what I see Koostahtah doing in that speech is doing something in the gift-giving tradition of the tribes, that's basically not saying, "You give me this," but making clear what's being given and making the person feel, feel it so they have a sense of what they should be giving back. So then they give him the name, "Light," which I think is directly tied to the promise of light which they understood him to be making to them.

A couple other things are that, you know, you're commenting on the miscommunication both ways. That's true, and that's something that goes through the history of the Tribes, and many tribes around the country. Lewis and Clark, for instance ---they didn't understand what the tribes were about, and the Tribes thought that black slave they had with them, York, was a warrior with black paint. But there is a crucial difference. It's not just like "miscommunication on all sides," and the usual kind of presentation of things that way. Because one thing you notice when you study the white and then the tribal accounts of these things, is that most of the tribal accounts make a point of pointing out the miscommunication, often times laughing at their own misunderstanding of the non-Indians, of what the non-Indians were up to. Whereas many of the non-Indian accounts continue to obfuscate the miscommunications; they try to cover up the miscommunication because it's in their interest to do so. I mean, Lewis and Clark, for instance, the first words out of their mouth to every tribe they got to were. "You are now under the dominion of the United States."

Roy: "I come in peace. . ."

Tom: And since the tribes gave them gifts, they make it out like they understood what they were being told. That obfuscation was in their interest. So that's an interesting difference.

(Audience)

Roy: You know what BIA stands for ---Bossing Indians Around. Yeah that's what they did, and I think they've gotten better, trying to do what we want to do, or live the life that we want to without their help. I think, I'm sure Thompson knows, every regulation that's been made and stuff like that, but we've been given more self-determination to conduct our lives the best way we can without their interference as much. And there's been a lot of tribal programs run by BIA that are now run by us, or individual tribes are running their own with the BIA having less say-so. But they still have some big control.

Tom: And as a matter of fact that is from a regulation —from the Indian Self-Determination Act in the mid-seventies, and so what it allowed tribes to do is that if they could demonstrate their ability to run a certain BIA program on the reservation then they get the funding, and they run it. It's called law 638 or something, because they, people, talk about 638-ing this or that. Like Tribal Forestry is run by the Tribes now instead of the BIA forestry program, which used to run, used to operate there. So the actual BIA-directed programs on the reservation now are pretty limited, I think.

(Audience)

Tom: The question was, now that the Tribes are running some of these programs, are they running them differently than the BIA would have, or used to. Is that right?

Roy: Like I was saying earlier, the Tribal Council has the say-so on whether it's logged or not logged. Usually there's a couple steps that happen before that. You know, one thing, probably the forestry goes in and looks at the area and I think they see dollar signs but they say they don't. They say they see disease and what do you call, too much growth.

Tom: Fuel load.

Roy: Fuel load, yes, and that's what they see. And so they have to go to the Wildland Recreation or Natural Resource Department, and I think they go in and look at the area, then go to the elders and Culture Committee sometimes and they try to get, they must go to them and they have a little say. But I don't think, from what I know —you know, I read our tribal minutes of the Council meetings and what goes on — I don't think they just go in and decide to cut an area. There are a few steps they have to go through before they do that. And, there's sometimes they get shot down on going in and logging the area.

Tom: And they just finished that forest plan last year.

Roy: Yeah so, no, they don't just come in and do what they want whether it's Tribal Forestry. Hopefully, it's. . . there are concerns over growth, and things like that.

Tom: The Tribes only established a Natural Resource Department in 1982. So it hasn't been around that long, but it's really something.

I mean, they've done some really good stuff, and just last year they finished off a new forest plan for the reservation the shifted the whole, similar to some of the shifts that are happening in the USFS where the policy shift is from commodity production toward ecological health. Of course, what that means on the ground is a different matter. Still, it's an important policy shift. There may be a number of steps to go. But it is true, if you look at photographs of the reservation, photographs a hundred years ago, before tribal burning, before they put a stop to it basically, there was much more open forest, dominated by old growth trees that were basically fire proof to those low intensity burnings, especially the lower elevation forests.

Roy: Let me run out to my BMW now. .

Tom: Yeah, they're basically paying a rental fee for using tribal lands. The land the dam sits on belongs to the Tribes and I think it's up to around $13- $14 million.

(Audience)

Roy: What's the coolest thing? Getting to see Roger. What's the coolest thing on the Rez? Well, one of the bars burned down. I'm happy to see that.

(Audience: Which one?)

Roy: Big Ethel's.

Coolest thing. . . there's a lot of "coolest things." I don't know what they are. . . I go to work, I go home, I come to Missoula, go home.

Well, let's see. . . what is it, Thompson?

Tom: Well, I could tell you a couple things that the Culture Committee is working on. We're working on a documentary history on the Salish and Pend d'Oreille, a book form, based primarily on the oral histories told by the elders, but juxtaposed with government records and photographs. It's going to be four volumes.

And we're also working on an ethnogeography of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille people, so their place-names, their stories of places, their use of places. And John Peter Paul, whom you saw in this film, was a major part of that. So losing him was a huge loss --his knowledge of the use of the aboriginal territory was extraordinary. But again, we're relying a lot on elders, but supplementing that with research and the ethnographies and the anthropological work and the archeology records and stuff like that.

We're about to put out a 250-page book also on the Swan massacre, which isn't mentioned in this film, except indirectly in passing when it was mentioned that tribal members were increasingly harassed and even killed for hunting off the reservation. That was a reference, a side-long reference, to this incident that happened in 1908 when a game warden killed four members of a Pend d'Oreille hunting party in the Swan Valley and in return was killed. There's a nice concise summary of that incident in a book that came out from the Montana Historical Society Press last year called *Montana Campfire Tales* I think, by Dave Walter, their research historian, who I think is a great guy. And he does a nice little summary in there. Most non-Indian accounts are full of inaccuracies, though, and different things that come out from all these accounts from tribal elders.

But so we're working on, there's a lot of different stuff going on at the Culture Committee. It's all --you know, each one of us kind of works in a little corner and that's. . . but there's a lot of different language things going on.

I think the Kootenai Culture Committee is putting together a much more robust effort to try to reverse the decline of the language before it's too late. And it really is the 11th hour and 59 minutes now for the languages. And there's been a long standing effort on both the Salish language and the Kootenai language. But every year now, at least since the thirties, there have been fewer fluent speakers every year, rather than more. And for me, that's the easiest way to determine whether a language program is succeeding. Every year, do you have more fluent speakers, or fewer?

(Audience)

Tom: Yeah, there are some of those, but the curriculum really needs to be developed and expanded and money needs to be sunk into it. I know that for instance when the Maori people in New Zealand reversed their language loss was because the government took responsibility for the loss of that language and realized that they had a responsibility in helping resuscitate it. And so they put real money towards it. In this country, the major grant area is through something called the Administration for Native Americans, and it's like, there's like a million or two million a year for all the languages --you know, 300 languages in the country. If, say, if we use a billion of our 1.5 trillion dollar surplus or whatever for native languages then it could really make an unbelievable difference. And you know the Maoris in New Zealand now have over 40,000 fluent speakers.

(Audience)

Tom: She was mentioning that in Canada, some of the tribes are suing the church and the government over the language loss and other issues.

(Audience)

Tom: All these things, from what I understand, go through the elders' filter. So it's a very ---I really ---all the time I work with the elders, my admiration just grows, because one thing that this is, is courageous. Because the last thing they really have is their stories, you know, that hasn't already been taken. Not the last thing, but one of the very precious things. And one thing that I've had to learn as a non-Indian working there is just that stories have a different place, a different value – they're something truly precious, and the respect that has to be given to them is really something. And they're going out in the world with these things, a world that's been very ungenerous to the Salish and Pend d'Oreille people. And I'm amazed at that. But not everything will be in there. And I think with both the history and the ethnogeography, there will probably be a tribal version of those things that's more private and a version for the public that will have, you know, the less sensitive type of material.

The Tribes have a very large Resource Protection Program, too, and one of the best in the nation of any tribal nation, and they're always concerned about the desecration and damaging of cultural sites. So I know that's a real concern.

(Audience)

Tom: He asked if our government will ever take responsibility for the loss of native languages the way the New Zealand government did.

Roy: That'd be kind of hard to believe.

(Audience)

Tom: He's saying that up by Glacier there was a case for native hunting rights.

Roy: Well, I know that down in California, there was a tribe that was trying to ---it was a court case with one of the National Parks where the state of California, or I don't know who it was, the tribe got denied that it was a sacred site, I can't remember the exact wording on that. But they was told that they can take their sacred site and move it! Sacred no more.

Tom: One thing that will make a lot of difference and whether or not something like that happens, is who we end up getting in office. As long as Conrad Burns is in there that's not going to happen.

But I just finished getting through the draft of a book that maybe will be published in the coming years, maybe not, about the successful effort on the Flathead to stop the termination of the reservation. Who here is familiar with the policy of termination? Just a few of you. . . in a very brief nutshell, termination was a policy that arose during the forties in reaction to the New Deal, to the Indian Reorganization Act. And the idea was to terminate federal responsibilities for reservations, and basically do away with the reservations, and "cut the Indians loose," was the expression that was used at the time, and basically cease any more federal trust responsibility. And this was done to a number of tribes. For instance, many of you may know that the whole Oregon Coast practically is public land. That's because there were sixty-some terminated tribes along the Oregon coast in the 50's. In addition to the Klamath, a very large reservation in southern Oregon, and the Menomini in Wisconsin were another example, and the Uintah in Utah were another example.

But the first tribe on the list were the Flatheads, and it was very narrowly averted. They were the first ones that the BIA targeted for termination, because they'd gotten their economy going to some extent

and things like that, and also because a lot of non-Indians wanted the land there, as they have for a century now. And it was very narrowly averted.

And one of the main reasons was that three out of the four members of the Montana congressional delegation at the time, the so called "three M's," were Democrats who were willing to listen to the tribal leadership and hear their arguments for why termination was not just. And that was Mike Mansfield, Lee Metcalf, and James Murray was the other senator. So it really makes a big difference who's in there.

For instance, right now, a real concern of mine is that Pat Williams was the representative for Montana for a long time, and he's teaching at the U now. And throughout the 20th century and now the 21st century, there have been these attempts by the white water users on the reservation to try to gain absolute control over the Flathead Irrigation Project and take it away from the Tribes, even though, you know, any reasonable reading of the treaty shows that the water belongs to the Tribes. It originates in the Mission Mountains. And that project was built to begin with the justification of helping tribal members, as Part Two talked about in our film. But the white water users have consistently tried to gain control of that project, and Williams was always there as kind of the goal tender to keep that puck out of the net. Well, now we've got Dennis Rehberg in the House, and the guy he named as his chief of staff is Alan Mikkelson, who is a long-time employee of the Joint Board of Control in St. Ignatius, Montana for the Flathead Irrigation Project. So it makes me a little nervous.

(Audience)

Tom: It's a very interesting question she's asking about place-names and the translation of place-names, the role of language in dominion over the land, and the assertion of that dominion over the land, questions along those lines —which is the whole question of the ethnogeography. It's really interesting, I don't know if we have a half hour.

I could give a one sentence answer and then maybe we could talk about it more. Okay let me see. . . Boy, now I have to think!

One of the main reasons for working on the place-names project, the ethnogeography, is because, yes, place names have a lot to do with the relationship between people and the landscape. If you go to Hawaii, for instance, and every place-name is in the native language practically, and half of them are difficult to pronounce for a newcomer, I think it shapes the consciousness of the people there. It makes them at least aware, all the time, that they're not in Kansas anymore, Dorothy. They're in someone else's homeland. And now when you drive through Ronan or Polson, or Dixon, on the Reservation —St. Ignatius, you know —the names do just the opposite. They produce a consciousness, a false consciousness, that this is just like anyplace else in Montana. And it's not. It's a different kind of place.

And so we're envisioning this place-name project ultimately leading to the signs on the side of the road being trilingual —they have the Salish name, the Kootenai name, the English name, then maybe also for people who pull off, a little explanation.

And I think that helps bring this kind of research, the stuff we have in a documentary or in a book into the daily life of people. And that's what I think we need to do.

So you know, you might look at that sign and be frustrated by it, because you don't know how to read the international phonetic alphabet and how to say "Ocqe etk^{w}." But that discomfort may be a good thing. It helps put people a little off balance and they realize, hey, there's something else going on here that I wasn't aware of before.

Roy: Or maybe that the Salish was way over in the Three Forks area and it wasn't idle over there, I mean our people, it wasn't empty space, our people was way over there, way over towards the Yellowstone, and way up in the Sweet Grass Hills, our people were up there, people buried up around there so. This land wasn't idle for us, it was our store, it was our home, and so on and so forth.

Tom: It reminds me of the commissars erasing somebody out of the picture, airbrushing people out of existence. . .

Roy: Well, thank you all for sticking out for this late.

Roy Bigcrane and Thompson Smith

Student Responses to The Place of Falling Waters by Roy BigCrane and Thompson Smith

1)
The day had a feeling of eternal afternoon. The kind of day where the sun feels like its in a permanent tilt, an angle of repose towards winter. I rode all day through the alleys collecting old bicycles and dumpstered treasures in the utility trailer some friends had welded together. The day was cool and calm, and as I cycled up to the busy intersection somebody yelled out, "Hey. Hey you, come over here."

When I turned around I saw the two people motioning to me. There were two Native Americans in the alley, a man and a woman, both wearing blue jeans and T-shirts. They were motioning to me with their hands and said, "Hey, can we ask you a question?" The distance between myself and the alley was enough for me to shrug them off and as soon as the street cleared I pushed out into the road. The man called out loud his time. "Hey!" In the middle of the road, I hesitated and turned around, and as I was riding up to the two of them I found myself saying to myself, "No. I'm not going to buy you any liquor," or "No, I don't have any spare change." As I got closer, I realized that these two aren't drunk at all. That their faces and eyes were clear, there were dark freckles on the woman's cheeks, and when I came up to the two of them they suddenly became shy and timid. They were surprised that I turned around and now I am in front of them, they stumble to find the words of what they wanted to say. "Ah….., Could we use your bicycle trailer?," the man finally asks. A little bit surprised myself, I ask for what and they explain that they want to use it to haul their laundry down to the laundry mat. Without hesitation, I agree to go to their motel and cart the load to the mat.

On the walk to their motel they become very talkative and explain the reason they need help is because they have a year's worth of clothes to wash. They are from Browning and were passing through town to visit relatives down south when they ran out of money about a month ago. Their motel is right off Broadway and when we get there I realize that I know their kids. Both of the boys have been hanging-out at the community bicycle shop I work at. They are excited to see me as I pull up with the trailer. We all laugh as we throw garbage bags full of dirty clothes from the second story of the building into the trailer.

After all the loads are carted down to the laundry mat, the man walks up to me and asks "How much?" I tell him it is for free and not to worry about it. He begins to look embarrassed and then he smiles at me. The sun is at the angle where everything becomes golden, even the cars, the gas station, and dingy motel buildings seem to be graceful in this light. The sky is ablaze and the man's face is a golden round curve, his lips are thin and careful. He speaks slowly, "Thank you."

Riding across the busy road, I stopped to look at a section in the river where the water braids off into two. The water is low and the plants on the banks have long since gone brown. A car pulls up next to me. A man steps out wearing a cowboy hat. He has braids in his dark hair with pieces of leather woven in them. The man acknowledges me as he gets out of the car and walks over to the riverbank. It is obvious that he is a Native American and when I ask him what he is looking for we start a conversation. He tells me he is looking for saskatoon berries---they are all gone. We talk for only a moment before he drives off.

The ride to the bicycle shop is slow and methodical. The eternality of the day feels like it's wearing off, the sun is lowering. The river flowing west gushs along its braids and there is suddenly the overwhelming sense of the foreign. For one of the first times I realize just how out of place I am. Just two encounters with real people, real lives. It wasn't much, but it was enough. Enough to know that the prefab world we are surrounded by everyday is nothing but exactly that, prefabrication. I stop on the river and looked out into the buildings lit-up in the dying sun; I think to myself, how quickly all this can change. I remember what a friend recently said to me about how as she reads and learns more and more about the history of this place, she has begun to be able to intuitively feel the place-stories, what she called "the blood lettering." Sitting on my bicycle, in the middle of the bridge over the river, surrounded by the beat of an

urban drum, I stare down into the constancy of the water's movement, and for the first time I listen I just listen.

Travis Rosenkoetter

2)

Thoughts on the Kerr Dam

In the film, "Place of the Falling Waters," I was struck by the film clip of the two chiefs speaking with Kerr, as the site for the dam was being handed down over to him. That film clip, as a snapshot on time captured for us to watch, was so powerful. The short exchange that I viewed seemed to carry an air of miscommunication. The sight of this American man standing tall, bespectacled and neatly suited, explaining to the two chiefs that he was going to put to use their "idle" waters for them, was so ridiculously out of place. It is almost a wonder, to view the exchange in such a context, that it was allowed to occur at all. As the camera pans across the crowd of Americans gathered around, all clapping wildly and cheering heartily, I wondered if they did not truly know inside what had just occurred.

Somewhere, deep inside of them, did these men and women know what harm they were causing to the Indian's culture? A question such as this required a deeper search into the consciousness of people to answer. I do not even know how to begin such an intense personal and emotional soul searching, but the thought intrigues me. Were the men and the women who applauded for the Kerr Dam truly ignorant to the social consequences it held for the native people of that area, or were they simply not willing to accept that knowledge? These inquiries are endless. These sorts of questions on how our society views Native Americans is not a dead issue, nor is it an issue of the past.

Roy Big Crane proposed that he often wonders how many Missoulians are even aware that there is an Indian Reservation fifteen miles from here. I often wonder the same thing when I see bumper stickers and t-shirts with the words "Free Tibet" written on them. Is it easier to focus and feel passionate about what is going on amongst the Tibetan people and the Chinese people, because it is not the American people? I do not question why people are concerned with Tibet, or other international social issues, but rather why not with the ones in our own country, the ones that do exist fifteen miles away. Is it because the passion would require large social changes within us because change would affect our lives?

Nora Strauch

3)

A Place in The Mountains of The Flathead Reservation

The place of the Falling Waters is the place of the spirits. The place of the spirits is the place of the Great Spirit, which is the place of all the spirits. The Falling Waters

F

A

L

LLL to the place where the cedar boughs sway, the Place where mosses bathe, where rocks shine. I have seen them there, not at the now-dammed Place, but at a Place where Waters fall from the lake named for the Christian devil; I do not know it as such. It is a beautiful Place, down where cold water crashes and swirls between rock. I felt it to be the first truly *wild* place I had come to in Montana: swore it *smelled* of wildness; I stayed alert for the bears.

What a Place of Steep Rocks! Place of tree roots lending arms to help pull me up. This Place of Falling

Waters was a Place of High Winds, that day in late spring when the Place was blooming, swaying, turning under Sky's wisps of white, dense strip of gray.

The place of Falling Waters was a place of golden-orange sunlight on peaks that day, as it must be on every late spring day that I don't see it. This Place of sunlit peaks must also be a Place of soft rainfall, easing into a Place of thunderous downpour, but I've never seen it that way. A Place of Timeless Circling, it must be. I didn't **think** to **think---**a simple act!~~---o~~f it as a Place of any other than what I saw there that day. I didn't see the circling, the intricacies and infinities of everything a Place can be to people who have watched it be the Gathering Place of the Spirits over the ages.

I returned to the same Place where Waters fall later that year. It was a Place of Delight, like that of a child, for I had forgotten the contemplative powers of a Place of Melting Icicles! Turning towards the Place of Sun-sheets Meeting Water, I softened almost like the water, fell almost like the water, until my own center of gravity felt the cold rocks directly beneath it. Lungs heaved air into them; I had come up too fast.

Watching the Place of Melting icicles drip down the Fallen Water, a bronzer sun shaded by quick cloud-streams, I saw white floaters, barely snowflakes, spinning before me. It was the Place of My Seeing Seasons Come Again.

Flora Brain

February 27th

Salish Voices

Frances Vanderburg, Roy Bigcrane, Louis Adams, Victor Charlo

Introduction:
The University of Montana and the city of Missoula are built right on land that was prime bitterroot digging ground for the Salish people. And not so long ago, as late as the 1950s, the teepees of their bitterroot digging camps could still be seen in the springtime where Sentinel High School and the Holiday Village Shopping Center now stand. The Salish still gather together in the spring for their annual Bitterroot Ceremony, still dig and eat this plant that has become the state flower of Montana. The old story of the plant coming to the people reminds us of their ancient tenure in this place.

> Long ago, as the story goes, in what we now call the Bitterroot Valley, Flathead Indians were experiencing a famine. One old woman had no meat or fish to feed her children. All they had to eat were shoots of balsmroot, and even these were old and woody. Believing that her children were starving to death, she went down to the river early one morning to weep alone and sing a death song. The sun, rising above the eastern mountains, heard the woman singing. Taking pity on the old woman, the sun sent a guardian spirit in the form of a red bird to comfort her with food and beauty. The bird flew to the woman and spoke softly.
>
> "A new plant will be formed," said the bird, "from your sorrowful tears which have fallen into the soil. Its flower will have the rose of my wing feathers and the white of your hair. It will have leaves close to the ground. Your people will eat the roots of this plant. Though it will be bitter from your sorrow, it will be good for them. When they see these flowers they will say, 'Here is the silver of our mother's hair upon the ground and the rose from the wings of the spirit bird. Our mother's tears of bitterness have given us food.'"
>
> (Hart, p. 47)

And this hammered river right here, the Clark Fork, which few fishermen today will eat the fish they catch from because of over a hundred years of heavy metal pollution from the mining and smelting upstream at Butte and Anaconda, was named for the bull trout which spawned here. We drive our cars and trucks on highway 93 through the heart of the Flathead Reservation, which sits merely fifteen miles north of here, every time we go up to Flathead Lake or to Big Mountain skiing or to Glacier Park. The western slope of the Mission Mountains is the first tribally designated and managed wilderness area in the U. S., and is home to a small but crucial population of grizzly bears.

The Flathead novelist, D'Arcy McNickle, in his book *Wind From An Enemy Sky*, expresses how it felt to watch us move into this country a hundred years ago:

> "It (the anger) had come first when these men from across the world... had told him (Bull) that he could not have his own country, that he no longer belonged in it. They would make it into a better country and let him have just a small piece of it....These mountains, trees, streams, the earth and the grass, from which his people learned the language of respect-all of it would pass into the hands of strangers, who would dig into it, chop it down, burn it up. They came with great beards on their faces, smelling of sweat, but smiling all the time and talking without pausing. They left big scars in the mountains where they went digging for gold. They cut down the biggest trees and hauled them away to make houses-or sometimes they just let them rot in the forest. They scared away the game with their heavy tramping feet. They plowed up the prairie grass and spoke out in anger when the stones broke their plows. They were a people without respect, but they managed to get what they wanted. (*Wind From An Enemy Sky*, pp. 130-131.)

I asked three old friends and teachers and one person who was new to me, if they would come down and be a part of our lecture series to give us the Salish perspective on where we actually are and how best to live here. We were honored by their presence in our lecture series.

Bios:
Frances Vanderburg (Pehleseweh) was born in the Jocko Valley on the Flathead Indian Reservation in 1935. Her grandmother was Adele Kaltomee Adams Vanderburg who was born in the Salish country near Wisdom, Montana when the wild strawberries ripen (June). Frances was raised by her grandmother Adele from age eight or nine years on. Her great grandmother was Mary Kaltonmee (Sackwoman) who, when she died in 1957, was probably a hundred and ten years old. She was a legendary mid-wife for several generations, who had been given special medicine to help women having trouble with child-birth, and to whom many women brought their newborns for a blessing. Frances has been teaching the Salish Language to both young people and adults on her reservation since 1969. She has also taught the Tribal Uses of Plants and Kinship-based Family History at Salish/Kootenai College. In the summer of 1991 she was accepted at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. as a summer intern being trained in museum pracatices, and subsequently was a curator at the People's Center, the Flathead Tribal Museum. These items are expressions of her role as a culture bearer for the Native people of this region today.

Roy BigCrane (See Bios for *Place of Falling Waters* lecture)

Vic Charlo is a Bitterroot Salish parent-poet-playwright-philosopher-theologian
who works for the good of all people.

Louis Adams: My name is Louis W. Adams. I was born at Schley (8 miles south of Arlee) Dec. 14, 1933 at Sam Ressurection's house, he was Mary ("Sack Woman") Kaltomee's brother, his birthdate was Jan. 1, 1857, died Mar. 29, 1941. "Sackwoman" was my Great grandmother, she was born in the Bitterroot in 1845, and died in 1957 at 112 years old. My Grandmother Adele was born Jan. 10, 1878 near Wisdom, she died Mar. 2, 1966.

Spent most of my life on the reservation, also a lot of time in the mountains of Valley Creek, Jocko, Placid Lake (my parents and grandparents had a good friend there, a white man by the name of Wilbur Vaughn, everyone loved him, he was such a good man, in fact my middle name is because of him, Wilber). My Grandmother from my Mother's side was Louise Caroline Vanderburg, 1-1-1897 to 1-4-1987, born near the river in Missoula (near which is now the University) where her Father Victor Vanderburg was getting bull trout. My Father Lomie R. Adams was born at the North end of Salmon Lake, 11-24-1907, died 7-13-1984. My Mother Susan was born near Arlee, 7-31-1918, died 1-22-1959. I also spent some time in my early years in the Bob Marshall country, with many of the old ones that are all gone. Spent one "hitch" in the Navy during the Korean conflict aboard a Destroyer, I was a gunner. 1951 to 1954. My "evening" years are being spent helping anyone requesting help on language, history, traditions, culture, whatever I can remember.

Speakers' suggested Readings:

Wind From An Enemy Sky, D'Arcy McNickle
Two Old Women, An Alaska Legend Of Betrayal, Courage, and Survival, Velma Wallis

Salish Voices
Frances Vanderburg, Roy Bigcrane, Louis Adams, Victor Charlo

Roger Dunsmore: Since this is a wilderness lecture series I want to read to you as a part of the introduction of our speakers tonight a justly famous statement by Luther Standing Bear, an Oglala Dakota and a leading spokesman for American Indian People in the 1920's and 30's. It's a good statement about wilderness and the wild, but from a different perspective than what we're used to.

> We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills and winding streams with tangled growth as wild. Only to the white man was nature a wilderness and only to him was nature infested with wild animals and savage people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful and we were surrounded with the blessings of the great mystery. Not until the hairy man from the East came and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the families we loved was it wild for us. When the very animals of the forest began fleeing from his approach then it was for us that the wild west began.

As soon as I was asked to guide this lecture series I knew I wanted to bring the Salish people down from this reservation right here, the Flathead nation, to be a part of our series. It is their ancestral ground on which this university stands, it is their Bitterroot digging places now buried beneath our parking lots and shopping malls. It is their names and stories for every bird and plant and stream and mountain that we must learn if we are ever to know where we are and how to behave properly in this place. I am deeply pleased and honored to introduce to you these four Salish people. I have asked them to present to us a Salish perspective on this place that we now call Western Montana.

Our first speaker is Frances Vanderburg, *Pahleseweh*, one of the Salish culture bearers, teacher of the Salish language, my teacher and friend. The second speaker will be Roy Bigcrane, filmmaker extraordinaire, who we spent some time with last week after watching the film he made with Thompson Smith. Roy is also a media technician at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana, and a sometime politician and friend. Our third speaker is Louis Adams. Louie is a very knowledgeable tribal elder, about place names specifically. He has worked for forty-one years as a tree scaler for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and for Tribal Forestry. We are glad to have you with us tonight. And lastly, Victor Charlo, a teacher, job corps counselor, poet, playwright, son and grandson of chiefs, and an old friend. Thank you all of you for coming. I've asked Frances tonight if she would open with her own remarks but also with a prayer in Salish for us.

Frances Vanderburg
Prayer in the Salish language. (Translation: Creator God, thank you for this day. And thank you for my relatives, my cousin Louie on my left. We shared the same gramma and my cousin Ursula who's in the audience who also shared the same great gramma, and thank you for all teachers. Bless their efforts and thank you for their efforts. Thank you for all students of all ages because we are all students our entire lives. Thank you for all of our ancestors. Because of them we are here. And thank you for them being my guides, many of them, and thank you especially for this beautiful, beautiful day for the sunshine and some of the birds that I heard as we came in and at the school that I work in in Arlee. And bless all of you and thank you.)

I would like to do part of my talk on kinship terms. I see two students here from Arlee elementary, or they used to be in Arlee. They now go to school here in Missoula, so they have some experience with Salish. Anyway the kinship terms that I am referring to---there are the maternal terms for the mother, referred to as *Toomh*, and the girls refer to their dad as *mestem*. And staying on the maternal side, *ya-yah* is the mom's mom. And then going over to the paternal, the boys refer to their mother as *skue*, and to their dad as *lleoo*. And the dad's mother is called *kenna*. And I'm going to ask Louie if I'm saying this

one right, if the dad's dad, is it *sxepeh*? And then we'll go a little further. The mom's brothers are referred to as *nunu*, and the dad's brothers, which are uncles, are *smamah*. And then we go to the aunts, the mom's sisters are *kahxeh*, and the dad's sisters are *titikwa*. And then we go to older brothers and younger brothers and older sisters and younger sisters. The younger brothers are *sesence*, the older brothers are *llkah*, the older sisters are *llchee* and the younger sisters are *ltstsuu*. Then names change when a parent dies. One gramma becomes *chechegeh*. She is no longer a *ya-yah* or a *kenna*, she is a *chechegeh*. So when a person uses that term then people know immediately that there's been a parent that has died.

Sharing a story about when Roger took my class a long time ago--I was going through these kinship terms with the students, they wanted to know, or they came back and they said, "That's complicated, that's too complicated." And some of them got panicky and I said, "No, it's okay, just come back. Relax, don't run away." But to the, I'm gonna say the current society as we know it, probably the last 40 or 50 years, the non- tribal person has an aunt, uncle, cousins, brother, sister, you know. And we don't know if it's younger or older sibling, either one. But in Salish when we mention *sesence* or *seence* the speaker and the visitor knows you're talking about a younger brother. And if they say *llchee*, then people know that you're talking about an older sister. And that can be both, you know, any sibling. I said, "After you think about it, after you come back for several classes you'll see the logic to it." The students in Arlee, after we go over it, they're not shocked or intimidated, and they'll say, "Well why is it, why, why, why do you have it that way?" And after I explained to them I said, "Well, my ponderings on it are, I think or I know the importance of names and all of us have many titles. When we're first born we're a son or a daughter. If your parents have siblings you're a niece or a nephew, so that's already two titles, and if you have grandparents you are a grandchild already, you're not even dry and wiped off yet and here you are, you've acquired all of these titles. When you get older– you're a teacher, auntie, wife, husband, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, cousin, but in Salish with all of these kinship terms like *tumh* (that's what the girls call their mother), each title signifies to me an important person in this family, in this community, as they branch out, or as the term is used now, in this extended family. It reflects the incredible importance of each individual." With our fast-paced life as we know it now (I am included in that. I drive up to McDonalds, "Give me my food right now!") But these names, these kinship terms, these are to me amazing and awesome thoughts given to an individual's status in their family. You know, auntie, whichever auntie you happen to be whether it's *khoxeh* or *ttqweh* or *skukwie* or *nunumeh*, uncles, *sesence* or *sence*, little brother, *llkha*, older brother.

One of my older sisters, I was arguing with her one time, she wanted me to go get the cows, and I argued with her and she says, "You have to do it. Go get the cows." And I said, "Why do I have to do it? Why do I have to get the cows?" And she says, "Because you're younger than me. You're my *ltstshuw*." I looked at her, I thought, she's just full of whatever. And she says, "I am your *llchee* and you have to listen to me, because I know a little more than you do." And I thought, "Oh, you do?" So that made sense to me. So I went off and muttered as I was going out of her hearing, cause she was bigger than me. Anyway, from that, I had a lot of time to think about a lot of these names because as I tell people, for the first 25 years of my life I spent a lot of time in hospitals, I was a sickly kid. I had really a lot of time. I used to count all the holes in the ceiling in my room, then I counted the trees I could see from my room, then I started counting the branches and one time I thought, I'm going to see if I can keep count of the leaves as they bud out. So this thing of the kinship terms, the importance, the incredible importance of each individual in this family unit, to have all these titles...Oh, as I was saying about my older sister, she said, "Cause I'm your *llchee*." And after she explained I still didn't want to go get the cows and later on she told on me, she told my mom and my mom said, "She is older than you and she does know a little bit more than you. So you mind. Did she hit you?" "Nooo..." "Your sister has a responsibility toward you because she knows a little bit more than you and she's older, and she has a responsibility to you because you're her younger sister and she's supposed to protect you, from whatever." As the younger sister it was my duty to listen to her, even though I wanted to argue a lot. Same way with older brothers and uncles,

and aunties, and so from a lot of my ponderings and understanding some of these kinship terms that the Bitterroot Salish have make a lot of sense, and it was developed over many, many thousands of years and refined and honored.

The other thing I'd like to talk about is a couple years ago I went with a friend looking for Bitterroots in the Bitterroot Valley and some years back I gave another talk in Roger's class and that was one of the assignments I gave the students then. I said go in the Bitterroot valley, find me some Bitterroots in the Bitterroot Valley, I challenge you; I bet you won't find any very easily. Never did hear from any of them. I said "If you find some you get in touch with me through Roger." Anyway, one of the things that people say, plants and nature are so fragile--I disagree about that, because we're gonna be long gone and nature is still going to be here. Might be altered a little bit but that's because of Nature's choice. When we found these Bitterroots, a friend that was from the Reservation, he's not a cousin or anything but he's a friend now, he called and he said, "Come with me and we'll go look." So as he was looking, he managed to find some, and we went out there and he says, "You're going to be shocked so be prepared for that." And I thought, Oh gosh. Did you kill somebody out there? I was teasing. I didn't know what he meant, shocked. He says, "Where I'm taking you, it...well, we'll just go." So we went out to this place, it's on state land, and there had been logging above that section so that all the vehicles could go through there. But where the Bitterroot were, the ground was all tore up from those big cat machinery that they take up there, and they need quite a bit of ground to turn around and load their logs and such and it had been several years since they finished that unit. But the ground is still packed down, still tracks there, and when it rained still puddles and that clay where it had dried, you could just take it off in blocks and go bake it and you'll have some pretty good bricks. As we were walking on the outside of where the Bitterroots were, we did find some right away, so as we were walking I took a shortcut through all the tracks, and all the mud and clay had been washed away and through all of those tracks where all of it had been packed down there were two bitterroots had come through. When I saw that, it reminded me of my great grandma, my grandma, who were, in my estimation, pretty tough people. And they were fragile in some ways, but they're very durable in a lot of other ways. Like I said here, the Bitterroot had been run over, plowed under, yet its seed is somewhere deep in the ground and over many suns and many rains as they came, and little by little the Bitterroot takes hold and pushes out through the light and blooms. So at the same time it's fragile and durable. So my friend and I, his wife found us and a couple other friends and they brought what is called spading forks. So because of their help I was able to get my supply. I was real stingy with it, I only gave some to one event that happened, for somebody's funeral dinner, but I was able to get enough for about half a gallon, so I had some for New Year's and my kids don't like it, but that's all right. As I was looking at the Bitterroot I got this feeling like they were saying, "We're still here!" And so are the Salish people. We're still here!

Roy Bigcrane

I kind of didn't know what I was getting myself into when I was coming down here, now I know. I'm up for it too. I feel honored to be sitting here with Vic, Louie, Frances. I'm the baby of this group and I feel like they grew up with a lot of the old people that I've only heard stories about and people I've never met. They grew up different than I did as far as the people they knew and how this area and how this land was. So they talked with these people, their elderly people. And those people that they talked to knew the free life that our people did before there was a treaty. And it's not that long ago, it hasn't been that long when there was no such thing as a reservation. Maybe in certain ways it seems like it's a long time to some people, but to our people it's not that long ago. So my elders up here, they talked with people who knew people who remembered the old buffalo days when we were the freest people, the healthiest people I feel on this land. They didn't have any doubts about who they were. There was only one way to live and that's how they lived, living with the spirit, living properly upon this land. They didn't know how to be contrary to this life that the creator gave us. They didn't know how to waste food, they didn't know how to clear-cut, they didn't know how to poison the waters and mine, and they might have seemed like savages to some people, but who they were, these lessons that they learned from these elders, that was the

only thing they knew. If they got sick they knew how to take care of it. If there's some trouble going to be happening in the future, they knew how to take care of it. If they were starving, they knew how to take care of it. They're really tough people, very spiritual people. So they heard a lot of these stories that I've only read about and they heard from other people. So I'm just as anxious to sit up here too and hear what they have to say. I won't use my 20 minutes, but I'll gladly share some of it with the rest of the people up here.

What my job is at Salish Kootenai College, public TV, I work at the TV station, our low power PBS TV station that we have. We also do contract work with different departments in the college, within the tribe and other outside agencies where we get contracted to produce videos for them. One of the jobs I used to do all the time was to videotape people, nature, all of these things and I'm pretty happy in the job that I have because I have fun, go outside, grab a camera, sometimes videotaping people, sometimes being out in nature, feeling the winds, feeling the heat, listening to the trees, listening to the water. I think, yeah, it's pretty good. But sometimes I have to go back to the computer and sit there, stare at the screen and fight sleep, but that's alright too, that's a part of it. My job, I think, is just, I guess I don't feel like my job is the main part of my life, I'm just happy that it's just a part of it.

Let me collect my thoughts. I just had a brain cramp and forgot where I was. Let me have a shot of water. . . I feel that my life, and I'm not just talking about me just to listen to myself, I'm just another person, just another human being, enrollment #4455 on the rolls. I feel that my job, my real job, is to try to conduct myself the best that I can, to raise my family the best that I can, hopefully raising them that they will be good human beings also, and that I can do my job the best that I can.

Frances asked me to mention some people I filmed, and I think that's probably one of the better things, best things of my job, when I've been videotaping elderly people and talking about things such as the place names. The Salish Pend'Orielle Culture Committee has been working on a history book and one of the chapters is "place names" and they have gone over Western Montana and beyond and talked about particular areas where the people have lived, where they raised their families, where they hunted and fished, where they laughed and where they cried and that just shows that our people have been here for awhile, for thousands of years. So they talked about the place names and people didn't think that, the historians or whoever, that our people did too much except maybe go to war all the time and boss women around. So you can see there's a couple of lies there.

So that was one of the good things I was able to do when I was videotaping, meet some of these people that I probably never would have met and hearing the stories of whether they were camping in this particular place and maybe talking about Bigfoot or talking about these types of things that I would never hear and living in these places. But one of the things I remember, and hearing it from Frances too, that there's a lot of places in the land where these people, my elders up here, they're camping in the mountains, making their winter supply of meat, all the things that they needed and having a good time up in the mountains or along the rivers, along the creeks. I didn't do that much, but as a child I still remember being out there for a little while, not for weeks at a time or months, and I remember Frances one time talking about these places. She goes up in these places and there's a lot of people that go up in these particular areas and remember, and it's not just like rewinding a tape and watching it over again but remembering, feeling all the, everything that went on, hearing the laughter again, hearing this and that, hearing the language being spoken all the time. That was the only way they knew. And all the things that went with it, their families, and that's how I feel too about this land because I know my ancestors, they've done all that they could so that we could be here right now. They sacrificed and sacrificed and sacrificed. Argued with the US government, argued with the state, argued with the counties and we're still trying to maintain what little corner, what we have left yet. But this nature is still our relative, we know that our ancestors still come visit us when we think we're alone out there. (Jeez, seems like I'm quoting Chief Seattle.) Maybe we're lonely and all of a sudden nature is showing you that you're not alone, if you're

paying attention. So this nature is our relative, it'll talk to us and comfort us and wipe our tears and make us laugh, nature is more than just the science of rocks and trees and cold air masses and warm air masses bumping together to create wind--it's more than that.

I'm running out of words so... I'm starting to, as my buddy would say, fart in a whirlwind here, so I don't know if I made any sense but I'm ready to listen to somebody with knowledge speak, so I'll call it at that. I thank you for your time, I thank Roger, or whoever thought I was worthy enough to sit up here, because I don't feel like I know anything. I'm trying to learn, and nature helps me a lot, and listening to people who know more than me–it helps me try to put the puzzle together, as I'm sure that most people who are sitting here are trying to do. We are here for a reason and we're all trying to look for a better life, maybe not materially but in the higher way. We're seeking something that is bigger than the U.S. government, bigger than that. We're looking for something and I think wilderness, if it can be called that, nature, can help us more along those lines if we take care of it. We don't take care of it and we're gonna get a big spanking. So that's all I have. Thank you.

Louie Adams
Speaks in Salish. (Translation: I thank all of you for being here to let me share a few things with you, I especially thank Roger for inviting me.) I'm a Salish Indian. I always claim to be full Salish although I'm not. Frances and my great grandmother, Mary Kelton, but we called her Sackwoman, there was a reason for that, but her dad was a Shawnee. Then we had from the woman's side, we have relatives that are Cheyenne. Before we was Adams, we used to have a name that was about that long (gesture). My great grandma used to tell my dad when he'd go out to mess with horses, don't be like your ancestor Nxul'tcka, don't be afraid of your horses. That was our ancestor's name, Afraid of his Horse. But I claim to be Salish.

I was up in the Bitterroot some time ago, and Dale Burke, I've met him quite a few years ago but he put out a book, "Lewis and Clark meet the Salish in the Bitterroot" or something like that, but two years ago I was a little bit late for his talk and this year I made sure I was there because after he talks he leaves, but he's a nice fellow. I wish he was here, maybe he is, I don't know. But when he talked he said he saw me sitting up there, he said, "You know we're going to get into this history of the Salish when they were in the Bitterroot. You know the Flatheads were, Lewis and Clark called them Flatheads but that was a misnomer. They're Salish. And also *Otlashoots*." So by golly when he said that, I made sure when he was done with talking, I said, "You stick around. Don't leave, I got something to say." Because when I did talk, I said, "We're Salish, but also a misnomer is that *Otlashoots*, there's no such thing as us being that." When our people met Lewis and Clark, sure they were strangers to a lot of our people, to most of them, but I remember my great grandmother used to say they weren't the first white people that some of our people met. Some of them come from *cáttulex*^{w}, from the north. That was some of the first white people they met. But when Lewis and Clark met our people up there I imagine the only communication they had was sign language and he probably asked them, Three Eagles, he probably asked him, "Where do you people live?" And Three Eagles probably just pointed down below and said, *tl'isut*. That's what that means, "down below." So, "Oh, *Otlashoot*..." So that's why I told Dale Burke, "That's why. We're not *Otlashoot* Indians. All he said was, `Down below, that's where they live.'"

But anyway, I guess it's gonna be a big thing this year on Lewis and Clark so I'll get into that a little bit, very little. When he came around I had a relative called Sophie Moiese, she was from the Bitterroot. She used to say her folks, her grandparents, one of her ancestors said, when they saw these strange people get there, they were pale, they thought they were sick, they said, but they had one black one. That was the main concern of the Salish. Because the Salish have a medicine dance in the wintertime and when you have a medicine dance there's a few people that become blue jays, and when you're a blue jay you paint your face with ashes, you make yourself black, because there's a ceremony with that. And they wondered what these strange people, what kind of ceremony they were going to perform that they had a blue jay

with them. So through sign language and through however they finally found out, they walked up to this colored man and they rubbed their finger on his face, and that is his real color. The first black man they ever met. So then they relaxed, they thought, well I guess they're not going to have a ceremony to destroy us, or whatever. But this was not included in a lot of things I have heard over the years and I always stress that because Sophie Moiese, she stressed that.

But anyway, getting back to the history right here, right here in this mountain east of us here, of the University, that's *Nm̓q^{w}i*. Humpback. Anytime my grandma and I was out here her sister and my cousin, whenever we'd camp out by where Shopko's at, my folks used to take us up there and we'd stay there about a week or two in the spring digging Bitterroot. But she would always point that that's *Nm̓q^{w}i*. Humpback. She was between here, next to the river, she was born there in 1897. Her dad was getting Bull Trout. That's what Missoula, the word Missoula means--"Place of Bull Trout". And then you go down a ways and get to the Hellgate Canyon, that's *cncxleutn*, that's where some of the Blackfeet and some of the our other traditional enemies waited to ambush us or whoever came through there, Nez Perce, but that was *cncxleutn*. Go further down and you get to Rock Creek, that was *npnetq*, meant "a lot of logs in the water." Course I'll back up a ways, you get to Bonner and that area, *Nyccstm*, that's another place where you got Bull Trout.

Then you go toward Potomac, *Epsx^{w}elí*, right in that area that big open place. We were there two years ago, John Paul and his wife were with us. John Paul, by the way, passed away here about three or four weeks ago, he was 92. But his wife is still alive, she's 90. But when we got down in there she wanted to stop, she said, "stop" and everybody got out, she was showing us a place right by the highway next to a crick. She said, "We used to camp here. We used to camp here when we were kids." She mentioned my great grandma, my grandma, she said your dad and Louie Finley and me, I forget, she mentioned a bunch of others, she said, "We were the kids. We camped here, at night you could hear the wolves all around these mountains, these hills." Somebody asked her, "Well, being if there was so many wolves were there a lot of deer and elk?" She said, "Yes, there were a lot of deer and elk." That our creator, our *K^{w}lncutn*, takes care of these things. Because when you look at it nowadays you mention wolves to be introduced here or grizzly bears--"No we don't want them. We don't want wolves, that'll raise heck with the cattle production and whatever else, grizzly bears are too ugly, they'll kill people." Ah, our people... they had every right to be here, they were equal. That's why when I read these things when I see these things it kind of bothers me. People forgot how to share. We can send people to explore Mars and Pluto and the Moon and whatever else and down here on Earth we've got animals that are going extinct. We've got fish, whales that are leaving, we've got elephants that are going away, Rhinos, cactus, certain types of bushes, flowers, somehow that's not right. This young man here (gestures toward Roy Bigcrane) kind of touched on that a while ago. There's something wrong in this world. Our people through thousands of years considered this their mother, Mother Earth. Because our sweat lodges, that was our churches throughout the land. From there everything spread out. You knew there was a creator. Our people knew there was a creator long before the Jesuits, before the white man ever came around. They knew there was a maker of everything. Yet, I guess that's why we were taken advantage of. Because when the white man got here and they would ask about certain parts of land: "Well, if you want to stay there go ahead. It's not ours." What the Indian meant was, we don't own land. The land owns us. So, these new people that came around said, "Oh. Hey they said they don't own it, so we'll take it. We'll fence it, we'll parcel it out." Because that's just the way our ancestors looked at the land, looked at the animals. Looked at the... Everything was equal. Because they knew there was a maker.

When I was growing up I remember, I used to hear some of the old people, they say when you lose somebody, when you lose your grandparents, when you lose your parents, you can find them. You go to your favorite place in the springtime or in the summertime. You might go to a ridge, you might go to a meadow, might go to a draw, might go to a mountain. You go up there, and you sit down, you sit down by a tree or wherever you want to sit down, and you just wait. You sit there long enough and maybe a

wild chicken will come up to you, maybe a pine squirrel, maybe a rabbit, maybe a deer, a bear, and in their own way these animals are telling you, hey, we're here. This Earth isn't done yet. We're your folks. Your folks knew us, now you know us. Take heart, that's what our people would say. It's not the end.

But anyway, from *Nyccstm* down there by Bonner, you go down toward Potomac, and you pass that, you go North from Greenough, just before you get to the river, I remember Mrs. Paul telling us, "Over next to the river by the bank, they call that *Snpikmqne*, right at the edge where the mountain goes down to the river, she said we used to camp here. And we were the kids. There was a lot of game, a lot of whitefish in that river, a lot of trout. From there we'd go to Clearwater, right where the Clearwater junction is, our people call that *Ccnpa*." There was an old Indian that died there, they buried him there, I know where his grave is at, that was his name, *Ccnpa*. South of the highway where all the stores and so forth are next to the river there, there's a little series of hills, they're low hills, and that's, can't think of it right now, but when I was a kid we used to go over there and oh, there were a lot of deer, good deer hunting. I think that was kind of where I learned how to hunt because my dad knew it, just shooting in all directions. From there we went down to Salmon Lake, my dad was born on the north end of Salmon Lake in a campground there, called *Solí*, that's what Salmon Lake is. Placid Lake is just west of that---they call it *ctqlé*. Had a good old white friend there, he died in 68 but his folks were good friends of all of our ancestors, people that I didn't even know. Then you go down to Seeley Lake, *Eptcix^{w}cx^{w}t*, that means "there are fish hawks."

But I'm getting too far over there. I could go clear to Hungry Horse, Bob Marshall is *Lq^{w}lq^{w}olex* to our people and I went there quite often when I was growing up. When I was little I used to go in there with my dad. I remember my dad took some hunters in there, a whole slug of white guys. My dad had a pack string and took them in there and they set up tents. They set up one tent specifically for gambling. They had folding chairs and they sat there and they had one packhorse full of booze. And all they did was gamble. And they had my dad do the hunting. Everyone of them ended up with an elk, and my dad used to say I'd like to know the stories they told when they got home. How they got their bull elk, and how...all they did was get drunk and gamble. I remember, the last time my dad took some hunters up there, one guy when he came out he gave my dad a .303 Savage. He told him, "Well, Lome, this is my last trip in here. You can have my rifle." My dad had that rifle till...I don't know whatever become of it.

Anyway, when we go down this way, from *Sxplstwe* right down here, down by Fort Missoula there's kind of a big hill there, that's *Smlqsna*. And Fort Missoula...you know all the forts around the country have names. Different names to you people. But to the Indian, all forts had just one name. *Sxplstwe*. That means "home of the killers." Because when they were established that's what they were about. Protect their loved ones and whatever else from us, I guess. But all forts just have one name to us. Then you pass that to Council Groves, I don't exactly know where Council Groves are because the old people used to say, that's not exactly where it was at. They call that *Ncqwotews*. Apparently there's a lot of small trees there. But that's what they called Council Groves. Then you go south to *Nncca* just before you get to Lolo. They said before they put a highway in there, the wagon trail was on a steep side hill, it was real steep and it was real narrow, that's what *Nncca* means, "narrow." They said, "And boy, when you started on that if you were on a wagon, you hoped there was nobody coming from the other way on a wagon." But you passed that then you got to Lolo. And Lolo was *Tmsmti* yet Lolo, LoLoh, is an Indian word, meaning Lawrence. But then that area our people called *Tmsmti*, "no salmon." Because in our legendary stories, coyote tried to get some salmon over to that area because there was no salmon. He come from the other side, he had a pack and a bunch of salmon but he'd lose one every once in awhile, it'd slide back down into the beargrass, down the Lochsa or wherever, he just about got the last one up on top on the mountains there and it fell out, he didn't catch it. Went back down, but that's how there's no salmon there. And that whole Bitterroot Range, that's *ck^{w}lk^{w}lqn* to our Indians. I remember some of the old

people used to say, "Early in the morning when you get up before the sun comes over, it's still just shining on the mountains, they were red." That's why they call them *ck^{w}lk^{w}lqn*.

But anyway when you pass, right from there, is the Nez Perce call that the NeMePu Trail, that means, "Trail to the Buffalo Country." And I gave a talk one time at Lolo Hotsprings and there were a bunch of Nez Perce there, we almost got in a fist fight, because I said, "Hey, wait a minute, that's also a trail that goes clear to *Naptnisa* from here and that's what our people call that trail, and it's a trail that goes clear to the ocean. You've got to remember, it's a two way trail." From there you get to Florence. But they call that *cpukus*. Our people call that *cpukus*. I guess when there was the first little settlement of white people there, there was a blacksmith there. And they said every time, he was friendly, they said every time we saw him he had his blacksmith apron what he had, and oh it was greasy. That's what that means, *cpukus* is "greasy belly." Then from there they went on to *tqetmls*, that's Stevensville; our people stayed there, that's where they wintered. They used to say in the springtime that's when everybody scattered. Went to their favorite places. Some went clear down to, like I say, the Bob Marshall, some went to Yellowstone, wherever. In the fall when the people come back late in the fall some people didn't come back because some went to the buffalo country also and if they didn't meet up with Crows or the Blackfeet and got killed over there, lot of times they'd have an accident trying to kill a buffalo, so some people wouldn't come back... yet some people would stay at their favorite places for a year, two years, three years. Especially the Yellowstone. I remember, they call that *Nkaqesocqetq*, "the hot springs, the hot water coming out of the ground" is what that means. And they said a lot of the people would stay over there, not a lot but some of the people, and if they had enough, if they gathered enough fish and meat and whatever else for winter they'd like to stay there because there's a hot springs they'd make their sweat lodges there and just stay there all winter. That was when they would come back to Stevensville because some of our old Indians used to say, "We needed each other. We need to be together once in a while because we're all one, we're a family, like all of us here."

And from there, they went on to Victor, and Victor was *Npo*. And they said somebody must have had a horse that got a sore on his back, a saddle sore or something, and that's what that means, but they shortened it to *Npo*. And then from there to Hamilton, *ctclcle*. The reason they call that *ctclcle*, they said whenever you got near Hamilton, of course Hamilton wasn't there yet, you know when you're driving down the highway in the summertime and you come over a little rise and you can see the mirage, something looks like it's in the water, that's what that meant. They said whenever you got near there you'd see all these aspen trees or quaking aspen, whatever they were they were little trees, they looked like they were in water. So the Indians called that *ctclcle*, that's what it means, it's like "trees in the water." And then you pass that to *Snk^{w}tx^{w}ex^{w}emí*, Darby. There was a deceptive rock across the river there that the Indians used to challenge each other—who could lift that rock. They said it wasn't very big but by golly, one person couldn't lift it. Anyway they lost a lot of horses and blankets on it. From there you get to *Sntetepti*, when you turn there you go up the west fork of the Bitterroot. The west fork, *Sntetepti* just means kind of "the edge," and you turn west going up toward *Eptmsowyè*, they said there was a root in the ground that was pretty big, the plant grew about two feet tall and they said that was good whenever you dug those up and baked them in the ground. They said it was good eating. That's why they call that area *Eptmsowyè*. You go up there now there's farms and whatever else. I remember one time going up there my grandma said, "There wouldn't be anything left like that." And you get to the bottom of that, where the highway starts winding, they call that *Ste?i*, there were some big pine trees there that the Indians had got some cambium from. But when you climb that and get to the Idaho line there's a trail that goes north. They call that *Namsa*, that ridge, and my great, great grandpa is buried up there—today he is still up there. He was buried there in 1900. He was with his relative Chief Charlo and a few guys I used to know who they were but I don't anymore, but they went over that *Namsa* they call that trail, and that just means "a trail to move on." They'd go into which is now Idaho and down at the bottom there was a place called *Nistetq*, the stream was deep and slow. That's why they call it *Nistetq*. They used to camp down in there, and this old man, my great great granddad died back there, they said, and

they put him on a horse and tried to get him back to the Bitterroot, they said they'd come a ways and he'd fall. They finally got him on that ridge and they buried him there. But he's still there, I go visit him once or twice a year. Last year I didn't make it up there. Frances has been there.

You know when we talk about this *Naptnisa*, the trail that goes through Lolo clear to the ocean, you know when Chief Joseph got chased out of his country he came through there. But before he got to Fort Fizzle he sent a runner ahead to Victor's relative's camp, to Chief Charlo's camp. This runner got there he said, "We need some help coming," because they knew those people there. There was a fort built there and there were volunteers. And John Delaware, I heard him telling my dad and Pete Vanderburg and I forgot who he was telling, he said, "Me and my two brothers went back with him. We helped them come on through there, we came on the *càlt* side, on the cold side, which would be the north ridge." He said, "And when we got to Charlo's camp." (The dominant society that attached a name to Paul Charlo, Martin Charlo, originally it was just *Sal'lu*, Charlo.) They said, "When we got to Charlo's camp, Susep, (that's Chief Joseph. Our people called him *Hànmasqt*. I wish I would have asked what that, why, because that means "eight days.") Anyway, he asked Chief Charlo if they could rest, if they could stay there. He said, `Sure! You can stay here as long as you want. You can live with us if you want. Any part of your people. Or all of you. But we won't help you fight. The days of winning wars with the *Suyapi* (which is white people), are over. If we help you fight we'll all get killed.' So, he understood that. He said, `Yeah, we just want to rest.'" But some of the Nez Perce did stay. Because we've got a lot of relatives, a lot of people that are related to Nez Perce. They always talk about *Olakot*, getting killed over where they finally caught up to them. That's not true, he built a log cabin over there by Horseshoe bend, west of Ronan. They left Charlo's camp and kept running away, but they got to *cq?e*, that's the medicine tree. People, all the Indians throughout the northwest, knew this place. This is where, this is also using Dale Burke's words, a misnomer on the people. They said "The Indians. Oh, they worship anything. Rocks, the moon, the sun, whatever." And that's not true. They use things. That's why a young man will go to the highest part of a mountain where the last tree is growin, because that's the highest one that's reaching up to the creator. And if you look around all the trees, all the flowers, all the bushes they all reach up, see this is what our people have seen through the years. But when they got up to *cq?e*, they camped south of the crick there, there's a little flat place there. Chief Joseph told his medicine man, *Kulkulsna*, he said, "You go over to that *cq?e*, the medicine tree and pray. See what we have to do." He was gone quite a while and when he came back he said, "We gotta pack up, we gotta go." Joseph asked, "Well, is the army too close?" He said, "They're not real close but there's other dangers --we gotta go." He said, "No, we can't. We've got too many tired old people, we've got tired kids, we've got tired horses. I'm thankful for what you did but we have to rest. Yeah, we'll leave before we have to, but we gotta rest." And that's why they were caught up to in the Big Hole--when they did leave it was still too soon, and some of the volunteers caught up to them.

But that was the story on Chief Joseph's trip through here. Because whenever I gave a talk over in Lolo Hot Springs some of the young Nez Perce were pretty bitter. They said because Chief Charlo didn't have nothing to do with Chief Joseph and his people, he told them to get away and stuff. And when I gave a talk there was one old man sitting in the audience, he never said anything but after I got done talking I said because we got a lot of people up on our reservation that are part Nez Perce that are related to us, finally this old man stood up and he said, "He's right. I've got some relatives up there. I just never said anything to anybody, because nobody would believe me."

But this is how some of our old people were, they just listened. I've got a good story on that, I've got a young man here that came up to one of my talks up there and he knows the story. But there was, when they first started all this exploration in Alaska, this one Indian guy was telling me. He said, "This one exploratory outfit came in there and they wanted to hire somebody from out there that would take them up different rivers, so they hired my grandpa, cause everybody pointed at him and said, 'Oh he knows the country well.' So everyday they'd pick him up and take this big fancy boat and whole crew and go up

different streams, finally they settled on one river. They worked on it for two years. Finally they flagged one area and they went up about five miles, put some more flagging, and they got it all completed and the boss with his boat told my grandpa," Well today we're done. All this exploration that we've been doing, we found out where the dog salmon spawn." They got back and they paid him off. They said, `By the way this area that we roped off that we settled on, does that have an Indian name?' `Yeah.' `Well, what is it?' He told him. `What does that mean?' `Where the dog salmon spawn.'"

But I guess that's what I have to share with you, so thank you.

Victor Charlo

Good Evening. My name is Chetleh Skyeeme, that means Three Eagles...I hope. After all these Salish speakers, I'm not a Salish speaker. My folks, when they grew up, they experienced a lot of problems going to school, just knowing their native languages. My mom made it to the third grade, my dad didn't even make it through the first grade. So when we were growing up, one of the things that they made sure that was going to happen in our family was that nobody was going to learn the language. And isn't that too bad. I really feel like that's really, just to listen to Louie talk about those name places, it makes me really sad that I don't know those names also. But that's the way it is. You make the best of it. And so who I am, I'm a UM graduate, I hung around here for about 7 years as a senior, played on the Clover Bowl that this place is now, used to drink a lot down there on Eddy Street with Dick Hugo, and of course that little house is gone. And I think that's one of the things that we're talking about. Is that the things we see change, the things we see that are just obliterated, like Hugo's house. They went in there and just, I don't know, rolled a CAT over it or something. That was a beautiful little house. A lot of memory. And so I try to write poetry, I try to use native names, native thoughts. Trying to get something to my children. And it might not be Salish, but it's certainly some things that I hope that make sense to them, that gives them hope and gives their lives meaning. I have 4 children. The youngest is 23 now, and the oldest is 28. Which is pretty amazing to me. I didn't think I was going to have any children. I was in the seminary for 6 years. You don't have children in the seminary. Thank God I got out. I have 4 beautiful children. I want to read this first poem, I'm gonna read some poetry. This first poem I call" Pattee Canyon Run." Actually I have the date when I wrote it, 1976, which is pretty amazing. I used to put dates on my poetry, I wish I still did because it gives you some kind of idea of when things happened. My oldest baby, she's 28, Mary. My wife and I were in Missoula one time and we were doing those usual things in Missoula. You know, just going crazy. Trying to get things done. Try to do this errand, try to do that errand. Because that's Missoula. And then we decided that we had to get out of Missoula and go eat somewhere, and this is what happened.

Pattee Canyon Run, 1976

We, Bitterroot Salish, ride here to escape new enemy
and quick meat our interest now as then.
Steep slope chides us windless and crazy
yet I can feel trail in old smoke and breeze.

Hot needles paint me here where Blackfeet
never hide in ambush. Trail angles me
up the ridge toward tall yellow pine, whose
pieces sing a puzzle bigger than time and trees

and sky and Earth and rain. Thirsty, I run
to whispered secrets of old times found again.

I haven't read that poem in years. It's a good one, though. Still a good one. How old. . . were you guys born then? I'm realizing, I've been a teacher all my life and we're talking about things that we think is like current times, current events, and we look at our students and we realize that they haven't the foggiest idea what we're talking about. Oh, the Vietnam war. Let me tell you about the Vietnam war. And that's kind of how we deal with that.

My dad. My dad was a chief, he died a few years ago. And one of the things that Roger and I talked about, he used to like to go up to the Bitterroot, because of course that was home. And of course it was a place where, when he was young, they were migrant workers and they went working up there. And there were places when we'd go up to the medicine tree in the fall and in the spring, and he'd point out places, where they camped, where they stayed. When they were working for this farmer, working for that farmer. Where they sweat. One time we were, he used to talk about Red Mountain, which is St. Mary's Peak. One day we were at Stevensville and he was telling me, "Look, look at Red Mountain. You can see it's red." And he looked at it for a long time, and then he said, "But it's not as red as it used to be." And I remember that. And so, this is one of the poems that I wrote for him. Stick Game. Dad was a real stick game player, liked to play stick games. A gambling game, a traditional gambling game that we still play. As a matter of fact, Kyi-Yo Indian club had a tournament here last Kyi-Yo days, I saw. I was going to come down and win all the money, but I didn't make it. Maybe this year I'll have to do that. This one I call "Stick Game and the Chief."

Stickgame and the Chief

Different. I gambled with Dad, the Chief, all night
and we won. Dad got away and made sticks, got huffy,
sung hard, shook hands and laughed with Clifford after he
made his home run when we were down to one stick. Where
there's life there's hope. Dad collected his winnings,
smiled as he put away his $50 bill
and said, "I'm going home. I'm taking Sammy to the Carnival."
He drove his red truck and blue camper away in dawn,
before we left the stickgame pavilion, he was gone.

And I? I hid the bones, went against my hunch
to hide the black bone toward the east and got
caught. Go with your hunch and you'll get away.
I danced in Tom Brown's memorial dance
and felt stiff yet ready to be the son of the Chief.

for the Chief, Antoine Charlo

This next one I wrote for my son. When he was that big. Of course he's this big now, really big guy. But when he was this big, I used to look at him. And those days I used to think about the old folks, my grandparents. And all those old people, and used to wonder what it would have been like if they journaled. You know, like if Chief Charlo journaled. Wouldn't that have been something. Well, today...And so I wrote this poem, as a matter of fact I wrote it here on campus, I wrote it at the UC which used to be by the way the old football field. And I dedicate it to my son, "for Martin Antoine Victor Paul Charlo." The computer can't handle that, about all they can do is "Martin Antoine VP Charlo." But what I realized, what I did is I named my son after all the chiefs, all my grandparents. And I call it "Generations of Need."

Generations of Need

Generations find focus in my little boy's face
when thoughts of old times and old folks creep
into that need to delve deep into who
we are. He is the little chief without saying..

I read worry of Moise who states that we
have too much schooling, and now we think
more than we should. He says the people
used to send a young boy to the top of Red

Mountain for the good of all of our people
and we were well. I follow DeSmet's dream
as I try to freeze a focus on unfamiliar
feelings except that we do belong to mountains

and my boy is the face of all of our grandfathers
who hold both of us true to cottonwood and stone.

Damn, I blew that last line, and I'm not gonna read it again. We used to do that, huh? We'd blow a line and we'd read it again. Not tonight. I won't do that to you. Another one. Well I guess I could read this out of the book. Hugo, I just love that, when I first met Hugo he'd say, "Well, I'm gonna read out of my book now." Now I can say that, of course it's the only book I've got, after 63 years, but I can still say it. It's *Dancing on the Rim of the World*, the editor is Andrea Lerner. And it's Northwest Poets that are in here, and a few others. Talking about time, space, I grew up. See the thing is, even though the Bitterroot is really a part of us, a lot of us never grew up there. I grew up in this town called Evaro which is, as you go up Evaro Hill, it's right up on top. And where we lived, as you're going north, if you look over to the right, you'll see this big field of camas, that was home. And there was a crick that went by there where dad built his sweathouse, it was called Frog Crick. And I, the poem is called "Frog Creek Circle" and it's for my family, especially Jan.

Frog Creek Circle

Mountains so close we are relative.
Creek so cold it brings winter rain.

We return to warm August home,
Frog Creek, where I've lived so long
that smells are stored, opened only
here. This land never changes, always
whole, always the way we want it to be,
yet we always come back
to check our senses or to remember
rain. We are remembered today in circles
of family, of Red Pine, of old time chiefs,
of forgotten horses that thunder dark stars.

These are songs that we come to this day
soft as Indian mint, as strange as this sky.

I live on the Flathead River now. There's an eagle tree right across the river. If the eagles were extinct a few years ago, around the Flathead today there is hope. I saw two this morning on the eagle tree, this evening I probably saw five or six or so on Mission Crick. Looks like there's a spawn going on. Beautiful, beautiful birds. I wrote this poem for a friend of mine, and I call it "Web." And it's for Asia Hoh Wristel.

WEB

Eagles whistle across river
in ancient tongue I try to understand
and calm green river reminds me
I am connected to web of life
as morning fog reverberates
with eagle song of my grandfathers.
Web quivers delicately.
Now bright November sun warms my spirit
with lovely rays bursting through twisted Juniper,
tracing delicate shadows on my window,
and I dream of you, your dark lovely eyes.
Your spirit so close I freeze in mid-thought, listening.
You tell me of your love of ancient home far away.
History insists you are a true sister warrior
and I hear your dedicated love of grandparents in Vietnam,
a world you want to be
and sadness settles on me like soft mist.
I want to tell you my heart,
how I celebrate my joy in your friendship
how I carry your letters, your calls, your kind words.
I want to tell you that your pain is my pain,
your happiness is my happiness
but love gets stuck in childhood stutter,
I can't explain.
Yet I know you'll have to go where
you'll find what you need to grow
as I think of delicate ballet,
and violent trick of fate.
And Asia, I cover you with my love,
like I covered you with my deep purple
Oklahoma Pendleton that night you stayed.
I dance the web with love.

*Note: WEB was not lined out by Vic before his stroke. The present form is the editor's approximation.

Sometimes we have to go away from home to find out what home is about. Chuck Jonkle, the bear man at the University here, takes us to see the polar bears, and I'm sure some of you might have gone, Roger's gone, it's a great trip, you gotta do it. And you can do it. All you gotta do is talk to Chuck. He'll find a way. Even if you don't have money. It cost big bucks, but you can get there. One of the things that happened to me was that I was really inspired. Probably wrote the most poetry I'd ever written, probably some of my best poetry, and one of them that I wrote was published in Northern Lights. One of the few

things that gets published. I'm in Poetry East, though too, so I'm not despairing yet. Well actually I just hate it. I just hate to send my stuff off. And I just hate that dance that you do with publishers. And if there's any publishers out there, really I love you guys. I really do. But it's that process that I just hate! And this, and the poems and stuff, they left me alone and that was the only reason they got in. I call this one "Churchhill Bear Jail." There's a jail up in Churchhill, and here's a story I told to a five year old when I got home, and he was really interested, of course he's a big kid now too, really interested and I told him the story and of course, Bear Jail, boy, his ears really perked up. And his parents and I sat there and we joked about it. Because bears are like Indians. Sort of. "Churchhill Bear Jail." And this is for my pal, Frank Barnabee. He was the little five year old.

CHURCHHILL BEAR JAIL

One of your first major stops in Churchhill is jail,
bear jail which makes you feel sad and odd
at the same time then this feeling turns to knowing
that bear jail is silly yet incredibly bizarre.

Bizarre seems the right word to describe quonset
hut outside of town, but there is more. Bears, you're told,
are given jail time depending on their offense and how
many times they commit that offense or any other faux pax.

First offenders are hauled back to Churchhill Cape with other
free bears, but if they come back to raid
or to be caught again, they are given thirty days.
They are not fed while they are serving their time.

Thirty days in jail without a lawyer, without
a judge, without a jury, without bail, without
good time served, you realize. Then you think
of bizarre ways of breaking them out. No justice.

Yet you think what would happen if there is
a judge. "Thirty days," the judge says, bear representing
himself asks about his bear rights. Judge says,
he should waive any rights because bear has none
anyway. The bear waves goodbye with perfect law
decorum to be put in his cell till hell freezes over.
But what is bear's offense? That he can smell
food for twenty miles? That a town is built on ancient

rendezvous ground that was his so long that genes
are imprinted with a map where every stone is turned?
That he can be trapped because there is ring seal
meat in bear trap and he is hungry before the hunt?

Is this justice? You can't help but think of all native
people in the same fix. You hear odd story about
a three, four time, many time loser bear who would
stretch his neck and close his eyes waiting for the dart.

What do bears dream of when they are all tranked
up? Dreaming of ancient ice to cover Hudson's Bay?
Can they be let out when ice does come before
their thirty, sixty days are up? What about incorrigibles?

What about all of us who know jail for bear
is truly bizarre, do we know that spirit is on trial
or what we feel for bear (our free spirit come loose)
or that their need to be free rings true with our love, our care?

I used to sit in those seats, of course not these, and just waited for the person to get done with these talks. I'm torturing you guys. It's just fun to be up here. Thanks! Thanks for inviting me. I like doing this. I've done it all my life, I guess. Dick Hugo, ancient history, right? You might see something somewhere in the English department maybe, fine arts department maybe. He was a pretty cool guy. And we were pretty good friends for really a long time. And one time this friend and I were going up into the, up through the Potomac and up that way, Salmon Lake, I think we were going up for a retreat there. And I was telling her about Dick, and how we were maybe going to go visit some of the places where he went, like Garnet. So, here's the story. And I call it the Mill Town. And it's for Ann Marie Yaley.

THE MILL TOWN
For Anne Marie Jehle

We miss Garnet, soon after we get
on Golden Road, as we talk about how
we see the world. Our job today--~~to~~ honor
Hugo's memory by stopping at places
he saw and wrote about. Garnet ghosts
are tricky.

Mill Town Union Bar (Laundromat
and Café) felt strange until we went in. There
was something wrong yet right about that bar
still called Harold's Club. Harold tried to get fancy
and change the name on us. Dick wrote a poem
about the old name, place that I truly know, and I
open in at Mill Town.

So, Anne Marie,
I bring you here to see these heads and this bad
painting. The cross swords gone or hidden.
The rest is here. We order draft beer
like Dick and I would do. I read his poem
to you. That moment would have been fine
if it ended there, but it didn't.

No, the guy with a snoot-ful, sitting next to me asked,
"What ya got there?" Pointing at Hugo's
book. I happily show him the poem,
and he reads. He laughs and asks where
he can get a copy of the book.
I tell him this particular one

Is probably out of print. I can't close
the door. He tells me to show the poem
to the bartender. She reads long and smiles.
She asks if she can copy the poem.
I'm glad. She buys us "two scoops," as we
used to call them. She says, "mugs."
I think
of Dick's line as she writes on that yellow pad:
"You need never leave. Money or a story brings
you booze." Or a memory, I think. The spelling
queen bee told us the word laundromat
is spelled wrong. Bartender, you and I act
as if it's still there not gone.

Everything else was there that
day in disarray. They saved
the heads even if Harold tried to make
his bar that elegant club where people
from Missoula
would fly by freeway.
We came. Dick, Annick, Dave, me, students
and what about the time we shot part
of the first movie on that Saturday
night.

And, Anne Marie, these memories
all have meaning, not just for me
but for you, now, not just because you
are my friend, but because the word burns
with first fire. We are these stories now
as sure as Dick and I would sing you
now, then to magic time, to those first
safe places we find growing up. And now
we burn yes, we sing yes to world we find
in us.

Okay. You're off the hook. One more. Chuck Jonkle, good friend of mine, we honored the bear. We had the first bear honoring on the reservation at the Kicking Horse Job Corps Pow Wow in May. And hopefully we'll have our second honoring of the bear this year at Kicking Horse Job Corps. Come out and celebrate. This poem was just with me the whole time I was going to Churchhill and when I finally got to Churchhill I was able to write the poem. And the song just kept coming and kept coming to me. And it's called The Walking Bear Song. And I didn't make that connection, I don't think there for awhile. And finally I did. And ordinarily I don't sing songs in public. But that day at Churchhill in this place where we were staying in this little basement, some of the folks that came up with us and we became really close friends, asked me to do this poem the way I wanted to do it. And I did. And that gave me some courage you know maybe to sing some of these songs. And so The Walking Bear Song goes with this. I don't see any cameras, I don't want any tape recorders or anything like that on.

[Vic sings The Walking Bear Song, an old Salish Song, eyes closed, fills the whole auditorium with a powerful voice coming through him every bit as much as coming from him. It is a voice thousands of years old, voice from the kinship with bears.] ed.

THE WALKING BEAR SONG

. . . . . becomes centered north as you leave warm reservation
to travel unknown trails guided by faith and spirit knowing
you are at the center of the universe wherever you are.
You try to walk in a sacred manner with all beings knowing
you do your best to do what is right. Your feet are light as song,
Walking Bear Song that urges you on, urges you on to
country of your ancestors. The Cree and the Chippewa and Walking
Bear comes, finally home. Was it ancient scratches on glacier polished
granite that told you your ancestors were waiting? Or was it high
wind that geese ride north or those owls who sang of the great snowy,
those owls on tree at your door at old Dixon agency? You want to paint
your face a color mixed with red granite and Hudson's bay water as a sign
that you take your place at council fire with Bear to talk of relatives, to
share songs. You remember teacher singing who Walking Bear was, as
you scratch your joy deep in smooth, hard stone.

*Note: THE WALKING BEAR SONG was not lined out by Vic before his stroke. The present form is the editor's approximation.

Frances Vanderburg, Louis Adams, Roy Bigcrane, Vic Charlo

Student Responses to Salish Voices by Frances Vanderburg, Louis Adams, Roy Bigcrane, Vic Charlo

1)

Bitterroots Climb Me

My body is stirring with earthquakes. Little ones in my soul. I can almost feel skin move on its own accord. I feel my stomach tear apart inside, and I can't keep my eyebrows from diving into each other. Crash! I don't want anyone to see how little control I have over my body. How little control I have over my emotions as I stare at the Pharaoh Plex stabbing the air around it with the Bitterroots rising from behind. The mountains are the greatest witness to all my weaknesses. The Bitterroots still rise as this valley is developed, torn, pulled apart, and lacquered. The Pharaoh Plex. The newest additions to this growing community where you could, once upon a time, drive on a two-lane road, instead of a four-lane, and not be bombarded with billboards advertising subdivisions and Western kitsch. But it is all relative. I feel glib in wanting the two-lane days back, because what about the days when there were no lanes? Just worn paths in the great basin rye. I give the Egyptian multi-plex movie theater the finger along with some other ritual posturing and make my merry way down the asphalt road that took me there. Roads. It keeps coming back to roads. I see a plane flying overhead, a smart silver one, and figure it must be Schwab leaving a consultation on the aesthetics of golf course houses. His rationale is the wave of the future. Roads in the sky. Pock-marked and stretch-marked. Pretty white scars where no knapweed could dream of colonizing. Does anyone ever wonder about the roads in the sky? The wave of the future. Buy your S.U.V for the sky and nobody can blame you! With highways, comes the unavoidable roadside paraphernalia: billboards, pieces of random metal, utility poles, noxious weeds, forgotten strip malls….a junk yard of the American Dream. It's harder to see the beauty of the Bitterroots with my legacy obstructing the view. But there are places along the road where chaos stops and things appear more natural…whatever that means…more like people knowing the land whether it is through cows, horses, weeds, or seemingly untouched fields. It gives me hope to see it's possible to be apart of the landscape in a healthy way, in a balanced way that they somehow rationalize through tradition or pure, unstoppable passion for this valley. Is it okay that We live here too, as long as we're good custodians? I put the question to the universe. I know We screwed up. I know We keep screwing up. I can't change the past, but can I keep trying to do the right thing? I'm not brave or stupid enough to set a stick of dynamite to the Pharaoh Plex, but I am aware enough to not be complacent about it. On the other hand, who am I to be upset? Someone a hundred years ago was probably devastated to see Main Street built, one of my favorite stomping grounds on a Saturday afternoon. But I do not know this. It is human nature to grow with our surroundings, for them to become part of us, and we feel part of them even when they may be the antithesis of our core. You drive past the granary every day to school. Every day to work. Every day till your death. The granary becomes part of you. A symbol of where you're from and something intangible inside. The shadows of the cottonwoods on your porch become part of you. As does the hardware store and maybe even the Mall. I say this. We can choose our biographies, we can sculpt them, we can cultivate our values and not be complacent- this natural tendency to accept everything around us as life when we have really been lied to, fooled by the American Dream and swallowed it full. Do I dare look inside my body and I find metal parts forming around soft tissue? You are what you eat. Perhaps you are what you see and live around too. I do not want to run from Montana and the development epidemic. I stand in front of the Pharaoh Plex and see the truth of human nature. And I see the Bitterroots rising from behind. The Bitterroots will be here longer than these buildings and small dreams. I choose to see the Bitterroots, sunlight on the ridge tops, and hope others will be more accustomed to the mountains than to the businesses and homes sprouting like weeds. I hope they see the mountains as part of their biography and think it odd to see cat tails ripped up for a movie theater on the outskirts of town- an Egyptian theme no less. A homeless-kitsched-insult on a land roaming with homeless souls trying to find connection to a land that wasn't theirs to begin with. But the Bitterroot mountains will always be there saying, "Here we are! Here we are!" Bitterroot mountains, how long will you forgive us? How many

chances do we have? Bitterroot valley, can I stay, can I stay if I keep trying to do the right thing? My body begins to relax, and my breathing becomes more natural. I am just one human. One human completely in love with this valley despite all the terrible shit happening. I am one human trying to find a place here- emotionally and physically. I only hope to stay conscious of these feelings. To always feel this love and try to see the truth in things and not drown in a whole world of many when I can just be one.

Joanna Tenny

2)

We're Still Here, but for How Long?

I grew up in south central Wisconsin, in the heart of farming country. The outdoors was literally out my backdoor. Favorite past times of mine were visiting the local frog hole and bike riding in the country, looking and listening for wildlife. I'd spend hours in the slimy, algae-covered surface seep, catching frogs in various stages of development and letting them go, waiting to see where they popped up next. Riding to the river and listening to the slap of carp and geese flying overhead also gave me hours of enjoyment and solitude.

On my last visit to my childhood state, my siblings and our children gathered at the family pond in the oak woods for a weekend camping excursion. Wanting to share the wonder of my childhood with my children, I asked my sons if they wanted to go frog hunting with me. My sister interrupted, "You can't, there aren't any frogs left: They have all disappeared." My response to this was silence and disbelief. I am well aware of the amphibian decline and the theories presented, but was not prepared to hear that the phenomenon had affected an area dear to my heart and heritage.

Here in western Montana, my home sits on the floodplain of the Clark Fork River, in the midst of oxbows filling in with cattails, aspen groves and brushy undergrowth. Wanting to teach and share the wonders of nature with my children, each spring we wait for the arrival of species announcing their return. The robins and red-winged blackbird are the first to return, joyously singing, "we're still here." Next come the red-tailed hawks and the killdeers, joyously singing, "we're still here." But what about the other voices, once so abundant, now silent or so few in number? The pacific chorus frog, once so loud when you stepped out the door, now so few in number you have to bend an ear to hear. The spotted frog, once so numerous along the slough edge you had to watch where you stepped, now so few in numbers that my sons and I have gone from frog hunting for fun to frog observing for fear of jeopardizing their existence. The nesting pair of western tanagers and lazuli buntings that failed to show up last spring for the first time. I cannot help but ask, "are they still here?"

In spite of those missing from my backyard, I find hope in the species that still return year after year and successfully rear their young. Like the rufous-sided towhees that build their nest in the undergrowth of my backyard year after year. Conservation and preservation of species can and must start with individuals. There are things we can do to make a difference. Backyard habitats for birds, butterflies, and amphibians can provide the summer habitat species need to successfully breed. As Roy Big Crane stated, we should teach our children about the wonder of nature and how to respect it, so it will be here for future generations to enjoy. Like Frances Vanderberg's bitterroots, each spring I listen for the bird and frog species present in my backyard announcing their return and joyfully singing, "we're still here."

Darcy Hover

March 6

Encountering Community Forestry in Southeast Asia

Jill Belsky

Introduction:
Jill Belsky is a passionate researcher and legendary teacher who persistently strives for a growing understanding of rural social life and land and the necessary relationship between the two. Belsky brought to the lecture series the perspective of a person who has spent extensive time in rural areas around the world. The knowledge she shares in the *Poetics of Wilderness* is first-hand and rich with her experiences in Indonesia, Borneo, Belize, and the American west. Her first-hand knowledge is enhanced by her study of the history, politics, economics, and management structures of these areas. Belsky states that, "Poetics and politics go together: becoming aware of the poetics behind our politics is a necessary first step towards re-imaging policies and actions for transformative action." She is clear about the consequences that political power has on the land and on the people of the land.

In the following pages Belsky makes the argument that there is a very real need for a re-imaging and transformation not only of our policies in rural areas but of our fundamental understanding of these areas themselves. To disregard the real nature (in the sense of both the essence and the physical environment of a place) is to deny a long history of interaction between people and the land. The acknowledgment of this interaction should make us question, what is wild?, and can we preserve the integrity of rural human/land relationships in the face of the battling forces of preservation and extraction? Belsky challenges the basic concept of wilderness as "untrammeled" by insisting on the positive benefits of "forest gardens," especially in the tropics.

Bio:
Jill Belsky received her Ph.D. from Cornell University in Rural and Development Sociology, Environmental Sociology, Community Based Natural Resource Management. Currently she and her students study the interaction between social and environmental change on rural individuals, communities and regions, and their implications for natural resource management and local livelihoods. Some of her recent projects involve the impact of Indonesia's political and economic transitions on sun-grown cacao (chocolate) production and rattan management, historical perspectives on logging and livelihood across a Borneo landscape; critical perspectives on community based rural ecotourism and conservation in Belize; and conflicts and challenges of wildlife conservation across pubic and private lands in Montana.

Speaker's suggested Readings:

Belsky, Jill M. 2000. "Changing Human Relations with Nature: Making and Remaking Wilderness Science." In Cole, David N; McCool, Stephen F. 2000. Proceedings*: Wilderness Science in a Time of Change*.
Janzen, Daniel 1998. "Gardenification of Wildland Nature and the Human Footprint." *Science*, Vol. 279, February 27, 1998.

Encountering Community Forestry: The Politics and Poetics of Re-imagining Wilderness
Jill M. Belsky

Introduction

Most of my research and experiences over the last two decades have centered less on peoples' sensibilities, including ethics, values, culture, but more on their *material* lives – that is, how they feed, clothe, house, transport, and earn income for themselves. In the context of being concerned about peoples' material lives, my work has focused on the human forces and histories intertwined with land, especially tropical forest lands. In this context I typically have been concerned with how different people interact with forest lands and the socio-institutional arrangements that enhance these opportunities for some and preclude access to them by others. This last point brings me to a major point of this presentation: that we all bring a set of lenses or optics to how we "see" and experience nature and our relationships to it. Another way of saying this is that every view of a place – of a social and natural setting – is accompanied by a **poetics** – by "poetics" I am referring to what kinds of things go together to produce or satisfy a certain sensibility. But I would like to suggest that a view or image of a place is also accompanied by a **politics** - by politics I'm referring to a view that things *should* go together in such a way; and this view is backed up by power that can enforce it, coercively if necessary. Recognizing that a **politics** usually accompanies a **poetics** of wilderness forces us to acknowledge that some views more than others are backed by power and hence don't just remain in our minds or in our poems. Rather, these views can and are reproduced in the "real world" through funding, policy making and enforcement that produce real "effects" on the land, and consequences for real people; many of which are unexpected or unwanted, and unintended. Poetics and politics go together: becoming aware of the poetics behind our politics is a necessary first step towards re-imagining policies and actions for transformative action. This is the major point I want to speak to in this presentation tonight.

I know there is a great reluctance among many of us to think of views or experiences in nature as having a politics. I'm quite aware that a major hero for many of you, Henry David Thoreau, explicitly went to the wilderness to get away from the messy human world of politics. But regardless of our desires, the woods, the seas and whatever other environment we choose to see as "wilderness" indeed entail politics as well as poetics; and they are connected. They are connected because there are some reoccurring, powerful images that we absorb and which color our own sensibilities and poetics, often unconsciously.

We often assume that our understandings are our own, or that they are universal over time and across space. Moreover, we defend them as being "natural"– inevitable– this understanding or experience in/of a particular place could be no other way. If it is natural then we do not have to consider that our understandings are influenced by meanings outside ourselves--that we are influenced by images operative in our particular time and place in history. We hold tightly to the idea that our values and experiences within nature are our own. I do not deny this but just urge you to consider the notion that there is a decidedly Northern, Western conception of "wilderness" that we have all been exposed to during our lives. This "idea" of nature entails a particular set of meanings: wilderness is a place that is pristine, sublime, untrammeled, and self-willing. It is what we all have been taught to honor and work towards preserving among all other types of places. This last idea and call to action builds on Thoreau's admonition that the preservation of the world is based on the preservation of this place or state that we call "wilderness." I am hopeful that you are aware of this line of thought, and that you are also aware that this set of meanings is highly contested; and the critiques themselves are further contested. For example, you heard Jack Turner a few weeks back in this same series go fairly crazy about "Cronon the Barbarian." Turner is incensed that environmental historian William Cronon and his colleagues challenge the meaning of wilderness as natural, that is, as having some essential, inherent characteristic to it rather than representing an assemblage of meanings given to it by people, most notably Euro-American peoples

during the latter 19th and 20th century. Turner is particularly upset with Cronon because he interprets his thesis as denying a physical existence of a self-determined wild nature.

This debate has echoed through many literatures (also recounted in Michael Soule's book Reinventing Nature). But I do not think that William Cronon is denying a material existence to nature. Not at all. Nor that he is deaf to the pleasures of walking in a beautiful forest or unconcerned about the destruction of these very same forests: indeed he is a member of the Wilderness Society. Rather, his critique, detailed by himself and others in his book Uncommon Ground, emphasizes that we have constructed meanings about nature that are shaped by people, history and human interests. I find it ironic that Jack Turner would be against such an idea, given that his own work so adeptly speaks to the "artificiality" and "abstractness" of nature that the general public does not see – that we are not encouraged to see – because of the interests that lie behind such views. I think this is Cronon's point exactly. We can acknowledge a real, physical existence to nature but still be able to recognize that different people "see" and "understand" nature differently; and these latter sets of meanings may actually be manipulated by powerful people and entities working in their self-interest. And most important to my point, that the diversity of meanings of nature and our role in nature are not equally heard. Some peoples' views of nature or wilderness are heard so loudly that they become national policies, while others are more muffled, while others are never heard – let alone acted upon.

My objective tonight is to flesh out for you how the construction of meaning with regard to nature and wilderness has been shaped in the context of tropical forests and peoples, and some of the insights I have developed with regard to research and planning in an area known as "community forestry" – engaging rural communities in forestry management. To do so I build upon the awareness that poetics and politics are always interconnected, and to offer a relatively new set of images for tropical forest management that emphasize forest gardens rather than forest wilderness as a basis for future conservation work. The "data" for this presentation comes from combing my photographs/slides, field notes, library and memory from almost two decades of travel, research and professional consultancy work in the central Philippines, outer islands of Indonesia, and Belize.

Tropical Places: From "Jungle" to "Rainforest" to "Biodiversity"

I too have spent a lot of time in "wild" and remote places in my earlier years in the Eastern Mountains of the Adirondacks, North woods of Maine and White Mountains, and in the wilderness areas across the Pacific Northwest and Interior Mountain States. For a full year after college I backpacked and explored wilderness areas and national forests, earning money along the way as a cook in an elk hunting camp in the Bitterroots and as a white water guide on the Salmon River. Like yourselves, I grew up during these trips. I learned a lot about the places I visited, a lot about myself, and about my partner who journeyed then with me and still does now some 25 years later. I am grateful for these trips in the Northern woods because I developed many skills that were indispensable to me when I faced later the challenge of conducting research in remote, tropical forested areas that were unreachable by vehicles and telephones. I begin with this background lest you think I don't have a sense of how and what you feel about wilderness and wild places – about having and experiencing a poetics of wild-ness.

Indeed I went to the tropics for the first time in 1976 with a very particular goal--to live in a part of the world that was more "wild;" that would force me to learn about myself as well as the new places I visited. Though unaware of it at the time, I came to Belize on this first trip to the tropics with a set of images, expectations and ways of seeing the tropics most definitely formed by what I had (unconsciously) absorbed earlier. I dare say the dominant images I held were consistent with what Candace Slater in Cronon's notorious book, Uncommon Ground, has called the "Edenic narrative," that is, seeing the tropical rainforest as a sort of lost or threatened garden of Eden, complete with exotic natives and lost

cultures. In this story-line, we view tropical cultures as gentler, more communitarian and capable of co-existing with nature in ways that we in the post industrial world have lost. Slater suggests that the threatened Eden image has replaced the earlier 20th century image of the tropical rainforest as night-marish jungles of the sort that live on in comic book adventures and mass market movies such as "Anaconda," in which an enormous river snake gulps down whole boatloads full of people. The tropical jungle of that time is wild and unknown and dangerous, but it also inspires fascination.

According to Slater, the representations of the tropical jungle that reached the general public changed during the late 1960s and 1970s. A burgeoning environmental movement in the US and other industrialized countries, together with new government development policies in such places as Indonesia and elsewhere which triggered a wave of burning and destruction, did much to convert the terrifying, chaotic jungle into a fragile, marvelously complex rain forest. Instead of fear or the determination to subdue the hostile, primordial jungle, this new set of images invites reverent wonder and assiduous preservation. The threatened "Eden" replaces "Green Hell" and demands not just care or wonder, but also detailed and dispassionate study. The "jungle" has become a "rainforest."

"Rain forest" is a botanical term that first begins appearing in dictionaries at the end of the 19th century. Instead of emphasizing the tangled, dangerous, mysterious jungle, the term "rain forest" has a distinctive quantitative, scientific side. Technically the name refers to any woodland that receives one hundred or more inches of rain a year and lacks a dry season. I think you would all agree that a very different sensibility is communicated when a place is called a "jungle." Perhaps it is no coincidence that the term rain forest enters popular usage in the early 1970s at precisely the same moment when "environment" and "biodiversity" become key concepts and, soon thereafter, key values.

The generalized switch from jungle to rain forest refocuses our imagination away from the mystery and danger of such places to their potential (global) role in saving the planet's future. A new assemblage of meanings accompanies the discursive shift. These entail maintaining a diversity of biological life or biodiversity: insects no longer represent one of the jungle's scourges, but a critical species to protect; rainforest trees are valued for carbon sequestration to prevent global warming; and rainforests themselves are reimagined as a global medicine cabinet holding the much hoped for cancer cure (among other medicinal benefits). Think about it. Aren't these images and the values that underlie them involved in your own view of rainforests? Certainly if you were to travel to the tropics your ideas, feelings and poetics of the place would be your own; but they would be influenced by these dominant images and values that you have been (unconsciously) exposed to during your life; and obviously they are dynamic.

The new set of images and values of the tropics as "rainforest" and "biodiversity" have also provided a much privileged place for some people over others. In a book about the Lacandona forests in Mexico (home to the Zapatista movement), ethnographers Arizpe and Paz recount a comment from a local peasant who, aware of the changing place of his forest homeland in the eyes of the world, says the Lacadona forests used to be the "ass of the world" and now it has become "the center of the world." Whereas only poor farmers entered and cared about this and other tropical forests in the past, now they are the central subject of scientists concerned about naming and counting biodiversity, or placing them on "geographic information systems." Of great import to the poor farmer are actions of the state that result in fencing off tropical forests as national parks and which prohibit his customary access to forest products. Lending political support to such actions is the world conservation community's meaning of tropical forests as a "global heritage;" or Euro-American biotechnology firms who have harnessed WTO policy and certain national legal systems to claim tropical genetic material and its biotechnologically engineered byproducts as their own private, intellectual property.

Another set of images of the rainforest that began appearing in 1990s is the rainforest as a consumer item. The marketing of the rain forest is immediately evident in the emergence of a series of rain forest products that cater to consumers who regard themselves as environmentally aware and eager to protect the rainforest by consuming products (as opposed to conserving consumption of them) that "certify" they have been sustainably produced. These include the "smartwood" tropical hardwoods or "fair traded shade coffee" that some of us are willing to pay $10 or more for one pound; or for other products that use nuts, berries, flavorings or shampoo elements that by giving economic "value" to the rainforest thereby contribute to saving it. At least that's how the idea goes. We see this idea in full force in a new form of tourism – known as "ecotourism" - which prides itself on saving the tropical rainforest by selling the tropical rainforest "experience." The model suggests that ecotourism raises the environmental values of both visitor and host community, and generates necessary funds for indebted nations and poor people to preserve tropical environments. This new set of meanings and uses exemplify what Pierre Bourdieu has called "symbolic capital" – the rainforest becomes newly valuable not simply for the goods that it produces but for the positive associations on which various enterprises capitalize or profit.

I hope I have convinced you with these few, brief examples that there is an important descriptive or discursive dimension to nature – in this example to tropical nature. It relies less on the material reality of the place but more on our imagination or our poetic sensations, especially if we've never been there ourselves. But let's get back to my major point: that these images indeed entail a poetic, but they also entail a politics – ones which became very clear to me through my work and studies over the years.

Imaginations Matter

So far I have emphasized those meanings that dwell exclusively on tropical places, especially the flora and fauna. To some, these familiar portraits continue to absent people. Clearly the message one could get from those images is that these places are uninhabited and untrammeled by people, now and in the past. Cronin and others have spoken on the practice of painters and photographers of the American West in the 19th and 20th centuries to offer images of the "New World" as uninhabited. This poetic view obviously supports a politics of justifying European settlement of an uninhabited, waste land. When Native Americans were painted into the picture of those times, their representation revealed a highly selected, partial vision that certainly merged poetics with politics.

To many, humanity comes into the picture (i.e., into discussions of environmental change and especially endangered places and species) when they are being counted and usually counted as too many. There is an unwavering and uncritical Malthusianism that continues to sway many scientists (not all) to see human population numbers as always THE reason for environmental problems over other acts of human social process. To call this a partial vision is an understatement. It is also a political act. In an editorial in the journal Conservation Biology this month, the authors strongly criticize conservation biologists for not seeking to understand the multi-faceted ways human economic, political and social systems around the world affect the fate of rainforests. Among other important points, the authors claim that despite the large growth in the discipline of conservation biology, these last few decades have seen vast destruction of much of the tropical rainforests (their attention is largely on Indonesia). They charge that conservation biologists have spent their time counting endangered species and making theoretically and spatially sophisticated maps and models, and these actions have done nothing to limit the destruction of important biological resources around the world.

I think it important to point out that the charge of conservation biologists' ineffectiveness is in large degree related to their idea of wilderness as devoid of people, as unconnected seriously to economic and political activities. Indeed, I would suggest that many of these scientists and advocates have a strong

wilderness poetic but lack an accompanying wilderness politics in which to see where and how they could apply their scientific knowledge. To a lesser degree, some social scientists have been equally guilty of failing to develop or "see" the politics and to do something about it. Others have been quite adept – in fact quite in your face – in opening a window of cultural and political critique. I am proud to count myself in this latter group.

Lessons from Community Forestry

Community forestry entails assessing social systems in rural areas and environmental change and reimagining a meaningful and transformative role for local people in forest management. It is also an important working example of the connections between the poetics and politics of nature and wilderness.

In an important paper published in the journal World Development, sociologists Agrawal and Gibson argue that a dualistic image of tropical forest peoples continues to inform conservation efforts. Rural peoples and communities - just like landscape meanings – are often portrayed in simplistic, binary and opposing terms. In this mental schema, rural peoples tend to be represented as either (1) uneducated, irrational, backward, traditional, *disenchanted* destroyers of nature and in need of outside "progressive" assistance; or (2) as *enchanted* communities living closer to nature and comprised of individual holders of "indigenous knowledge" located in some golden past, and able to sustainably manage their local environment through local customs and social institutions – a kind of "ecological noble community savage" image. The first disenchanted image has dominated tropical environmental plans and forestry projects since colonialism. It has provided the rationale for bringing in foreign experts to "scientifically" manage forests, and for privileging Euro-Western goals of maximizing fiber production over other forest values. Undeniably, it has provided legitimization for large-scale commercial enterprises to seize forests which rural communities have lived in, farmed in, hunted in, gathered in, buried their dead in, danced and sang in, and also locally managed, for centuries.

A key way that the disenchanted view of tropical peoples and their relationship to nature held sway was through dominant and persistent official views of shifting cultivation. To this day, many government officials continue to think negatively of and thereby negatively label local farming and forest-based practices that entail shifting cultivation. Take the labels assigned to this agricultural practice: officials who wish to disparage the practice continue to call it "slash and burn" or "wild farming" rather than call it by a more neutral term such as "long-fallow rotational agricultural systems" or even "swidden." Anthropologist Michael Dove has named this process a "political economy of ignorance;" given the decades of research that document when long fallows (15-20 years) follow short cultivation periods (1-2 yrs) this tropical farming technique provides an efficient way (little labor, no purchased inputs, sufficient yield) to raise food and cash crops on tropical upland soils which typically are not very fertile. The infertility of tropical soils may seem counter-intuitive when presented with popular images of lush tropical vegetation but they are indeed highly infertile and erosive.

The negative portrayal of swidden farming systems accompanies a persistent ignorance of other tropical farming systems and their role, many would argue, in fostering forest farming practices that permit forest regeneration, conservation of forest biodiversity, and community food security. A particularly important example of local forest farming involves "forest gardens." Many of you would probably not be able to recognize a primary tropical forest from a secondary-growth forest managed as a forest garden. The reason for this obscurity is because forest gardens (also known as agroforestry) closely resemble natural forests. They entail the cultivation of a diversity of species in multi-stories that mimic the complex structure of a tropical forest. Shade grown or rustic coffee and cacao (the source of chocolate) are often grown in such complex agroforestry systems. Ironically, while the Indonesian and other state elites decry local forest farming practices – including these so called "primitive" forest

garden/agroforestry systems – others often outside these countries have mounted massive campaigns to support them and encourage global consumers to buy shade grown crops produced in such systems precisely because of their social and ecological benefits. I and a multitude of others have argued in our published works that the negative view of forest farmers and their forest-farming systems persists not because of any reasonable data, but because of the political and economic interests of elites who think they benefit by this representation. Mired in the forest productivist paradigm, state elites think only of the benefits of tropical forests as fiber as opposed to a list of economically beneficial non-timber forest products, and hence the necessity of reclaiming "abandoned" or "unregistered" lands of tribal peoples for whom their customary property right regimes are also conveniently not seen or respected. Forests are literally given over to logging concessions. When local or native forest claims are not respected, local groups lose access to forests to hunt wild game, gather forest fruits, fungi and medicines, and land to farm. To avoid death, they have little choice but to move and become low wage workers on (state-backed) commercial plantations (oil palm, rubber) which follow the logging of tropical forests. Hence, the misrepresentation of customary forest communities as forest destroyers or unrightful forest dwellers enables logging, deforestation, and permanent conversion to some other land use.

Daniel Janzen, a famous tropical ecologist, reports in an article in Science (1998), that for both practical and ethical reasons, he thinks there is a better way to protect what he calls "wild land nature." I quote him rather extensively because his understanding of the marriage of poetics and politics is quite deep and his re-imaginings profound:

> *"Part of the problem is in the name. Stop labeling the wild as the wild. They are simply many varieties of gardens. There is no footprint-free world... Let's stop talking about national parks, wildlife refuges, drug gardens, conserved wild lands, biological reserves, protected areas, royal hunting reserves, national monuments, and all the other obfuscating labels that have been applied. Let's just call them all what they are, wild land gardens... What does the wildland garden grow? It grows wilds. Truth in labeling. It grows ecosystem services, and it grows biodiversity services...*
>
> *The more quickly we can move the remaining large lumps of wild biodiversity into garden status, the greater the chance that they will still be with us into perpetuity. This means planning, rather than evolution... And if those who leave footprints are excluded, our wild lands will not be gardens. Absorbing the footprints means, as a general rule, giving up on 5% of wild biodiversity and ecosystems for the indefinite survival of the 95% remaining."*

I am sure the idea of replacing wilderness with gardens is an anathema to many of you. They are obviously not the same. He must be nuts. I must be even nuttier for quoting him. But I remind you of the facts published in the recent editorial in Conservation Biology I noted above: more tropical wild lands have been logged and permanently converted during the last two decades then ever before. There are only fragments left. As Janzen suggests, and my experience confirms, tropical forests are not wildlands in the way you all probably define and imagine them. They may look like and provide many of the "wild" sensibilities and "wild land" eco-services you value and wish to protect, but they have been hunted in, gathered in, cultivated and managed for centuries by resident peoples. The latter – not in all cases but in many enough for us to stand up and take notice of – in ways that have been productive, sustainable and frequently invisible to the Western eye. For these reasons, tropical wild lands are and should be protected as wild land gardens. To do so, of course, requires a dramatic transformation in both our poetics and politics regarding tropical rainforests, yet again.

It is within this broader context that the promise of community forestry may yield some fruit. Also known to some as "social forestry," community forestry emerged in the 1970s as local residents protested against their customarily-claimed forests and forest gardens being usurped, logged and

reforested with species that were often exotic, did not mimic a natural forest, provided no ecological services, provided no local use – and were also ugly. Logging practices were causing massive ecological destruction: landslides, siltation of rivers, loss of wild fish and other flora and fauna --- sound familiar? Community forestry grew as a transnational movement among a coalition of local and foreign non-governmental organizations, forest practitioners, "nature lovers" and local human rights groups to develop a place for local communities to have a voice in forest planning. For some academics like myself, the notion of community forestry represented a means not only to protect forests, but to reclaim tribal rights to land, food security, fair labor practices, cultural survival, citizenship and social justice. Yet we could work for such radical change within a politically centralist middle ground of "forest conservation" or "forest management." Given the highly authoritarian and undemocratic regimes in which we worked (e.g. Suharto's Indonesia), this non-radical poetics served our purpose well.

In the community forestry movement, the rural "community" was positioned as the key social management unit (though some programs, as in India, emphasize individual farmers, working in joint or co-management with state officials). The focus on community emerged because of the recognition that forest communities in the tropical South in many if not all cases had developed sophisticated customary or communal resource management customs which, until the intrusion of the modern state, market, and demographic pressures, were able to sustain both livelihoods and fundamental ecological processes. Advocates of the community forestry approach emphasized the "enchanted" image of communities as having more vested interest in the long term condition of local environments than absentee corporate managers, more helpful ecological knowledge, and less bureaucratic and hence more efficient implementation of conservation and development efforts than outside state employees or foreign experts. Furthermore, they argued that conservation and development had to be integrated, that is, incentives should be found for conservation when local people receive some benefit for it. They emphasized a practical bit of advice: it is worth paying attention to the man or woman with the shovel. They, not the erudite social theorist or conservation biologist in his or her office, decided the fate of the forest. Maybe.

In explaining the popularity of our recent enchantment with community in conservation, many have observed that it builds also on our current dissatisfaction with theories of progress and centrally planned development and conservation. There is a rekindled hope around the world, that we can hear in Missoula as well, that concerns for place, devolution of power, and democratic institutions based on civic activism can and should take the place of centralized control. I think it is also important to point out that the positive reception of community resource management in Asia is not uniform, nor shared in the US or across other industrialized countries. In Asia and Latin America environmentalist-oriented groups mostly hold the "enchanted" view of rural or indigenous peoples, whereas in the US, the "disenchanted" view of rural community seems to prevail. That is, most environmentalist groups (though this may be changing slightly) continue to see forest dependent rural communities as wanting what everybody else in our culture wants, but are limited because of their remote location, limited education and economic opportunities, and history of "addiction" to resource extraction. These combine to disable them from moving beyond their immediate material interests, and as such, they are vulnerable to industries and corporate interests promoting extractive resource development. For these reasons, many in the US are critical of giving more power to local communities to manage public forest lands.

In my encounters with community forestry (and community based conservation movements in general), I'd like to highlight two major insights of my own. The first is that not all communities have the social capacity or social "capital" to sustainably manage their environments and natural resources. Some communities have been able to develop the communal capacity that the model is based on. Some haven't. Some had it at one time and lost it. Some never had it. There is also no guarantee that even if there is important ecological knowledge in a community that it is held by the local people in power, or that immediate material survival concerns won't overrule instituting such practices.

The basis for my first conclusion stems from my observation that rural communities are not homogenous. For example, my work has shown me that villagers do not respond in the same way to political and economic changes. While some cling tenaciously to traditional ways of life, including strategies to maximize food production and security, others eagerly experiment and are willing to take risks. Jealousies arise when some benefit and others are left behind. Intra-community alliances along class, party, family and gender lines, and along their intersections, can create opportunities for alliances, or wreck havoc on even the best intentioned project.

Second, and perhaps most importantly, the celebration of community in conservation has taken the limelight off the actions of powerful states, even more powerful transnational corporations, and international monetary lending institutions and multilateral trading treaties (e.g. NAFTA, GATT). The latter exert tremendous influence on the way "nature" is understood, commodified, converted and compromised. The IMF through its structural adjustment policies mandates the policy environment and socioeconomic structures that compel if not determine choices and actions in the rural hinterlands. The IMF bailout of Indonesia, for example, – in the midst of a power vacuum created by the ouster of Suharto – has led to a chaotic, unregulated massive cutting of forests for quick monetary gains that the World Bank and others insist has left only fragments of lowland primary forests. Thus even in the good name of community (or sustainable development, I should add), many social and ecological disasters are produced.

A paper I recently completed and which is published in Rural Sociology details a host of problems I documented in an otherwise acclaimed community-based ecotourism effort in Belize. Conceived by a group of very well intentioned wildlife biologists, the project intended to promote wildlife conservation through fostering ecotourism: income from preserving wildlife and tropical habitats would compensate for reduction in wildgame hunting and forest farming. However, I found that the mechanisms for implementing the ecotourism effort were not based on detailed, empirical understanding of the community, but on generalizations of some essentialized, traditional, Creole community. Furthermore, the envisioned "links" between ecotourism and community support for hunting regulations and conservation did not take into consideration how local, regional, national and even international ideas or poetics and politics would work against the effort. Indeed, despite Belizean state support for the community project from one ministry, another ministry promoted logging and dredging operations, against Belizean environmental laws. Nonetheless, local villagers were not permitted to hunt certain game species, fish, or farm in the forest. Lacking the social institutions and material resources to support the mental picture the planners carried in their head (and communicated to funders), the project served to exacerbate some intra-community rivalries and incited a backlash to the very conservation values it had hoped to foster.

Conclusion

In this talk I have emphasized that there is both a poetics and a politics that accompany "views" of nature, including so called wild nature. My major thesis is that the stories we tell about nature entail more than just mental constructs or images. When backed by power (and many such narratives are indeed in the minds of powerful officials and organizations) they form the institutional basis for conservation missions, policies and interventions. In my experience many of these powerful images and programs have worked to take away local livelihoods and to disregard the history and multiple benefits of certain – not all– types of forest farming and wild land gardening. In the real political and economic context of places such as Indonesia, images of wild forests – and wild farmers – have justified state appropriation of forests and large scale logging and permanent forest conversion rather than wild land preservation. This has amounted to a terrible loss for rural communities, cultures and ecosystems. Community forestry has developed in part to offer an alternative poetic and politics to counter this trend. In some cases this has

led to successful transnational action and transformation, while in others effective counter-actions have not worked. Building on native practices and images of tropical forests not as wild lands but as gardens is a potentially strategic image that requires a definite re-envisioning of tropical places and peoples, but may provide a politically useful poetic and politics for tropical forest management in the future.

Jill Belsky

Student Responses to Encountering Community Forestry in Southeast Asia by Jill Belsky

1)

When Jill Belsky spoke of our poetics as a type of political lens through which we perceive reoccurring images such as those we associate with wilderness, I found myself vigorously nodding my head. How long I had waited to hear someone with courage to speak about the problematic perceptions of "wilderness" and how bizarre to find that person outside of the disciplines of linguistics or semantics. As a self-appointed radical ecofeminist I like to think that I fight the legacy of Western dualistic perception with every word I write or type. Too long have we all tried to balance the infinite shades of gray in this world into the good/evil, light/dark, man/woman, rational/irrational, civilization/wilderness dualisms imprinted upon our minds as children of Western logic systems. I often felt attacked while participating in the Wilderness and Civilization Program for saying how detrimental the word wilderness is to the physical place that it denotes. A few years later I realized that I did not present my argument as well as Belsky and that, at the time, my understanding of the whole concept was shaky. A few years have granted me the insight to know exactly how rash and radical the dissolution of dualisms appears when our entire foundation of Western thought lies upon separation of self and other. Belsky illuminated the dangers of dualistic thinking quite articulately in her talk. I whole-heartedly agree with that nameless student's assertion of her legendary status. My childhood is split between extremes in rural community and suburban experience. In a high school outside of metropolitan Washington D.C., I gave up trying to adjust my peer's perception of Montana and fed their fantastic image of the West with stories of our single-wide trailer, dead deer on the kitchen table, wood gathering in the Crazies to supply fuel for our stove, and the pervasive heat of canning days. I don't know whether or not I was feeding the noble savage image or the disenchanted, backwards destroyers of the land. When I think of the knowledge and practices handed down to me from two highline farming families, I perceive neither of those images. Belsky soothed a wound I receive when I hear supplanted environmentalists in Missoula dismiss the ecological knowledge of local ranchers, farmers, and timber workers. As heir of all the suppressed guilt of rural farming, as a Montanan, as an ecofeminist, and as a confused kid, I refused to take such clearly drawn sides and contribute to yet another damaging dualistic perception. The issue of wilderness is simply too complex and too pressing to argue at dualistic extremes, and the word "wilderness" is too weighed down with Western dualistic perception for it to accurately and safely represent the areas that lie so close to my heart.

Anne M. Stone

2)

I. There is another snake on the road again this morning as we walk out of the gate to wait for the bus. This time it's a bright orange and yellow-patterned snake. Half its body is smashed to the pavement and the other half is still alive, flopping and twisting around trying to unstick its smashed head. There are buses and mopeds streaming by in a flood of the early morning rush, people in sarongs carrying baskets walk by on their way to the market down the street. And through the buses and the cars driving by, my brothers and I watched this shiny, bright orange reptile wither and jerk in prolonged, anxious death. Every morning there is something else smashed in a frozen moment on the busy road where we live. Normally we were thrilled at the sight of a dead snake. My brothers and I cringe watching the jerky movements of this snake as its body struggles against its death. We are transfixed by its bright colors and movements. We stare at it, but we are too horrified to look.

The house we live in is surrounded by a ten foot high wall. It is made of cinder blocks that have been painted brown. Cemented on top of the wall is broken glass with their edges pointed upwards. On top of the glass is barb wire. Surrounding the house are banana plantations; they are surrounded by small villages. The wide, deep green tropical leaves of the banana trees hang heavy over the fortress-like walls

of the compound. Children from the villages surrounding our house would climb into the tree's canopy and watch my brothers and I play all day. Sometimes my brothers and I would try to talk to them but there was always too much confusion for any real communication. These children would sit in those banana trees staring at us all day; we would just stare back in confusion. They existed as the undeniable reminders of the boundaries and the differences that those walls of broken glass represented, faces staring down at us as we would stare back at them.

II. My father is wearing his usual stiff, white, button-down, sleeveless shirt. His armpits are sweating and there are dark circles of moisture under his arms. He is excited to see us and shows us around the floor of his office building. Everything has that smell of fresh paper, the smell of new carpet. His office is a little cubical, with a window facing down the street below.

I am very young when this happened, and I can remember feeling distracted by all the adult talk that seemed to be going on. Walking over to the huge pane of glass and looking out, I can see into the throbbing metropolis of downtown Jakarta. There are people everywhere. I can remember that day so clearly because when I walked over to the window my eyes were immediately drawn to what was going on directly below the building. People are rushing towards the gate in front of the building. There are security guards dressed in all white and police dressed in red and white uniforms. It seems like the crowds are coming from every direction and the noise of commotion becomes a tidal wave roaring into the building. Shouting and chants in a language I can not understand. My forehead is pressed up against the window watching all this when my mother comes over and grabs me. She is talking to me as if I did something wrong, her voice is tense and I can remember her squeezing my hand as we were escorted out of the building, the feeling of fear as we drove into the traffic.

The private school I went to everyday, Jakarta International School, goes to the Jakarta museum every year. It was a big event because it meant there was no class and you could eat candy all day. There were big military jeeps, tanks, cavalier cannons, old war planes and fighter jets that sat on display in front of the buildings of the museum. It was always exciting to go to the museum because at least half, if not the whole, day was spent playing "war" with all the big machines in front of the museum with the other classmates. The museum was always empty and as our bus would pull up, we would begin the process of noise and chaos that only a large group of children can create.

The museum wasn't just army machines out in front, though. The museum was known for its wax displays. Some of them were life size displays, some no more than the size of a small box, all depictions of the history of the country of Indonesia. I don't remember these wax displays very well. I only went into the wing of the building where the displays were set up, once. And the time that I did, I peeped through the cracks of my fingers for half of the time. The wax displays where a mixture of historical/cultural scenes of traditional Indonesian life and then the other half were scenes of the recent Indonesian revolution.

There was nothing I had yet known to compare with what we witnessed as kids, entering those scenes of Indonesian history. For some reason, all the violence I had seen on TV and in the movies didn't even come close to the feelings of horror that these wax miniature scenes were able to create. The dark halls were lit by spot lights that showed the scenes of blood and gore. Huge groups of people being shot, slaughtered and piled up onto each other. Painted wax rivers of blood flowing from the dead bodies. Scenes of whole villages being beheaded. Like the rich color of red on the Indonesian flag, all I can remember is that color of blood red. Red and the heat of those lamps illuminating the scenes of horror. Like an old silent movie, the still wax images of those bloody massacres never left my head, but instead just kept turning themselves over like the nauseating realization of a deeper, much darker side of humanity that we all have inside us.

III. The walls around my house my family lived in never seemed strange. Rather, it merely felt like the way things just were. There were walls around everything in that world. Huge fifteen foot walls around the all-white school my brothers and I went to as kids. There were walls around the hotels we would stay in when we traveled. Walls surrounding the building my father worked in. There was a mystery world on the other side of those walls, trembling in the dark recesses of my dreams and subconscious. As a child it would haunt me at night. It would grab onto all those things that I couldn't resist and from nightmares that I could never understand. My patient father cooing and rubbing my sweaty back as I would endure the nightmares of a place in shadows. No one in my family ever thought or talked about it. Instead, the walls and the radical inequality on the other side of them were just the way it was. Everyday life was just as it should be and it never seemed strange that our house kept getting broken into or that eventually my father had an iron gate installed in the hallway leading to the bedrooms that he would lock every night with a giant chain. It never seemed strange that there were nothing but banana, tobacco, and sugarcane plantations everywhere we went in Indonesia. It was never that there was never a forest. The excessive wealth our family lived in everyday and the amazing poverty of everyone else was never vocally expressed. Instead, it withered and jerked silently inside of me, inside of us, like the orange snake caught and crushed in the middle of the road. I was unable to understand or vocalize the intuitive feelings that I knew I had. Instead of sound, there was the silence like those of the wax figurines. There was nothing in my childhood to help me understand the chaos and inequalities of place and culture that stared down as brown faces in a landscape of diminished possibilities. Everything lived and breathed inside those walls. The snakes would be smashed by the next day's travel, a flag was raised everyday in a prayer for hope, and the sewage ran strong in the ditch outside the wall in front of our house, constantly pushing the past away from the present, away from the reality we choose to acknowledge.

Travis Rosenkoetter

3)

Coffee and Plastic on a Guatemalan Hillside

In 1997 I flew down to Guatemala City for my spring break. This was the first time I had been there in almost eight years. I convinced my friend Amy to go with me, and she was to meet me in a few days. The family I lived with eight years ago was going to pick me up at the airport. I was afraid I wouldn't recognize them. Somehow everything worked out. I struggled to regain my grasp of the Spanish language because I wanted to bridge the gap between myself and the people around me. I didn't want to be the "gringo" with the bad accent.

The smells of that city came back so quickly. Smells of garbage, tropical heat and people. Smells of a place to stay longer in my memory than any other sense.

After a week in the city we took a bus and then a boat to Santiago Atitlan. Lake Atitlan is surrounded by volcanoes. It is extremely deep and therefore very blue. The water rises and falls about 10 to 20 feet every forty years. An ancient Mayan legend tells about how the Gods bring the water inside the mountains and release it many years later.

We were traveling with other members of a group called Farmer to Farmer, a solidarity organization between rural communities in Central America and the Midwest. In Atitlan we were working with a weaver's cooperative that also grew corn, beans and coffee. On our third day there some members of the cooperative (Mayan Indians), took us up the side of the mountain to see their coffee fields and bean fields. The first half mile or so was very steep. Apparently everyone from the town dumped their garbage here. I was walking on a footpath made of plastic. Nothing has ever made me hate plastic so much. I could see

how our culture had spread down here to one of the more remote cities in Guatemala, and how it was now spreading up their mountainside as well.

Seven years ago, the Guatemalan army had come to this town and massacred many of the villagers. Rosa Delilah, a girl my age, showed me where it happened. She pointed out a well where the soldiers dumped the bodies, and pointed out where one young boy had died. She said his body was on one side of the road and his head on the other. Despite this sadness, the people were proud, because eventually they were able to force the army from their town, making it one of the only towns with no military presence.

Some of the weavers didn't know Spanish. They knew Tzutuhil, their native Mayan language. They weaved their clothes of brilliant colors and made tortillas from corn. So much of their culture was still intact. It made me sad because I could see how proud they were of themselves, and yet how much they envied North Americans.

We picked coffee while we were there. I could see where they had sprayed the plants with pesticides. We asked them about this, and they said they didn't know of any other way. They didn't think coffee would grow without chemicals.

Quite often these people could only afford land that was miles away from where they lived. Sometimes it was so steep you could barely stand there. The better land belongs to the wealthy.

I have seen how these people depend on this land. It is their only source of income and their only source of food. Creating a wilderness area here to preserve the land would devastate them. Likewise, clearcutting the land would devastate them as well. I don't think we realize how connected we are to these people. Our tax money pays to put armies on their streets. Our new houses make it even harder for them to eat. Our plastic travels up their hillsides. Our ideas encroach upon their lives.

Erin Altemus

March 13th

Thoreau's Axe: Reflections On Ecological Incorrectness or Bewildered By Wilderness

Will Baker

Introduction:
Will Baker is a native son of Idaho, a long-time teacher at a handful of western colleges and universities, and a writer of no small stature in/about the American West. I had the good fortune of meeting him out in the Missouri River Breaks twenty years ago when someone invited him along on the annual Wilderness Program Spring float. I remember that we walked away from the fire (there was enough star and moonlight to walk around in) and went up on the hills above the river and talked and listened and tried to drink it all in, the night sky and prairie, the canyon of the Big Muddy, that first night we met. And we haven't stopped. Two summers ago we flipped our small sailboat over, forwards, on Flathead Lake. After a half hour or so trying in vain to right it, Jenni and I got into the water to try lifting the mast up, and the wind blew the boat, with Will on it, away down the lake. We've fixed fence together on a friend's place, ridden his horses up into the scrub oak hills around his farm in Northern California, and sung/prayed together over the carcass of a young elk killed thoughtlessly by an over-eager bow hunter the morning after our friend had showed him the local elk heard. And then helped carry out the quarters.

He knows work, "practice," the need to subject ideas to practical life. His chapter on being inside Wounded Knee Two, 1973, in *Backward: An Essay on Indians, Time, & Photography*, has always seemed to me to be the best writing about that event by a non-Indian. And made me wish I'd have taken the risk and been there myself. His most recent book, *Tony and the Cows: A True Story Form the Range Wars*, stirred the Wilderness and Civilization Program students like no other text in recent memory because of its honest, painful pondering of the interface between ranchers and environmentalists, and its critique of "deep ecology" by someone who is both attracted to it and yet sees the dilemmas of trying to practice it. *Tony* is a book we need, and which took courage to write. It is a book by a man who is in close touch with both sides of the issue of how we might best begin to live with the native land of North America.

Bio:
Will Baker grew up in Idaho, the son of a logger and a schoolteacher. He attended universities in Wahsinton, Paris, Hawaii, and California, with interim emplyment as a farm laborer, ironworker, saw mill hand, parking lot attendent, newspaper reporter, and ordinary seaman. After receiveing a PhD from Berkelyey, Baker taught at Reed College and UC Davis, until his retirement in 1995. He has also served as a visiting Professor at the University of Montana and as a Fullbright scholar at the Universidad Catolica in Lima. Since 1974 he has lived on a small farm in northern California, where he raises nuts, fruit and beef. He is married and has three children.

Speaker's Suggested Readings:

Tony and the Cows: A True Story from the Range Wars, Will Baker
Backward: An Essay on Indians, Time, and Photography, Will Baker
Mountain Blood, Will Baker

Thoreau's Ax: Reflections on Ecological Incorrectness
Will Baker

Twenty years ago I had the privilege of teaching here for one spring term, and it was a very rewarding and enlightening experience. I had never before had the opportunity to read term papers from wranglers, biker chicks, accomplished jugglers, doctor's daughters who wanted to be goat ropers, male strippers, and hackysack Jedi masters. So I'm very pleased to have an occasion to see if this situation still prevails, and also very honored to be a part of this series of lectures on the Poetics of Wilderness.

At the same time, I have to confess that the term "lecture" gives me a twinge of unease. A while back I retired from academic life, and the only lecturing I do now, according to my kids anyway, is at the dinner table, and their review of my performance there is not a rave. I have never mastered the trick of paraphrasing myself. "Know thyself," Plato says. That's not so hard if you have sixty years or so to work on the problem. But *Paraphrase* thyself–now that's a tougher trick. So I hope we can look at tonight as a kind of seminar, in which I am delivering a speculative paper–in very rough draft–and you guys can talk fast and smart when we get to the critique and discussion part.

Another more serious problem emerges when I try to get my mind around the title of this series: I find both key terms–Wilderness and Poetics–to be unmanageable. Impossibly deep and complex. Poetics, insofar as I understand it, is the science of poetry. Which to me is an oxymoron. Whenever possible, I read poetry and avoid poetics. So that's what I'll do here. I'll read two poems before I'm through, no matter what. I don't know where yet, but I'll find a place.

Now *Wilderness*–that's the big baggy monster. It's almost as bad as Freedom, or Love, or Beauty–all of which are connected to it. I didn't tell Roger this, was afraid to, but I secretly changed the title of this talk, and it's now a banner, boldface headline:

BEWILDERED BY WILDERNESS.

As I'm sure you know, the etymology of these two words is deeply entangled, so much so that lexicographers are not sure which is at the root. No matter. Either way wilderness has been understood from the first as a place where you get lost, or find yourself at a loss, not knowing where to turn. That derivation describes perfectly my condition. After some decades of trying to reconcile its various and contradictory meanings, I can't even explain satisfactorily why the word provokes in me a considerable emotional turbulence–grief, fury, doubt, disgust, despair, guilt, tranquillity, joy, yearning, frustration, numbness–all the result of repeated head-on collisions with the modern version of wilderness.

Just a quick look at ordinary usage can show us the semantic bog underlying the word. It could be capitalized, a legislative designation for a new preserve accompanied by a thick volume of regulations, a map, attractive brochures, and even a videotape. Or, nowadays, worn-out wilderness is often brushed aside in favor of a trendier derivative, "the Wild," which has become an icon or mantra of sorts, or at least a kind of trail mix of diverse literary and philosophical notions. Both words can even refer to real places where a certain number of trees and streams and bear and cranes and fish survive together in some measure of freedom and privacy–at least for now–those sanctuaries established at the pleasure of the dominant species, who live far away in their colossal artificial hives.

Or in one of its most active contemporary incarnations, "wilderness" has acquired a nuance from a couple of frequent companion words: "adventure" and "experience." Wilderness Adventure bears a freight of rich jock tourism; it depends on thrills purchased in some exotic remnant of jungle, taiga, veldt, or archipelago. For the last wild places on the planet are indeed available, if you have the bucks. They have become scenery, rentable for self-dramatizations–as explorer, mountaineer, daredevil sportsperson–and there is a vigorous industry ready to sell you all the accouterments of a "wilderness experience." Consider a few clippings from the ad section in a publication I prefer to call the Men's Urinal:

> **ANTARCTICA–THE LAST FRONTIER:** Save 10% on selected voyages and get a FREE pair of Bushnell binoculars when you book an Antarctic cruise with Marine Expeditions. Cruises must be taken before

March 31, 2001. Rates start at $2,645, including airfare. CALL NOW!

BIO BIO EXPEDITIONS WORLD WIDE 800 2GO RAFT
The Futaleufu river experts! In Patagonia, Chile, come & enjoy our "Adventure Spa" Base Camp: classic Finnish Sauna, River-side hot tub w/ deck, hot showers, massage therapist & private tent decks. Rafting, Kayaking, Fly Fishing. Mountain biking, horse riding. Peru: raft & hike the Inca trail to Machu Pichu. Africa: Zambezi w/ Kilimanjaro. Nepal & Siberia. Impeccable safety record.

FLY A MIG-25 TO THE EDGE OF SPACE.
Break the sound barrier in a MIG-29 (sic) over Moscow. You don't have to be a pilot. Life is either an incredible adventure or nothing at all.

COVERT OPS =THE ULTIMATE ACTION--ADVENTURE
Experience the rush of undercover combat operations. Drive the counter-terrorist evasive driving course, learn techniques of combat shooting and self-defense, participate in a hostage rescue operation.

Wilderness–that high-energy, full-bore, ass-kicking personal challenge. Maybe here is the place for a poem, a little break from so much commitment. This one is about tourists, actually. We see a lot of them in California, and of several different species. Some wild things go for the urban adventure.

If you were a whale you couldn't stay
away. The hot sun and cold waves, the boats
scratching your barnacled back, the slices of ether
in the tide. Even the horns wouldn't scare you.

A long-necked goose from Canada, you fall
for the food, the night flights with stars below,
the crowds, big time yakking. So what a few
powerlines and jets? You're almost in Mexico.

Lion...ah well, a little different situation.
Stretch and wait. Ignore those fat tasty dolts
until the revolution. If they come to worship,
greet them in your swift, deliberate fashion.

At this point you may be thinking, "That's not *my* wilderness, buddy. I know places where none of these buffed-out, cognac-swilling technoyups will ever go. There is a true wild, a sacred wild, and it must be preserved, honored, reverenced, because--and now follows–you knew it was coming–that ringing pronouncement from the grandfather prophet of this tradition–because 'in wildness is the preservation of the world.'" That's Henry David of course, the original anti-technoyup, an inspiration and guiding spirit for eight generations of Nature enthusiasts; a lone scribbler who now stands as a composite archetype, a drop-out organic peacenik civil rights activist mystic visionary who, with one book, launched what would become a major current in American intellectual history.

For Thoreau is now, it would seem, more pertinent than ever. His life and work are a primary inspiration for the Green Revolution, the ongoing international effort to protect and celebrate the last wild places on earth. And as happens with many prophets and gurus, his teachings are often bent and raveled in their transmission to ensuing generations. For example, the preceding quote is not, as a careless reader

might assume, the fruit of a quiet stroll in the idyllic countryside around Walden Pond. The phrase comes from a rambling essay entitled *Walking*, and is tossed out in the course of a grand rhapsody on the West–the land of the noble savage, great bear, and buffalo--that trackless, unbounded, mythic frontier. It's more poetry than prose; and (in my humble opinion) somewhat overheated poetry. After all, Henry knew nothing about the West, first hand. It wouldn't matter, except that this particular saying has become a slogan–even a battle cry–for what I call Environmental Correctness.

...in Wildness is the preservation of the world.

Poetic, provocative, incendiary, mysterious–quintessential Thoreau–but what the hell does it mean? I don't care, at this juncture. I am only interested in the way activists, eco-warriors, and philosophers have seized on this phrase to announce a revolutionary cause. I'll try to paraphrase their noble aim (no scruples about paraphrasing others): It runs like this: the planet is in great peril, and only a passionate commitment to wildlife, wild places, wild people, can save us from an ecological catastrophe, and also from, in the words of a leading ecophilosopher, "the end of humanity's tenure on the planet." In this reading, Wilderness becomes the physical temple or shrine for the new faith in Wildness, a religion, or at least a religious principle, offering salvation.

A great irony arises with one rare, archaic meaning of the word Wilderness–given next to last in the OED: "in religious use applied to the present world or life as contrasted with heaven or the future life." So the very same dark forest full of beasts and savages, which was to William Bradford and Cotton Mather a metaphor for the tribulations and sorrows of this life, has now become an idealized refuge, the last and highest hope for humankind. Some turnaround. Yesteryear's pit of vipers becomes heaven. A logical next question would be: Can today's heaven become tomorrow's sinister herpetarium?

I'm willing to argue it's a possibility, and I've chosen to outline my case by taking a closer look at another passage in Thoreau, this one from *Walden*. It's only an outline, and I'm going to cut a lot of corners, but maybe it will be enough to light a discussion.

I don't want to bore you with unnecessary background as context, so I'm going to drill a quick audience core sample. How many here remember the title of the first chapter of *Walden*? "Economy," very good. Though of course we are not talking GNP or the Dow Jones here. And do we have a general idea of why Henry went to the Pond? Yes, that was the aim–to live as cheaply and simply as possible, in a quiet rural neighborhood, to free as much time as possible for fishing, hiking, thinking and writing. Sounds great, no? So the first chapter sets out the practical dollars and cents of achieving this goal. (Every farthing accounted for. How much for the house? $28.12 ½.) So we start with shelter, a roof over one's head–the main priority along with food, and a major commitment of time and energy.

To begin his review of architectural options Thoreau spends several pages admiring the ultimate simplicity of aboriginal dwellings which he imagined as created of mud or earth, or hides and a few sticks. Then we encounter this interesting partial reversal:

> Though we are not so degenerate but that we might possibly live in a cave or a wigwam or wear skins today, it certainly is better to accept the advantages, though dearly bought, which the invention and industry of mankind offer. In such a neighborhood as this, boards and shingles, lime and bricks, are cheaper and more easily obtained than suitable caves, or whole logs, or bark in sufficient quantities, or even well-tempered clay or flat stones. I speak understandingly on this subject, for I have made myself acquainted with it both theoretically and practically. With a little more wit we might use these materials so as to become richer than the richest now are, and make our civilization a blessing. The civilized man is a more experienced and wiser savage.

You see the contradiction: we are not so *degenerate* that we couldn't live in a wigwam, but it is "better" to accept the advantages of more recent invention and industry–the efforts, in short, of "mankind"–~~a~~ classification which, we may infer, in its modern definition does not include the aboriginals. Would it then follow that someday–perhaps we are there now–the noble savage, too, could degenerate to a state of "experience" and "wisdom," aptly symbolized by his newly acquired brick and shingle (or, now, concrete and neon) structures? Such a question exposes a bit of a muddle in Thoreau's attitudes toward "savages" and "civilization," and suggests that his devotion to simplicity was itself not quite so pure and straightforward as he imagined, and entailed certain troubling countercurrents.

The most startling, and to me endearing dimension of this paragraph appears in Henry David's acknowledgment that lime and bricks may figure in a new utopia–a blessed civilization–because human ingenuity has made them "cheaper and easier to obtain" than caves. With "a little more wit" in our management of the building trades, he implies, we might create durable, inexpensive, stylish lodging for all our citizens. I think Thoreau confuses wit and wisdom here, but it is very refreshing to note this uncommon, pragmatic, public-spirited impulse in his work: he offers us in effect an ad for Habitat for Humanity. Similarly, his glancing ambivalence toward primal simplicity should comfort those of us who have a sneaking suspicion that however earnestly one worships the ideal, one would not leap to trade places with those pre-neolithic ancestors who inhabited a remote and pristine Wild without Powerbook, Gortex or NPR.

Understandably, Thoreau did not pursue this interesting muddle, and in his very next paragraph gives us another graphic insight into the dilemma of squaring human culture with Wilderness.

> Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went
> down to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where I intended
> to build my house, and began to cut down some tall, arrowy
> white pines, still in their youth, for timber. It is difficult to begin
> without borrowing, but perhaps it is the most generous course thus
> to permit your fellow-men to have an interest in your enterprise.

Henry has an undeserved reputation for straightforwardness. A reader must always be alert to sly undercurrents, shades of irony, important omissions. The last sentence here is typical, and only after many years and several re-readings did I get beyond my delight in the way it neatly and boldly turns a debt into an act of *noblesse oblige*. Around 1996, doing some research on the controversy over grazing on public land, I looked through *Walden* and right off I was struck by the casual dismissal of that borrowed ax. Something of importance, I thought, is being passed over here.

Well, you might say, such a rudimentary device, an ax. Just an edge and a handle, the first model invented by *Homo erectus* a couple of million years ago. Surely you can take such a thing for granted. There's bound to be one handy, and anyone can figure out how to use it. It's elemental, and absolutely ecologically correct.

For Thoreau it was merely an emblem of his simplified economy and an excuse for a witty aside. But since only a few rude rural folk now use this antique tool, the majority have a chance to make a fresh assessment. We know from our occasional camping trips that, however simple, even a hatchet demands a measure of skill and it can perform work which, in the absence of our insulated, climate-controlled shells of wood, metal, and brick, may be vital to our comfort and convenience. We might recall also that when Native Americans first encountered the metal ax and knife, they thought them the most marvelous and desirable of implements. Axes are to this day highly prized among the Tarahumara of Chihuahua, and Amazonian people rate the machete as a primary unit of barter.

One can do a lot with this basic, durable, portable and inexpensive tool. A craftsman can create not just beams, but rafters, joists, flooring, and even furniture, which is just what Thoreau tells us he did. Hence, without his ax, there would have been no snug shack at Walden Pond. Well, so what? Am I saying that Henry should have been more grateful?

No. I just want to point out that he glosses over the ready availability of his steel tools, and later notes in passing their "trifling cost". He is experiencing the kind of technological amnesia we have since developed into a fine art. He doesn't recall a truth brushed in his previous paragraph: that handy, cheap, vital tools are a direct consequence of an industrial system that is by no means simple. This fact has been brought to our attention most recently by Jared Diamond's account of the development, over seven millennia, of a highly organized agricultural and political society that was a necessary precondition for advanced metallurgy and intercontinental commerce. So that borrowed ax involved Thoreau inevitably in the whole long process, from the first grain farmers of the Fertile Crescent right on up to the steam engines, rails, coal and iron mines, banks and account books of his own age. He relied on some generous friend to purchase that ax at a nearby store, and the storekeeper got it from a foundry, via the train. The same system made shingles, bricks, and lime easier to obtain in his neighborhood than caves, logs, or bark. Henry was thus dependent on the whole apparatus of production, transport, and marketing that formed the larger economy which he elsewhere deplored so fiercely; and we stumble finally into the discovery of what looks like heresy, by this prophet's own standard. He owed the technoyups, and couldn't have gotten along without them.

Many critics have also pointed out Thoreau's reliance on the society of his fellow men in other ways. Henry himself tells us that he walked the mile and a half to the nearest village every few days, to take tea and listen to gossip, or obtain a few supplies. He entertained visitors at his shanty too; on occasion as many as twenty. These details make it clear that Walden was no wilderness, except in Henry's imagination. It was what we would call a rural property, and that raises another question: by what fortune or grace could the prophet of wildness erect his shack and live in it for two years, paying no rent or taxes? He remarks that he took down those arrowy white pines as a "squatter's right," but otherwise never names the benefactor who arranged his squatting, since identified as Ralph Waldo Emerson.

We conclude that Henry borrowed not just the ax, but also the land, the trees, and the very pond itself. His sermons on independence and self-reliance lose some of their zing when we compute the extent of his debt to what he called his "restless, nervous, bustling, trivial" century, and I am just a touch disappointed that he had not the magnanimity to acknowledge this gift from an older, more conventional, but solvent friend. The same friend who bailed him out of jail once, and delivered his eulogy. Ah, those "hidden costs." Always a mistake to overlook hidden costs–a couple of words which, incidentally, explain our ecological crisis with admirable concision and clarity.

Thoreau was an iconoclast, so my hope is that his spirit won't be too offended if I subject him to the same kind of rough assessment he himself favored. I mean it as a kind of tribute, for he had no use for false gods, and certainly would not care to be one. Nor did he ever pretend to perfect consistency. He convinces himself that the vegan way is the moral way–but he can't stop fishing because it's so much fun. He condemns railroads–and then falls in love with the way those iron dragons breathe. He is definitely and unashamedly a human being, though by no stretch an ordinary one. As a writer he is unassailable: brilliant stylist, bold, original thinker--cunning as a coyote and quick as a snake in an argument--and poet to the bone. I love his writing, that mix of endearing foibles and rare genius. And therein lies the problem.

Writers of great wit and style can charm even a close reader into swallowing ideas that are ill-formed, dubious, or foolish. There are plenty of examples: Plato nearly convinces us that philosophers should be kings, and poets run out of town. Carlyle made capitalist buccaneering sound downright glorious, and Nietzsche did the same for naked power in all its forms. Thoreau's case is much subtler. He entrances young readers–he did me, anyway–and then may tempt them into the service of ideals that, however noble and right for an Eastern intellectual, may turn out to be, despite the charm and dash of the master's delivery, a bit too high, severe, and wispy for the Irish to live by every day.

Of course Henry isn't responsible for misinterpretations of his work. The problem is that the last couple of generations have canonized him and elevated his experiment into a quasi-religious parable. He now appears as a prophet who adores Nature as the ultimate source of value and meaning, and sets an

example of devotion to a simple, independent, and-we would now say--sustainable life. The illustrious goal of this consecration is, as he says, no less than the preservation of the world.

We owe Thoreau great and eternal gratitude for delivering, in 1850, the finest and fiercest rebuttal of the rampant getting and spending, the amoral materialism of his and our civilization; and we can certainly forgive him for underestimating the degree to which that civilization penetrated and shaped his own life. But we cannot afford to repeat that mistake, to become so enamored of Wildness that we fail to acknowledge how pervasive and powerful MAC (Modern American Civilization) is, how much we are ourselves its creatures, how even our access to and very definition of "wilderness" are dependent, at least in part, on petroleum and silicon. For such self-delusion and evasion could set us up for a very bad shock.

For example the most radical, deep, cool ecologists now hold that plants-or even rocks and raindrops-have "natural rights" that are equal to, or even supercede our own. Thoreau's metaphor of the wild as a sacred temple is transformed into a new faith in the Biome, or global ecosystem, or Gaia--and the new Goddess is now threatened by the industrial, technological, digital juggernaut. As proof-and a powerful argument it is-the faithful point to the grim assessment of many respectable scientists, who have compiled the data on disappearing species, our unstable climate, the advance of deserts and viruses, the accumulating poisons in land, air, and sea--a nightmare which they contrast with the rich, diverse, bountiful paradise of the wild earth before human history began.

The result of these propositions is a very dark and twisted view. It runs like this: in their inexorable drive to dominate and consume, humans all by themselves are bringing about a collapse of the planet's ecosystems, a disaster on the order of that fallout from a comet's collision with earth at the end of the Cretaceous. The enemy, then, is civilization--the "human pox," in Dave Foreman's phrase. The righteous find themselves in the position of Jeremiahs decrying the community which produced them, renouncing their roots, calling for a revolution in the name of disenfranchised Nature.

What then, in the Goddess's name, should we do? Some, like Bill McKibben, say it may not matter, because it's already too late. Others argue that humans overrate their own importance in the grand scheme; our techno-civilization will also collapse and we will die out or a few survivors will regress to a paleolithic stage and Nature will right itself, so things will rattle on until the sun snuffs out. A certain number believe that if we teach Thoreau and his disciples with enough passion, instill in the next generation an abiding reverence for the equal rights of all living things and a commitment to a simple, unobtrusive lifestyle, the whole thing can be turned around and true wilderness will flourish again. The firebrands say we can't wait for that train, but must act now--sue the bastards, sit in the tree, toss the monkeywrench-stop the monster somehow, at least for a moment, because it's our only chance.

A dire and desperate situation, in short. But that's not the end of it. Some doomsayer like me comes along then and begins to insinuate that the crisis is your fault-simply because you are human, a functioning participant in civilization. It's an old story, the bleak prophets say: the catastrophe began with neolithic man, with farmers. We now think of rural and urban as opposed concepts; but farmers created the first cities. They settled in droves along rivers; their domesticated goats and sheep ravaged the grasslands; they cut down the forests-with axes, first of stone, then bronze, then iron--for firewood and houses and boats; they got so good at farming they had time on their hands, so they invented slavery and writing, developed armies to conquer their neighbors, launched dynasties, created huge monuments and epic poems to advertise themselves, and liked the results so much they have kept it up ever since, through the ages of steam, oil, electricity, and nuclear power. Why? Because, this argument runs, that's just the way we are, the way we have always been.

We are now advancing well beyond bewilderment to the stage of profound if not absolute depression. Doubtless a certain number among us are tempted at this point to plunge into complete denial, put some beers in the cooler and Merle's most recent album in the CD player, grab the skis, kayak, or dirt bike and head for the hills, tossing perhaps a farewell finger at the gloomies in the rear view mirror. Believe me, I share this impulse and have given in to it for many a blessed hour. But this pit will still be here when we return, and I have yet a shred of hope that we can discover another slant on this crisis that holds out some promise.

Let me offer an alternative, not nearly as jazzy and quotable as Henry's, but in my view much sounder. Just a plain statement of what I am arguing for, as I attack my former church. Here it is: Compassion and common sense would make this earth a much safer and happier place for every living thing. In the discussion we have going, I want to apply the standard of common sense first.

Does the ultimate fate of the world depend primarily on our maintaining and expanding wildlife habitat, on protecting endangered species and fostering their recovery, on reducing consumption of natural resources, on stopping pollution of air, water, and land? And to accomplish these goals must we convert most people to a simpler life in harmony with wild nature? Suppose that is the case. Given the evolution of our dominant species, we have then to shoulder the burden of unmaking civilization; we must reverse the direction and momentum of the last 30,000 years of human culture.

I must remind you that many contemporary believers in this formula for salvation give us only a few more decades, at most, to accomplish the rescue mission, because the planet is deteriorating so fast. If that is true, then true believers must 1) pray for a tremendous, unprecedented, lightning reversion of humanity to the ways of low-tech hunter-gatherers, or at least simple farmers, armed like Thoreau with ax and hoe; or 2) expect an accelerating devastation of the whole biosystem and a cataclysmic die-off of humans and many other species; or 3) encourage a drastic last alternative: a campaign of demonstrations, sabotage, even terror (after Kazynski and McVeigh) designed to unravel MAC and hence protect Gaia.

I don't believe either the first or third of these transformations is possible. It seems to me inarguable that we are hard-wired to fool with, complicate, and screw up things. I hold it self-evident that as a species we are and always have been inventors, risk-takers, dominators, exploiters, and above all consumers. Just like other animals, we alter this earth irrevocably every day, almost always with the aim of securing our own advantage, making our kind more comfortable, powerful, and unconstrained, and so far I see absolutely no reason to expect any change in that destiny.

As a demonstration of the point, I would suggest a rough and ready research project. Go to a city of several million people, walk the streets and look at the passers by, especially the motorists. Rate them, by their actions and expressions, as candidates for a lonely hunter's life in the wilderness, or as tenders of a small farm. Then engage a sample for a short interview and ask them (especially the poor) if the big problems in life (as they see them) can be solved by setting aside more land for National Parks, protecting the Adobe Lily, and enforcing tighter emission controls. I would predict that a few of the wealthy, educated, and fit (those who have had a recent "Wilderness Adventure") will argue most forcefully for the importance of habitat, clean air, etc. The great majority–though they may talk wistfully of "living in the country" someday–may be honest enough to admit that they mainly want a job with good pay, a decent apartment, and a car with a little class.

All these things, of course, the better-off wilderness adventurers already have, which invites a closer examination of their motives in cherishing the Wild. We can ignore here the crassest sort, epitomized by those organs quoted earlier, with their tales of rugged and glamorous adventure, their ads for hand-crafted boots, imported liquors, cologne, and wrist altimeters. Let's consider a more refined and spiritually active type of outdoorsperson. Amateur naturalists, wildlife photographers, and dedicated backpackers have an elaborate code for low-impact travel into wilderness; and many are passionate advocates of protecting and enhancing such areas. They travel light, respect the land, haul out all their trash to a landfill somewhere, and honor the ancient ways. But they do not thereby automatically evade the paradoxes and inconsistencies of human intercourse with Nature.

The state-of-the-art gear at REI, L.L. Bean, and Filson's, or in numerous regional boutiques, is neither cheap nor primitive. A first-rate backpack, cook kit, sleeping bag, tent, and tool kit will run a couple of thousand dollars; and these items will be fabricated from plastics, alloys, synthetic fibers, and petroleum products that involve the user deeply in the technological culture he or she wishes to escape. If one joins to these basics more specialized equipment–cameras, canoes, skis, etc.–the expense will be considerably more; and in any case a fourwheel drive vehicle is often necessary for a significant leg of any bold expedition into Nature's hidden heart. One suspects that the clean, Spartan image of Sierra Club trekkers is in part an illusion: only a certain level of wealth and leisure permits swift entry into and exit

from remote, rugged places, thus empowering a fortunate few to camp lightly and leave the sacred groves inviolate.

We may take for granted our refined technology and hardly notice such obvious contradictions. Our Cheap Jerokee is to us what Hank's ax was to him. Or if we acknowledge the paradox, we dismiss it again with a what-can-we-do shrug. But it may eventually grow harder to hike with a clear conscience on our Vibram soles, golf confidently in our solar carts, ride the wind on elegantly engineered mylar. Our "wilderness experience" might develop unsettling reverberations for those few troubled with scrupulous self-examination.

For example, the lover of wild Nature may occasionally wonder whether her solitary ecstasy may have a thread of selfishness in it, whether her prayers for rare animals and plants may emit a faint perfume of duplicity. The ideal she worships and pursues as a moral imperative--a pristine ecosystem rich with native life-forms–is also exactly where she wants to be on vacations, but not exactly what she had in mind for a career. After all, there is no serious money to be made in a Wilderness, and no place to shop. A raft rat makes about as much as a choker setter or a junior Piss-fir, and the annual salary of all three wouldn't amount to a deluxe Land Rover.

This is a roundabout way of suggesting that most of us may be hypocrites in denial, whose goal of a simple and natural life is achieved (intermittently) only through dependence on a complex technology feeding in turn off our planet's resources. But such a paradox doesn't necessarily mean we are doomed. All three alternatives posed by the Wild Bunch (returning to caves, ruining earth, or blowing things up) are unacceptable or impracticable, as well as depressing.

We should take another look at our dilemma. We can agree that we've damaged this earth and may suffer a great deal if we can't figure out some repairs and new approaches very soon. Okay, but where's the evidence that our best hope for saving the place is to deny what seems to be our own fundamental nature and devote ourselves to the securing of certain shrines where the preservation and worship of every *other* living thing is paramount?

Consider a couple of common sense alternatives. We might think about trying to reduce our sheer numbers. Yes, we're a wasteful, dirty, hyperactive species, but a good part of the problem is the simple fact that there are six billion of us. If we could keep our birth rates just a tenth of a percent below our death rates, we'd have a chance to work on long-term projects to restrain, at least, our selfish indulgences. And if we don't find a way to match our birth and death rates, it won't matter whether we do or don't learn how to live simply. One way or the other we will starve, or tear each other to bits, though not before, I would bet, our sacred parks and preserves have been stripped bare.

Africa is becoming the harbinger of such a future, and that brings up another issue. What has brought about so much damage and suffering and waste on that continent? Or if you prefer, why is its ecosystem so threatened? In large part, the last two ghastly decades have been the heritage of colonialism and a chronic imbalance in the distribution of wealth in this world. Several African nations stay poor because they don't produce much; they don't produce because the populace is weak from hunger and ravaged by AIDS; they can't prevent AIDS because the pharmaceutical companies haven't (until just recently–the consequence of a massive lawsuit) allowed production at cost of the available drugs. That was one of the reasons for the demonstrations against the WTO in Seattle three years ago, and it was an honorable reason. More honorable, I would argue, than sanctifying Wilderness Areas where right-thinking technoyups can take annual safaris.

At this point the element of compassion comes into play. We are looking at an equivalent of the Great Plague (bubonic plague is indeed back, along with AIDS, cholera, and TB) throughout the developing world. How are we responding? According to Larry Gaston, a law professor and health rights expert, we used to sit by and cry because we could not do anything, and now, when we finally *have* weapons to combat a deadly disease, "we stand by and watch, expressionless, because we choose not to do anything. And that's a clear measure of how far we as a species have moved from compassion to disinterest, or self-interest."

Yet it seems as plain as day that our real self-interest lies in making Africa healthy and productive, so they can sell us something and spend some of the profits buying our goods. Yes, more

heresy. I say international aid and trade (without the WTO) has more to offer the wretched of the earth than technophobia and nature worship. I would even argue that such trade can benefit the environment. Healthy people with a job and some hope are much more likely to leave the tusks in the elephants and the horns on the rhino.

So, relying on compassion and common sense, I would set three priorities, in order of their urgency: 1) reduce the human population by encouraging smaller families; 2) insure mutual survival by spending half of our defense budget on providing health care and technical aid to poor nations; 3) try to find a way to fit our civilization into the intricate cycles of nature without upsetting them.

Of these goals, the last is by far the most difficult and far-reaching; and many people might argue that it assumes and thus contains the other two. As we have already observed, the last 10,000 years of human history are a standing proof that what we know as civilization is inexorably dedicated to transforming and controlling nature, to an adaptation *of*, rather than an intimate accommodation *with,* the Wild. We are back again to the same question: How, by what formula, spell, or prayer could we hope to correct this course?

With his borrowed ax and skill with words, Henry David carved out a remarkable career--still unfolding--as the daring prophet of an alternative destiny for humankind, an ideal of self-reliance, simplicity, and spiritual harmony with the natural world. His vision, as we noted earlier, has charmed readers in our time even more than in his own, has inspired generations to dedicate themselves to preserving the sacred Wild. Yet the prospect of living out such a vision grows ever more remote; we are fooling ourselves mightily, I believe, if we think we can achieve the Thoreauvian ideal by preserving rain forests, canyon lands, marshes, grasslands, tundra and coastlines as shrines, as temples for the adoration of Gaia.

The simple fact is that almost no one can *live* in the Wild anymore, and very few want to anyway. In the official Wilderness Areas, it's against the law; and though public lands are available for "use," residence cannot be permanent. We might see the whole issue more clearly if we consider for a moment the on-going conflict over Public Lands. Should public lands exist in order to feed us, supply building materials, and purify and store water; or should they be primarily parks to study, admire, and cherish? Some years ago, the negotiants in this controversy started with the assumption that both approaches were legitimate, and the goal was to integrate and balance them. That assumption has since weakened or soured, and the two camps now regard each other with suspicion and contempt.

The result is an uneasy stalemate, rather than compromise. Working through lawsuits, voter initiatives, and demonstrations, environmental activists manage to preserve old groves, wild rivers and canyon lands, or they curb whaling, pollution, and four-wheeling. Relying on lobbyists, spinmeisters, and campaign contributions, corporations arrange legislation that favors quick and profitable exploitation of resources: oil, minerals, timber, water, and soil. The conflict is institutionalized, apparently unending, and increasingly acrimonious. Yet neither approach deals directly with the fundamental underlying problem. Which is, in a nutshell, that humans no longer seem to *belong* in the Wild--no more the birdwatchers than the bulldozers.

Very few of us, for example, take our food or materials for clothing or shelter directly from the land. We are seldom herdsmen, dairymaids, stone or wood cutters, or tanners and weavers. Less than one percent of our nation's people survive on a family farm, and only a slight percentage of our timber and beef comes from public lands (the only remnants of lower-case wilderness still supplying a livelihood to ordinary citizens). We could get by handily without any of these marginal resources, including the family farm.

What disturbs me in this situation is the disappearance of particular jobs, a particular way of life, which entails a cultural rather than economic loss. I won't pause to grieve over the erosion of the old, aboriginal way, only a century and a half gone, whereby a few million people survived on this continent for several millennia without any significant damage to its ecosystems. At one time Native Americans might have taught us how to move lightly on this earth, how to respect other beings and balance their needs with our own, but not enough of us had the patience or inclination to learn. Also, the Indians fell in love with our axes and muskets, and many of them lost faith in the old path.

I want to focus on what has happened to workers in the "resource industries" in the last half-century. My own father was a logger, when that job was still respectable, though not well paid and not very safe. He fractured half a dozen bones, lost a finger and then half of one foot, which in the end broke his heart because it finished his career in the woods before he was 50. He loved his profession, and suffered most of all because he was too crippled to pursue it.

I also loved growing up in the woods, with a trout stream just a hundred yards down the lane and bears over the first hill out of town. The only thing better I could imagine was having a ranch where I could ride horses. Had I lived on the coast, our trade might have been fishing. Such careers were possible and even honorable when I was a boy, and some of my generation chose them. Now the gypo with a cat, loader, and a few saws, the shirt-tail rancher, and the lone troller with his own boat are on their way to extinction--or already punching the clock at tree plantations, feed lots, and fish farms.

So there is not much future in being a lumberjack, cowpoke, or fisherperson, and I think that's a sad thing. Yes, one can still be a guide or packer or game biologist, but these jobs are rare and they seldom form a community that endures. To take one's living from the wild, to be near or in it every day, working together with brothers, sisters, and neighbors, to *practice* the wild, in Snyder's phrase--that is a special relationship, one that is surely implicitly praised everywhere in *Walden*, even though Henry conceived of it as only an experiment.

Like Thoreau, we may acknowledge that so-called savages once throve in the wilderness and attained a standard of simplicity, economy, and self-sufficiency, an intimacy with the natural world, that we can scarcely imagine. Yet we ought also to recognize that only a minuscule remnant of humanity, in desolate regions of this planet, live in a fashion even remotely similar to that original practice of the wild; and we have deliberately reserved our public lands, our last remaining "open space"--what a flat and empty phrase--for either the corporate extraction of resources or transient, elitist tourism.

A priority of the no-moo, no-cut activists is to sanctify tens of millions of acres as pristine, untrammeled wilderness where human traffic and involvement are held to the minimum. These activists put themselves in an interesting situation. They love the wilderness; they seem to want us all to love it. But what if they succeed beyond their wildest dreams? Convince hundreds of millions of citizens to convert to the Green Church? The new faithful will want to visit the nearest shrines regularly, and deciding who has access, and how and when, would require strict rules and tight scheduling. I suspect that some of the militant devotees of the Wild would find such restriction onerous. I also suspect they would prefer that others loved Nature in the abstract, leaving the hardship and glory of actual contact to the chosen few.

But neither worshiping hordes nor an eco-elite charged with appreciating Nature for the rest of us would have a vital, everyday connection to a wild place. Frankly, I don't think very many people could manage to endure long in what still passes for wild country on this thoroughly tamed continent--a scattering of deserts, mountain ranges, tundras, and swamps. Such places are thinly populated for good reason. Aside from rare rich eccentrics who build and supply remote mansions, those few who survive at the edge of the wilderness have usually taken a lifetime--or several generations--to adapt to their niche. They face toil and hardship for very modest rewards, and contribute at best only marginally to the national economy. They are not cut from the same cloth as the millions who live in cities and suburbs. Television has at least insured that rural people on the margins of degraded wilderness know what they are missing. If they stay in the bush, it's because they want to, or can't adapt to the alternative.

These small-time loggers, ranchers, farmers, and fisherpeople are Thoreau's true descendants. But their spare lives are not an experiment. Hence they may be valuable as a lesson, a possible model. They remind us that human and wild still coexist and interact, at least for the moment, on a daily basis, that a few of us could perhaps–somehow, some way, just barely–live off the land without ruining it, and maybe even *for the love of it.* We would have to cut down some arrowy young pines, maybe even with borrowed chainsaws, and run some stock in the hills when the grass is right. But we would have before us daily the consequences of our work and our play. We might see that we cannot afford to number more than the earth under our feet will bear, might learn to control our urge for more of exactly what we need less of, might understand that we have to save others in order to save ourselves--and so might take the first

step to begin the long and difficult adaptation needed to bring ourselves into harmony with our ultimate and only home.

A very long road, indeed, and the chances for traversing it are not good. But I personally see no other way to go. The current efforts to "protect" and "set aside" or even "create" wilderness are misguided, if these areas are designed only as theme parks, chapels, museums, and scenery. If humans do not see an intimate, direct, and vital connection between themselves and the earth--if they do not, in the old language, care directly for the Mother who feeds and shelters them--and only a certain number of them--then they may very well see her wither and sicken, and so bring disaster upon themselves and every other living thing.

We would do better to concentrate on regenerating those villages in the once-Wild West where settlers still hang on together, surviving on what they can take or make from their region. Perhaps it is time to convert most public lands to active, sustainable use, provided that the users *live* next to the woods, fields, and watercourses they depend on. As some contemporary descendants of Thoreau have argued, we could revive the idea of the medieval Commons serving clusters of villagers/landholders and craftspeople. We might even consider sponsoring some brand new frontier settlements, allowing a new generation to practice living closer to the wilderness.

I'll let my argument rest there, on the wildest of dreams. Let us have fewer people; let them be kinder to one another; and let them inhabit the National Parks, Primitive Areas, Wildlife Preserves, and National Monuments, and so learn to live and work in the fields, woods, rivers, and seas of this planet without destroying its beauty and fertility. Hallelujah!

Will Baker

Student Responses toThoreau's Ax: Reflection on Ecological Incorrectness by Will Baker

1)

The American consumer machine will not slow down until our society and culture move closer to extinction. That is, not until the majority of humans understand that resource exploitation, global warming, and the pollution of air, water, and soil is in fact threatening the lifestyle of western culture, will any fundamental change occur regarding the relationship between our capitalist society and the natural world.

Will Baker doesn't have any real answers that address the global environmental problem. The environmental community continues to work tirelessly to address the multitude of challenges that threaten the planet. Personally, I have made the choice to pull out to the periphery of society in an attempt to create my own peace on this planet; but I still chose to participate. I share a car and recently drove it down to Utah. I sometimes buy new things. I cringe to see Wall-Mart, K-Mart, and Target dominate suburban landscapes and shudder that television reigns supreme. My five-year old niece aspires to grow up like Britney Spears, the W wants to explore our public lands for insignificant reserves of oil and gas, and kids are regularly shot in public schools- all products of our cultural misunderstanding of how humans should live on this planet- lessons taught and reinforced by consumer culture. This is our reality.

I shouldn't say that Will Baker presents no solutions. He outlines three broad points that address the global environmental crisis; reduce human population, make the sick and poor of the world healthy, and find a way to live gracefully. All real nice things to think about but we do not live in a world of abstract ideas and vague generalizations. Our world consists of hundreds of daily choices that contribute to our earth's demise. As individuals we can create healthy communities in the places we live, but we can't slow down the machine. Consumerism will always dominate the economy of life in America, shit, it is the foundation of this country. James Madison, the primary framer of the Constitution, shaped a government that would pit the ambition of factions against one another to create zero advantage of power. However, Madison could not foresee the impact of big industry as a force that cannot be counterbalanced: these entities own too much. Corporate wealth owns our elected officials, our food growers, the media, and resource extractors. The framework has been in place since the Constitutional Convention, it was just a matter of time until the machine's full potential was achieved.

Henry Thoreau was a visionary in his ability to understand the power of mainstream culture. This was the catalyst for a simpler life at Walden. He was a radical minority. Henry understood the real beauty in this life, developed an ethic on how he wanted to live, and did what made him feel good.

As a conservationist and lover of wild places, I too have developed a set of ethics to guide my life. I will continue to work hard to change what does not fit into my ethical norms, despite the domination of the consumer machine, because it makes me feel good to do so. My body and soul will not tolerate living in any other way. I crave beauty and happiness. Often it is difficult to transcend from the reality of the machine, but what are the alternatives? To dwell on life's injustices creates unhappiness and frustration. To fully participate in the workings of the machine is an equivalent to hell on earth. But gnawing away at the machine, smiling at the subtle victories, and celebrating the joy of life, will create a blissful existence. Maybe someday collective bliss will transform into public policy. Until then, laugh loudly at the rhetoric of America.

Bobby Grillo

2)

Okay, now I'm really confused. Reading Tony and the Cows got me thinking about many things. About listening to both sides, that there aren't really two sides to an issue but several facets. There are no black and whites. But after listening to Will Baker, my thoughts have gone wonky. What's your point, Mr. Baker, because I think I missed it completely. There are no 3 simple answers to saving the world, or are there? To even assume this simplicity makes me cynical immediately. I personally feel like Mr. Baker

was an eloquent lecturer, but he was lecturing to the choir. Though I was moved by his eloquency, I disagreed with its presentation and foundation.

His focus on population was overdone and misrepresented. Yes, population exerts pressures on the Earth. But I feel there is a stronger and more urgent pressure taking place: lifestyle. Mr. Baker barely touched on this subject. What do I need to be told more: to not have children (which I wasn't planning on anyway like most white, middle-class women I know my age) or to be conscious of my lifestyle choices? I think Mr. Baker could have had a greater impact by focusing on the American lifestyle rather than other countries that are over-populated (but, ironically do not share in the consumptive lifestyle we do!) Interestingly, Mr. Baker did not make this connection.

I was thoroughly confused by Mr. Baker's use of black-and-whites, that it all comes down to 3 simple answers. This white, western-Euro American way of thinking. The answers always have to be simple and neatly organized. But life is like an ecosystem– complex and overlapping and still full of many undiscovered mysteries. To compact these answers into neat little statements leaves me with a nothing feeling. It just doesn't feel real to me. And it seemed like Mr. Baker gave us a presentation from his own tangled human perspective which claimed to be truth in-and-of-itself and only frustrated and confused me more. Or maybe that's what truth does, and I'm just completely missing the point. But I feel I have some valid criticisms.

Personally, I feel that if we knew the full extent of our impacts on the Earth, we would be terrified to leave as much as a footprint on the land. I don't need to be told anymore that there are too many people on this planet. That is not going to solve anything. If anything, this overused argument has caused me more torment about having children than seems necessary. And what would have been more productive over all these years of feeling guilty for being human, would have been to do something positive and live a lifestyle I'm proud of. I guess it's never too late.

Joanna Tenny

3)
Will Baker Responds:

Joanna and Meagan:

Thanks for your frank and thorough responses to my talk back in March. Your criticisms were well taken, were in fact very close to my own evaluation of what I finally ended up saying. The "paper" I presented was indeed on the thin side when it came to concrete examples or close reasoning on the complexities of environmental issues, and overall it was not very coherent.

I had a hell of a time trying to put together my thoughts on these thorny issues. I tore up a couple of early versions which dragged in too many specifics from too many diverse fields, and made a bad decision (I now think) in choosing to enter the enviro-labyrinth through a revisionist reading of Thoreau (that would have been subject enough for an hour). I was indeed aware of some promising new coalitions between greens and ranchers or organic farmers or hunters (in particular the Quivira Coalition and the Malpais Group), and did not mean to imply that none of the Wild Bunch were interested in such alliances. But I was also aware that underneath these bridges there are still a lot of turbulent, dangerous currents; i.e., as an organic farmer (CCOF) in California, I am very aware of my dependence on machines and my need to manipulate the earth in order to survive, and remain wary of the devotion of many urban-based enviros to the cause of "the Wild" as an absolute and primary value. (Another hour or two even to scratch that topic.) I also foresee confrontations like the one ongoing in the Klamath basin, where the farmers are in the streets protesting the seizure of "their" water in order to support the salmon run (I'm also an avid salmon fisherman).

Given such contrariness, complexity, ambiguity, and emotion, it was also a bad choice to try to give things some kind of positive twist at the end by arguing for birth control and compassion- it sounds monumentally simple-minded to me now- but I was feeling worn out and depressed by weeks (or years, if

you count *Tony & the Cows*) of wrestling with this shit, and wanted to be *for* something unequivocally. I grant your point, Joanna, that our consumerist lifestyle is a mortal danger to what is left of the wild earth. But I will still argue that the population problem is quite as serious, and solving it is a *necessary* condition for the salvation of our species. Of course, one can make a strong argument that our survival will be bad news for the rest of the planet, but pursuing that line of thinking can be (quite literally) suicidal. I'm still hopeful that, given time and dedication, an astute and savvy community can curb our capitalist lusts enough to reveal the benefits of living more modestly and harmoniously, with greater regard for the rest of nature---at first in isolated regions, maybe eventually on a national scale. But we do need time, and that precious element can run out on us if we find ourselves in a world with 12 billion people on it, more than half of them starving, disease-ridden, and desperate. Nor should you take this warning personally- every couple could have two children (or one or none, as they choose) and within a couple of decades we would have returned to the population level of thirty years ago. In sum, we have to do both: reproduce less and live more simply. And, I'd add, treat each other better.

Anyway, thanks again. It's heartening to know that good, young minds are digging into this mess we have made.

Will Baker

4)

Many Axes

(Yes, I've got an axe to grind, and, please, choose your axe with care.)
Guilty axe-
chopped thoughtlessly
now recognized in connection to the destruction of forever lost habitat
Grandpa's axe-
then dad's, now mine
Global market axe-
made of tropical hardwood
head not well secured to handle
buy one, get one free at your local big box
Recycled axe-
amalgamated plastic handle
shiny head once a crumpled can and the frame of a 72 Chevy long since wrecked.
Communal axe-
stored in the shed behind the garden
please return to place behind bucket when you're done-
and then come to my house for a cup of tea
Selective axe-
splits boards from old barn
hues old timbers
makes beams for new gable
Artifact axe-
rendered obsolete by as yet incomplete by passionately pursued
UnAxe-
now being imagined by your local wild bunch who dare to feel the burden of the axes of the past, acknowledge that their houses have been made with axes, attempt make use of alternative axes, use their axes in a sustainable manner, and yet are not hypocritical when they dare to dream of axe-less futures.

Shasta Grenier

March 27th

Montana Big Open: Quest For The Forgotten Wild

Robert Scott and Douglas Coffman

Introduction:
Bob Scott and Doug Coffman began teaming up fifteen years ago on a project to restore a significant area of the Northern Plains in Montana to their original "glory." This is a visionary project and these two people are not only dedicated to realizing it, their knowledge, tenacity, will, connection to wild bison, and basic grit have gone a long ways towards that realization. The term Big Open, as it was originally used, referred to the last open (unfenced) range in Montana, in the late 1800s--to the land between the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. Today, The Big Open refers to a nine million acre area centered on Garfield County (Jordan, Montana is the major town in this region). Within this vast plains area are the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge, the UL Bend Wilderness, and sections of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Aboriginally, it was prime hunting country for bands of Crow, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Arikara, Lakota, Blackfeet, Salish, Nez Perce and, undoubtedly, others who found it to be one of the richest areas for animals such as the American Bison, as well as for deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, and bighorn sheep. It is a part of America's steppe, located in the continental center of a long arc of grasslands stretching from Saskatchewan and Alberta to Oklahoma. It is the driest of Montana's grasslands, and making a living from agriculture is difficult, to say the least. There are approximately 3,000 people living in the whole area presently, and the latest census shows it to be losing population. The Big Open proposal starts by recognizing that the area is better suited to native wildlife than to ranching and farming. It envisions a gradual phasing in of native grazers simultaneously with a gradual phasing out of domestic stock and grain production. Scott and Coffman and their Board (Montana Big Open is now a non-profit corporation dedicated to advancing ecological restoration in the region) are sensitive to the people whose lives are bound up with this area. Their vision emphasizes the need to create an economic base for residents through hunting, guiding, and eco-tourism. Their effort exemplifies the difficulties and value of working on a long-term conservation project. (This statement is indebted to their "The Big Open: A Return to Grazers of the Past," *Western Wildlands*, Fall, 1990.)

Bios:
Robert B. Scott, P.E. is a fourth generation Montanan who grew up in the Bitterroot Valley. He was owner of a Central Montana wheat and cattle ranch during the early 1980s, and from this experience came many of the ideas that have propelled the Big Open Project. Bob's wife of thirty years, born Glenna Smith, is the offspring of a family that ranched in the Big Open in the 1920's and 1930's, and Bob credits the stories of his father-in-law with deepening his understanding of the land and its people. Glenna and Bob raised three children in Montana. Today, Bob works on behalf of many progressive causes, both environmental and social. In addition to leadership of the Big Open Project, he owns and operates Discovery Books, a rare book business in Hamilton, Montana. He received his formal education at the California Institute of Technology [BS'65 and MSAe'66], and has over thirty year's experience in various engineering disciplines. He is the author of numerous technical papers and articles, including many on the Big Open.

Douglas Coffman operates a private business in Eugene, Oregon where he conducts generalized research on the history, ecology, and evolution of the American Bison. He received a B.A. in anthropology from the University of Montana (1973) and an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Oregon (1976). His holistic inquiry into the process of human survival has informed and guided his professional work in post-secondary education and outdoor leadership. Doug has also developed, directed, and taught in a number of wilderness field schools and other environmental programs. Since the mid-1980's, he has pursued a special interest in American Bison both privately and through his current work as Operations Director with Montana Big Open, Inc. In 1996, Doug completed a successful decade-long effort to locate,

acquire, and restore the historic national icon of the wild bison – Hornaday's Smithsonian Buffalo Group (now on public display in Fort Benton, Montana). Published works and second-party acknowledgments appear in "Western Wildlands," "Montana Magazine," "Wild Earth," "Earth First! Journal," "Piegan Storyteller," and several prominent national periodicals.

Speakers' suggested Readings:

Birch, Thomas. 1995. "The Incarceration of Wilderness: Wilderness Areas as Prisons," in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century.*
Coffman, Douglas, Robert Scott and Charles Jonkel. 1990. "The Big Open: A Return to Grazers of the Past," in *Western Wildlands.*
Hornaday, William T. *The Extermination of the American Bison.* Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.
Licht, Daniel. 1997. *Ecology and Economics of the Great Plains.* Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press.
Scott, Robert B. 1998. "Wild Bison Restoration: The Suitability of Montan's Big Open." In *Bison Ecology and Management in North America,* Lynn R. Irby and James E. Knight, Eds. Bozeman: Montana State University.

Montana Big Open: Quest for the Forgotten Wild
Doug Coffman and Bob Scott
March 27, 2001

PART 1: "HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MONTANA'S BIG OPEN"
by Doug Coffman

Montana's Big Open: Historical Perspectives

[SLIDE 1: OPAQUE]

I'd like to add my thanks to all of you for meeting here this evening to share ideas and information on a topic of widespread interest and concern. '*Returning wild bison to parts of the Great Plains*', though currently controversial, is *not* a new idea. In fact, it is an often *unrealized* part of our traditional Americana, as we are about to see. The impulse to preserve and resurrect the bison is older than any of us here — older even than the settling of the Western Frontier. I suppose it stems from the art caves of Western Europe, going back even to the closing millennia of the last ice age. Yet, as modern proposals like "Montana Big Open" and its Plains-wide counterpart, "Buffalo Commons," illustrate, it is also a question as fresh and new as tomorrow. In the end, what any of us does with the perennial question of the buffalo returning — what Canadian ecologist, Don Gayton, aptly calls, "*That huge and rumbling irrationality*" — is a matter of personal choice. Our responses will vary, of course, and this is good. Due to the practical complexities and impediments to bison restoration, though, it is *not* likely that the question will be fully resolved in our lifetimes. Indeed, *we* may be consigned to live, and die, in a period *between* wild bison. Only one thing is certain: insofar as current public interest in bison stems from concrete needs ---biological, environmental, and human ---wild bison restoration as an issue is *not* going to go away. Probably the *best* thing *we* can do is to engage openly and actively in the long struggle toward consensus.

To that happy end, I'd like to open my talk this evening by orienting you to the subject of tonight's *dual* presentation: Montana's Big Open... namely, '*what is it?*'

[SLIDE 2: BIG OPEN/STATE OF MONTANA]

FIRST, "The Big Open" is a *geographic area* of ~15,000 sq. mi. It straddles the northern mixed-grass plains along both sides of the Missouri-Yellowstone Divide in East-central MT. The name was first applied in the late-1870s or early-1880s by a frontier photographer working out of Miles City. It's name reflects the region's most awesome physical attribute - its vast openness;

SECOND, "The Big Open" is a *proposal* for ecosystem recovery in this same region. The Proposal dates to its conceptualization, in 1986, and its public presentation, in 1987, through the Institute of the Rockies, here in Missoula;

THIRD, "The Big Open" is a *program* for large-scale environmental restoration and economic revitalization in the region. It is based upon the fundamentals of Conservation Biology and Sustainable Economics, the combined thrust of which is that the natural world is of altogether more value when kept intact;

And FOURTH, "The Big Open" is an *organization* ---a newly-minted non-profit corporation established last year for the purpose of implementing the Big Open Program. The legal name of the corporation is, "Montana Big Open."

The original idea for The Big Open was the brainchild of fourth-generation Montanan, Robert B. Scott, of Hamilton. Later this evening, following my presentation, Bob Scott will speak about the Big Open Project and its future.

First, though, it is important to convey, by way of context, some sense of the region's interesting past. As my retrospective on the Big Open unfolds tonight, I'd like to address two basic questions:

1. *'Did the vast, dry uplands of Montana's Missouri-Yellowstone Divide originally provide essential habitat for abundant wildlife, particularly bison?'*

2. *'If that area is a naturally-productive wildlife region, what are some of the reasons why?'*

To begin, let's try to imagine the Divide country of the Big Open – the vast area lying along and between the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers in what is now Eastern Montana – as it was in its pristine state...

[SLIDE 3: BIG OPEN AND McGINNIS BUTTE]

- Let us visualize... an ancient land of sun, wind, and grass, the northern fringes of which were not released from the planet's frozen grip until the end of the last ice age...

- a sparse land much like the rest of the American Great Plains, only drier...

- Now try to conjure up the indigenous peoples for whom this land was home; and the native wildlife, large and small --in numbers beyond counting --that lived upon this sea of grass, and gave it life...

- And, finally, try to imagine a pristine landscape that – until *less than 150 years ago* – remained virtually unknown to white Euro-Americans. We may find such visualizations difficult, given that *most* of us have virtually *no* social view of what this region is like today, much less how it appeared in early history. Tonight, my major task is to *establish* such a mindset.

So, what unifying view of the Big Open might history provide?

- Though the Big Open was well-known anciently to its indigenous peoples, exploration of this remote region by Euro-Americans did not begin until the early third of 19th century. And it commenced chiefly *by river* --

[SLIDE 4: MISSOURI/YELLOWSTONE RIVERS]

In 1805 and 1806, of course, Lewis & Clark explored the large valleys of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, and a few of their major tributaries. Then in 1832, the American artist, George Catlin, ascended the Missouri River as far as the mouth of the Yellowstone. The next year, 1833, the German scientist, Maximillian, Prince of Wied and Swiss artist, Karl Bodmer, ventured even further up the Missouri River to the vicinity of present-day Fort Benton.

[SLIDE 5: TYPICAL RIVER BREAKS]

All of these early travelers reported bison *omnipresent* in the Big Open, in large, often vast, herds in the valleys and rugged "breaks." It is the descriptions from these early riverine expeditions that are best-

known generally, today.

But what of the semi-arid uplands, above and away from the comparatively lush river valleys – what did *later* travelers in the dry *interior* of the Big Open encounter there?

Fortunately for us, from the mid-to-late-1800s, many travelers and explorers kept ample record of their experiences in buffalo land. Most of their overland journeys took place during the summer and fall – seasons of easy travel on the northern prairies. The evidence from these early reports gives us a good sense of what the Big Open was really like in its natural state.

Tonight, we shall hear some brief excerpts from the journals of a few of these upland travelers. We'll catch the echo of their voices, as they resonate from within this old bison horn – itself a relic of the Big Open prairie in days gone by:

VIEW IN SUMMER

Fr. Pierre-Jean DeSmet ---Jesuit Missionary to the Indians, and one of the first literate observers of the Big Open ---crossed the region with wagons and handcarts in July/August of 1851, bound for the treaty council at Ft. Laramie –

[SLIDE 6: BIG OPEN INTERIOR]

[De Smet, Reverend Pierre Jean 1851. 'From Fort Union to Fort Alexander.' Letter reprinted In McFarling, Lloyd, *Exploring the Northern Plains* 1804-1876. Caldwell: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1955:202-210. Originally published In De Smet, Western Missions and Missionaries: A Series of Letters, N.Y: P.J. Kenedy, 1863.]

Item: (July 31, 1851) "[Our] four vehicles [wagons/carts] were in all probability the first that had ever crossed this unoccupied waste. There is not the slightest perceptible vestige of a beaten track between Fort Union and the Red Buttes [near Fort Laramie (Wyoming) on the Platte]". (1955:203)

Item: (August 3, 1851) "On the fourth day of our march we descried thousands of bison. The whole space between the Missouri and the Yellowstone was covered as far as the eye could reach... During a whole week [i.e., the remainder of their trip to Fort Alexander, on the Yellowstone] we heard their bellowings like the noise of distant thunder... It may be said that [this] is the country in which the buffalo and herds of deer are generally found in the greatest abundance. A good hunter might easily kill here, in the course of a day, several cows [bison], deer, a mountain [sheep], a red-tailed and a black-tailed buck, an antelope, hares, and rabbits. He might fire twice upon a grizzly bear, and perhaps meet a gray and a silver fox. To this list of animals we may add the beaver, otter, badger, prairie-dog, and several kinds of wild fowl, principally pheasants and grouse. It is easy to see that our hunters possess the power of selecting a repast". (1955:206-7)

Edwin T. Denig ---an Indian trader with the American Fur Company who was intimately familiar with the Big Open country ---reported the scene a few years later, in about 1855 –

[SLIDE 7: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, DIVERSIFIED]

[Denig, Edwin Thompson 1854. *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*. John C Ewers, Ed. Norman: University of Oklahomo Press, 1961]

Item: "At this time [shortly after 1855] the entire south side of the Missouri as high up as the Musselshell

and as low down as the confluence of the Little Missouri of the Big Bend, extending for 100 miles into the interior, is unoccupied by any Indians. This is one of the best game districts in the world. The surface of the country is rolling, diversified by small patches of wood and green meadows over which the buffalo graze in immense numbers...

In July and August, 1860, members of Bvt. Brigadier General W.F. Raynolds' U.S. Army expedition passed directly through the dry heart of the Big Open region – still officially "unexplored" at that late date. 1st Lt. John Mullins reports –

[SLIDE 8: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, CREEK BASINS]

[Raynolds, Bvt. Brig. General W.F. 1868. *Report on the Exploration of the Yellowstone River.* Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office. (pages 161-170: Report of 1st Lt. John Mullins, on route from Fort Benton to Fort Union, 1860).]

Item: (July 26, 1860) "...We discovered the valley of the Musselshell River...[south of Mosby, MT]. The country east and south of us seems very much broken... From this point, as far as the eye could reach, the country seemed covered with immense herds of buffalo...". (1868:165)

Item: (July 30, 1860) "Continued our march this morning, keeping a generally easterly direction of a barren, rough country. Passed a number of herds of buffalo, who seemed to have eaten off every sprig of grass; we met with no water after leaving camp, until after a march of 23 miles we camped near the bed of a small creek containing water in holes...to our right we could see the timber in the valley of the Porcupine, distant about twelve miles. During the night we were much annoyed by the buffaloes running through camp". (1868:65)

Item: (July 31, 1860) "Left camp this morning on a northeast course...to the valley of the Porcupine... Large herds of buffalo were visible in the different valleys. The three forks of the Porcupine were seen almost to their source...all coming in together near the same point and forming the main Porcupine. ...all the valley, being filled with buffalo, presented a striking variety in natural scenery". (1868:166)

Item: (August 1, 1860) "...continued our march to-day up the right-hand fork of the Porcupine...northeast, gradually ascending to the divide between the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. I reached the divide after a tedious march of 18 miles, crossed it, and proceeded for six miles further down a tributary of what is called the Big Dry Sandy river [probably Little Dry Creek]. The whole country traversed today was dry and barren, no wood, water, or grass; the latter having been entirely eaten off by the buffaloes" [vicinity of Cohagen]. (1868:166)

Joel A. Allen –a naturalist with the Northern Pacific Railroad Expedition of General D.S. Stanley –– observed and reported on the Big Open prairies in the summer of 1873 –

[SLIDE 9: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, LARGE DRAINAGE]

[Allen, J.A. 1874. "Notes on the Natural History of Portions of Montana and Dakota" From: *Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History*, vol. XVII, June, 1874. (Report of J. A. Allen, naturalist of the North Pacific Railroad Expedition of 1873, General D.S. Stanley, Commander).]

Item: (August 18, 1873) "...on the divide between the Yellowstone and the Musselshell [northwest of Pompey's Pillar] we found large [bison] herds had grazed but a day or two before our arrival [August 18]... From this point to the Yellowstone [via the big bend of the Musselshell and the mouth of Little Porcupine Creek] we were frequently in sight of quite large bands... ...at no time were more than a few

hundreds in sight at once. We found later that the valley of the Musselshell and its adjoining prairies had been the recent feeding ground of large herds, immense numbers having evidently spent the early part of the season there. // The herds seem to have occupied the whole [Musselshell River] valley as far as we followed it (from the 109th meridian to the Big Bend), as well as the plains on either side. Considerable bands had also ranged over the divide between the Musselshell and Yellowstone, particularly along the two Porcupine Creeks. General Custer met with small herds still further to the eastward...while quite large herds had recently passed up Custer's Creek [northwest of Terry]. (1874:9)

Two years later --in 1875 --naturalist Allen summed up his many observations of bison in the Big Open region for none other than F.V. Hayden, U.S.G.S. Geologist–in-charge of making a federal report –

[SLIDE 10: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, SCENIC]

[Allen, Joel Asaph 1877. *History of the American Bison, Bison Americanus*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.]

Item: "The former existence of the buffalo over the whole of the region drained by the Upper Missouri is well substantiated by the evidences they themselves have left, and which exists in the form of well-defined trails and osseous remains. Lambert [*Pacific Railroad Report of Exploration and Surveys*, vol. 1, Governor Stephens's Report, p. 167] speaks of the extensive plains between the meridian of Fort Union and the Rocky Mountains as being the 'pasture grounds of unfailing millions of...buffalo'. Lieutenant Saxon [1853], in his report of a journey down the Missouri, from Fort Benton to Fort Union...says that during the last few days of their journey they saw innumerable herds of buffalo cows, in many places extending in every direction as far as the eye could reach [Pac. RR Rept.]. Lieutenant Groger [October, 1853] also found large bands on the Missouri from the Musselshell to the Milk River...[Pac. RR Rept.]". (1877:538-39)

Item: "During the period [1853 to 1856] buffaloes were met with in great abundance on the southern tributaries of the Missouri, between the Great Falls...and the mouth of the Yellowstone. (1877:544)

In 1876-'77, First Lt. Edward Maguire collected reports from *his* subordinates on a summer reconnaissance to the Big Open, for Col. Nelson A. Miles. From August of 1877, a Lt. L.R. Hare reports –

[SLIDE 11: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, DIVIDE]

[Maguire, First Lieut. Edward 1878. "Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1878," *in Report of the Secretary of War*, 1878, vol. 2, part 3, p.p. 1671-1703. (Pages 1672-1680: Report of Lieut. L.R. Hare, Seventh Cavalry, on reconnaissance for Colonel Neson A. Miles between the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers).]

Item: (August 19, 1877) "From the highest point of the divide [between the Yellowstone and Musselshell Rivers] an extensive view is obtained of the Musselshell Valley, and at this time the valley was covered with immense herds of buffalo... The broken grounds furnish hiding places for deer, elk, bear, and all other game in abundance, while the prairies are covered with buffalo during the milder months... Grass was scarce in camp, but this was due to the buffalo having been there in such immense herds that they had eaten it all off." (1878:1677)

And from this same time period, a Lt. O.F. Long also reports to General Miles –

[Ibid., pages 1688-1703: Report of Lieut. O. F. Long, Fifth Infantry, on several reconnaissance trips for Colonel Nelson A. Miles in Eastern Montana.]

Item: (November 7, 1876) "Then passing over a few miles of rolling country [on Sunday Creek, north of Yellowstone River], where numerous herds of buffalo are seen grazing on the fine grass that grows here so luxuriantly..." (1878:1688)

Item: (November 8, 1876) "...we leave the creek on which we encamped last night [Sunday Cr.] and wind among and over the low foothills that lead to the Missouri and Yellowstone divide...Vast herds of antelope and buffalo are seen." (1878:1688)

Item: (December 10, 1876) "We...move over a high, rolling country [upper Big Dry Cr.]... Buffalo in large herds are seen on all sides grazing on the rich grass that here grows in abundance." (1878:1692)

Item: (December 11, 1876) "Our road is over a low and slightly rolling country [probably between Big and Little Dry Crs.]... Plenty of buffalo and antelope are grazing about." (1878:1692)

Item: (September 19, 1877) "...we encamped on a small dry fork of Sunday Creek... No wood could be obtained, and buffalo chips were used as a substitute. A few antelope, buffalo, and black-tailed deer were secured." (1878:1697)

Item: (September 20, 1877) "...we pass over the gently-sloping foot-hills of the great Yellowstone and Missouri divide, growing in abundance rich and nutritious buffalo and bunch grass. Large game-trails cross the country in every direction, and buffalo and antelope in great numbers are quietly grazing on each side." (1878:1697)

Item: (September 27, 1877) "Our road now leads over a high rolling prairie [north of Missouri River and mouth of Musselshell, near South Fork of Fourchette Cr.] ...as far as the eye can see, stretches a vast expanse of undulating prairie land, with waving grasses that furnish food for the numerous herds of buffalo and antelope that graze on every side." (1878:1699)

Item: (October 16, 1877) "...the route passed over during the day [Musselshell valley between Cat and Lodgepole Crs.] has been practicable for a wagon-road. Plenty of buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope seen." (1878:1702)

The well-known adventurer and writer, James Willard Schultz, actually hunted bison in the Big Open region. In August of 1879 he reports –

[SLIDE 12: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, BUTTES]

[Schultz, James Willard ("Apikuni", or "Spotted Robe") 1907. *My Life as an Indian.* Forest and Stream Pub. Co. Premier Edition, 1964, New York: Fawcett World Library.]

Item: (August, about 1879, head of Armell's Creek)--"From a little butte nearby we could see that the prairie was black with [bison] clear to the breaks of the Missouri, and to the eastward where the buttes of Big Crooked Creek and the Musselshell loom in the distance. The Moccasin [Judith] Mountains shut off the view to the south, but westward there were also buffalo". (1964:174)

[Schultz, James Willard 1974. *Why Gone Those Times*? Eugene Lee Silliman, Ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.]

Item: [Black Butte, late August, 1880]--"Northward to the breaks of the Missouri, twenty five miles away, and eastward to the nearer, timbered valley of the Musselshell, herds of buffalo were everywhere

upon the plain. I can give no accurate estimate of the number of the animals...but there were surely more than a hundred thousand of them." (1974:259) "I leveled [my telescope]upon the plain running north from the Missouri up to the foot of the Little Rockies... There too the buffalo herds were as plentiful as upon our side of the river." (1974:260

Item: "Never again was I to see at one time so vast a number of buffaloes as those that...I had looked down upon from the top of Black Butte, on that twenty-sixth of August, 1880.

VIEW IN WINTER

By the late-1870s and early-1880s, the Big Open became the center of the commercial bison trade in the Northern Great Plains. Influx of bison hunters increased dramatically, and activity shifted to the *winter* months. The mass-killing and skinning of bison took place almost exclusively in *winter* ---when the robes were prime, and therefore most valuable. The combined accounts of those who participated in the wholesale commercial slaughter bear strong witness. We will let a few of these men speak of what they saw:

Again, James Willard Schultz was there. In the winter of 1876-'77, he made this report from near present-day Lewistown, MT –

[SLIDE 13: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, WINTER BISON]

[Schultz, James Willard 1974. *Why Gone Those Times*? Eugene Lee Silliman, Ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.]

Item: (Winter, 1876-77)---"All winter and spring buffalo had been plentiful in the vicinity [Judith Basin, near Lewistown], but for some cause which no one was ever able to learn they had suddenly grazed away to the eastward, and scouts reported that the nearest of the big herds was in the vicinity of the Musselshell River, near its junction with Big Crooked Creek." (1974:8) "Ever since early morning we had been passing immense herds of buffalo [same loc'n.]... A big herd of buffalo south of Crooked Creek and west of the Musselshell was the first to be attacked..." (10) "After perhaps a half-hour's ride we sighted the buffalo--four or five thousand of them--in a basin several miles in extent..." (10-11)

Over the next few winters, Schultz made further reference to the abundance of bison in the Big Open region ---

[Schultz, James Willard ("Apikuni", or "Spotted Robe") 1907. *My Life as an Indian*. Forest and Stream Pub. Co. Premier Edition, 1964, New York: Fawcett World Library.]

Item: "...now came the disquieting news that there were practically no buffalo to the north, the west, or the south of us [on the Marias]. We couldn't believe it at first; it seemed impossible; but the great [buffalo] herds had drifted southeastward from the plains of northwestern Canada into Montana, and they never re-crossed the line. This was the winter of 1878-79. South of the Missouri to the Yellowstone and beyond, the buffalo were, however, apparently as plentiful as ever." (1964:157)

Item: "Winter (1881-2) came again ...but the buffalo were not so plentiful as they had been the previous winter. Their range was also smaller, extending from the mouth of the Judith River eastward to the Round Butte, on the north side of the Missouri, one hundred and twenty five miles, and back from the river not more than forty miles. They were far more plentiful on the south side, between the Missouri and the Yellowstone, but so were the hunters. The white hunters were the most destructive of all, and piled up more than 100,000 buffalo hides along the Yellowstone that winter." (1964:191-92)

Usher Burdick, author and former buffalo hunter, tells the story of a hunting companion, George "W" Newton-

[SLIDE 14: BUFFALO HUNTER ON A 'STAND']

[Burdick, Usher L. 1939. *Tales From Buffalo Land: The Story of George "W" Newton*. Baltimore, Wirth Brothers.]

Item: Newton contracted with Frazier Brothers as buffalo skinner, September 1878 and "started for the territory drained by the Big Dry [Creek]." (1939:12)

Item: "Newton was employed by Frazier Brothers during the winters of 1878 and 1879. In the winter of 1878-1879 the firm ...killed 5,000 buffalo and these were skinned by a crew of six men. The district in which this firm operated was mainly on the divide between the Sunday and Little and Big Drys in Montana." (1939:13)

Item: "During the season there [were] usually two hunts. One started in June and ended in August, which was a rather limited undertaking, and the only purpose of securing hides at that season was for tanning purposes, but the real buffalo hunt for the purpose of gathering furs which took on the proportions of a gigantic enterprise did not start before the latter part of September. By traveling along the great divide, herds of buffalo could be located feeding along the streams on either side, and Mr. Newton states that during the early part of his hunting experience that when these herds were located the animals were so numerous that they took on the appearance of bees around a hive." (1939:15)

Another author and Plains historian, Wayne Gard, tells the story of two buffalo hunters who hunted the Big Open ranges.

[Gard, Wayne 1959. *The Great Buffalo Hunt*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.]

Item: "In the summer of 1879, [Jim] White...went north into Montana. [Oliver P.] Hanna would join him later. In October, White wrote Hanna that he had made a camp at the head of Sunday Creek, on the divide between the Yellowstone and the Missouri. That was twenty five miles north of Miles City. The camp White had made was in bleak country, far from wood and water. But thousands of buffaloes covered the prairie as far as any hunter could see." (1959:261)

Item: "[The] winter of 1880-81 saw more hunters than ever on the northern ranges, principally in eastern Montana. One of the new outfits...was that of George Newton and John Herbert. Hunting mainly between the Musselshell and the Big Dry, he and Herbert took thirteen hundred hides during the cold weather. Much of the killing that winter was done in the big triangle formed by three rivers--the Missouri, the Musselshell, and the Yellowstone. More than 200,000 hides were...shipped out of that region during the winter and spring." (1959:268-69)

Item: "...buffaloes seemed as thick as ever on the northern plains at the start of the season of 1881-82. One hunter said he saw many thousands along the Big Dry, the Smokey Butte, and Timber Creek--all streams between the Missouri and the Yellowstone. Reports of these buffaloes brought a stampede of new hunters until an estimated five thousand whites, in addition to the Indians, were shooting and skinning on the northern plains. Most of them hunted in the big triangle formed by the Missouri, the Yellowstone, and the Musselshell." (1959:270-71)

Local Big Open historian, Geneva Highland, also recounts the observations of one buffalo hunter, B.F.

Lamb ---

[Highland, Geneva 1960. *Big Dry Country*. Billings: Billings Printing Company.]

Item: "B.F. Lamb...spent three years as a buffalo hunter in north central Montana, in 1878, 1879, and 1880. He hunted in the area on the north side of the Yellowstone from near Miles City, west to a creek in present day Rosebud County called Froze-to Death--north to the Bull Mountains and the Musselshell Valley. He...had hunted the first two years along the Missouri River and north of it. He said he had never seen cattle anywhere to equal the number of buffalo in this area, that when you got five or ten miles from the river, no matter which direction you looked you could see buffalo on every hill, on every ridge, in every valley and coulee."

Plains historian, Mark H. Brown, also summarizes the commercial hide-hunting in the Big Open ---

[SLIDE 15: BUFFALO SKINNER, HUFFMAN]

[Brown, Mark H. 1959. *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone: A History of the Yellowstone Basin*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.]

Item: "And as to the buffalo--by the mid-1870s the hide hunters on the Southern Plains were looking for new hunting grounds and there was only one place left to look. That was Eastern Montana and adjacent sections of Dakota and Wyoming Territories. Miles City was located near the center of this great hunting ground... So it was natural that Miles City became the most important outfitting and hide buying point on the Northern Plains... Although many buffalo were killed in the immediate valley of the Yellowstone, some of the favorite hunting grounds lay just outside this [valley]. On the east, Beaver and Box Elder Creeks and, to the north, the Musselshell River, Redwater Creek, Big Dry and Little Dry were favorite hunting grounds: and it was in the country between the Yellowstone and the Missouri that the last of the great herds were to be found." (1961:363)

Frontier photographer, Layton A. ("LA") Huffman, was also among those who witnessed and recorded the commercial killing frenzy that beset the Big Open. He reports that ---

[Huffman, Layton A. n.d. Unpublished manuscript, Montana Historical Society Archives.]

Item: "During the late seventies [1870s] and early eighties it was still possible to see bands of thousands of American Bison along the high ridges and in the smaller valleys between the Yellowstone and big Missouri rivers."

Other writers summed things up after the fact. Here, buffalo historian, Larry Barsness (writing in 1985) ---

[Barsness, Larry 1985. *Heads, Hides and Horns: The Complete Buffalo Book*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press.]

Item: "The bad winter of 1880-81 made good hunting for everyone. Snow lay deep in the great triangle formed by the Missouri, Musselshell and Yellowstone Rivers, so deep as to keep the herds from escaping the hunting. The Sioux City 'Journal' reported in the spring of '81: 'The past severe winter caused the buffalo to bunch themselves in a few valleys where there was pasturage... There was no sport about it, simply shooting down the famine-tamed animals...leaving the carcasses to rot.' Everyone moved into the great triangle in 1882: white hide hunters, innumerable Indians, and Métis; all shot for their share of the estimated 250,000 buffalo in this patch of country." (1985:130-31)

E. Douglas Branch (in 1929) gives a closing comment on the Big Open as a commercial center of buffalo hunting activity –

[SLIDE 16: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, WINTER]

[Branch, E. Douglas 1929. *The Hunting of the Buffalo*. New York: D. Appleton and Company.]

Item: "The great triangle bounded by the Missouri, the Yellowstone, and the Musselshell was a favorite [buffalo] hunting ground of the professionals. ...hunters' camps lined [these rivers], and their tributaries. By 1882 there were over 5,000 hunters and skinners--to say nothing of Indians--in the northern range. The buffaloes were blocked from water; and a chain of sentinal camps backed against the Canadian border let very few buffaloes escape into British Territory." (1929:210-11)

Buffalo hunting activity quickly dwindled in the Big Open after the winter of 1883 due to the *elimination* of the large herds. Straggling bands of bison remained in the Big Open, however, and sporadic kills were made into the early years of the twentieth century. Again, our writer-adventurer, James Willard Schultz, gives one interesting account from about 1898 –-

[SLIDE 17: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, BADLANDS/BREAKS]

[Schultz, James Willard 1979. *Floating on the Mi*ssouri. Eugene Lee Silliman, Ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.]

Item: [1901] "Few people knew that here in the badlands lying south of the Round Butte [on Missouri River, north-central Garfield County--now submerged in Ft. Peck Lake] and between it and the Musselshell, a small herd of buffalo ranged until three years ago [about 1898]. They were the very last of the great northern herds, some thirty-five head... When first found, there were only eighteen head of the buffalo, and part of them were bulls. But year by year the little herd increased, until there were thirty-five, counting calves. And then? ...those...French half-breeds [Métis], in some way learned of their existence. Down came the tattered lodges of the camp at Lewistown...and... they started out for the slaughter. And it was complete." (1979:129-30)

[SLIDE 18: BIG OPEN INTERIOR, SCENIC]

- Though we've heard but a small fraction of available hunters' reports tonight, the historical evidence is *consistent* and *conclusive* –-

  :The Big Open is land of *abundant wildlife*, large and small;

  :*Bison* are the most productive natural resource of these prairie uplands –-

  :bison existed there by the hundreds-of- thousands; and they thrived there year-round – *winter* and *summer* alike.

- Fortunately, other important evidence, such as visual and cartographic records, has come down to us from the time of the disappearance of the last wild herds. These records help to document the uniqueness and importance of the Big Open as an abundant wildlife region -

[SLIDE 19: BISON IN BIG OPEN ca.1880, HUFFMAN]

- In the early-1880s, Miles City photographer, L.A. Huffman, documented the commercial hide-

hunting in the Big Open, and captured graphic images --- such as this one --- of some of the last bands of wild bison left in this region;

- About this same time, the Eastern naturalist and founding conservationist, William T. Hornaday, was also busy documenting Big Open bison for posterity –

After the main bison slaughter had subsided, in 1886, "WT" Hornaday, mounted a collecting expedition and came West to Eastern Montana. Hornaday was Chief Taxidermist of the U.S. National Museum of Natural History, in Washington, D.C. *'The buffalo are gone'*, it was being said, but a few straggling bands remained in remote parts of the Big Open, and Hornaday wished to obtain specimens for his museum before it was too late. While collecting these, he bore witness to the aftermath of the mass-killing of the buffalo. In writings published after the 1886 expedition, Hornaday tells us what *he* saw in the Big Open ---

[SLIDE 20: W.T. HORNADAY, PORTRAIT]

[Hornaday, William T. 1925. *A Wild-Animal Round-Up: Stories and Pictures from the Passing Show*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.]

Item: "At the head of Sunday Creek...you emerge upon a vast stretch of rolling prairie uplands, absolutely treeless, and drained by numerous small creeks. In days gone by that was one of the finest buffalo-ranges in all the West... That once-popular buffalo range extends northward over divide and valley, across the Little Dry, Sand Creek, and Big Dry, ninety miles at least, where it breaks into the awful badlands...of the Missouri." (1925:55)

[Hornaday, William T. 1887. 'The Passing of the Buffalo'. In *The Cosmopolitan*, vol. 4, nos.2 & 3, October/November. New York: Schlicht and Field Co., Publishers.]

Item: "We toiled slowly northward [from Miles City] through the badlands up the Sunday Creek Trail. We were thirty-five miles from Miles City when we saw our first antelope, and forty when we came to the first bleaching bones of a buffalo. The former had been exterminated up to that point, and the buffalo bones all picked up and sold for fertilizer." (1887:87)

[SLIDE 21: BUFFALO BONES, HISTORICAL]

Item: "From the Red Buttes [southeast of Cohagen] onward you see where the millions [of buffalo] have gone. This was once a famous buffalo range, and now the bleaching skeletons lie scattered thickly all along the trail. They lie to-day precisely as they fell four years ago. Beyond the Red Buttes, we were seldom out of sight of bleaching skeletons, and often forty or fifty were in sight at one time." (1887:88)

[Hornaday, William T. 1889 (1887). "The Extermination of the American Bison, with a Sketch of its Discovery and Life History." Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.]

Item: "Over many portions of the northern range the traveler may...ride for days together without once being out of sight of buffalo carcasses, or bones. Such was the case in 1886 in the country lying between the Missouri and the Yellowstone, northwest of Miles City. Go wherever we might, into bad lands, creek-bottoms, or on the highest plateaus, we always found the inevitable and omnipresent grim and ghastly skeleton, with hairy head, dried-up and shriveled nostrils, half-skinned legs stretched helplessly upon the gray turf, and the bones of the body bleached white as chalk." (1889:508-09)

Item: "It is difficult to say...which were the most famous hunting grounds on the northern range.

Lieutenant Partello states that when he hunted in the great triangle bounded by the three rivers, Missouri, Musselshell, and Yellowstone, it contained...250,000 buffaloes. Unquestionably, that region yielded an immense number of buffalo robes, and since the slaughter *thousands of tons* of bones have been gathered up there." [Emphasis added.] (1889:509-10)

Item: "The great herd that 'went north' [across the Yellowstone, in 1883] was utterly extinguished by the white hunters along the Missouri River and the Indians living north of it. The only vestige of it that remained was a band of about two hundred individuals that took refuge west of the Mussellshell between Flat Willow and Box Elder Creeks, and another band of about seventy-five which settled in the badlands between the head of the Big Dry and Big Porcupine Creeks, where a few survivors were found by the author in 1886." (1889:512)

(Huffman/Hornaday era, cont'd.) -

Ultimately, Hornaday's Expedition provided *24* fresh bison specimens to various American museums. Six of the finest of these "*last buffalo*" were incorporated into a mounted artistic grouping that thrilled visitors to the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C. This is how the Bison Group actually looked, as it stood in the Museum of Natural History for nearly 75 years -

[SLIDE 22: HORNADAY BISON GROUP, HISTORICAL]

This imposing display provided millions of visitors with their first, and in many cases *only*, glimpse of the premier American animal, in a scene depicting its natural habitat. The very stuff and symbol of the wild bison, the Group became a true national icon – the holy relic of a time gone by.

In 1957, the display was dismantled and the specimens returned to the State University of Montana, where several were stored, right here in Missoula. Over the next forty years, the specimens were scattered across Montana and nearly forgotten, until my own research relocated all six specimens and began a project to restore them. In June, 1996, after a ten-year restoration effort, all six of the Hornaday Bison were finally relocated, restored, reunited, and rededicated to the public view. This is how the group looks today, as it stands in the Museum of the Northern Great Plains, in Fort Benton, Montana ---

[SLIDE 23: HORNADAY BISON GROUP, RESTORED]

The project to restore the Bison Group also led to the discovery of the main *Base Camp* of the 1886 Hornaday Expedition, where the specimens for the Bison Group were cleaned and prepared. The Hornaday Campsite is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and can be seen today. This is how Hornaday depicted the base camp in his sketchbook from the hunt-

[SLIDE 24: EXPEDITION BASE CAMP, HISTORICAL]

And this is how the actual campsite looks today. It is located in Garfield County, Montana, off Highway 200 a short distance southwest of Sand Springs –

[SLIDE 25: EXPEDITION BASE CAMP, CONTEMPORARY]

William Hornaday also left us *other* important graphic materials from the last days of the buffalo. One of these is a map from his now classic work, The Extermination of the American Bison, published in 1889-

[SLIDE 26: HORNADAY MAP, 1889]

The HORNADAY MAP is based upon extensive data, meticulously gathered and organized by Hornaday following the 1886 'Hunt for Buffalo.' It depicts the extent of the natural range of bison (outlined in red); the inexorable shrinking of the bison range on the Great Plains through the 1870s (outlined in blue), and 1880s (outlined in green); up to the eventual disappearance of bison from places like the Big Open, after 1883 (in green dots). This map is used today in plotting the shrinking range of the American Bison through time.

This map depicts a time which, as most of our American folklore, history, and Western literature tells us, is "*gone forever.*" As L.A. Huffman phrased it, "*It was a dream and a forgetting; a chapter forever closed.*" And I suppose, in some sense, it was and is... Mostly, it seems, we *have* turned from those halcyon days when buffalo roamed, to the more pressing matters of the present.

Indeed, the subsequent history of the Great Plains after the buffalo reflects just such a turning away from the past...

- The disappearance of the last bison herds from the Big Open ranges in the late-1880s ushered in a *new* and changeable era of imposed domestic uses –

  :Open range cattle ranching enjoyed a brief heyday in the mid-to-late-1880s. But after the notorious "Hard Winter" of 1886-87 brought about the collapse of this short-lived enterprise, barbed wire began to enclose the Big Open ranges, and modern, intensive forms of industrial ranching and farming emerged. Domestic sheep joined cattle to fill the former range of the buffalo.

  :In the first two decades of the 20th century, federal Homesteading Acts produced a heavy influx of Euro-American immigrants into the drylands of the Big Open. Their attempts to tame and settle Montana's remote hinterland proved futile for most, due to the environmentally *unrealistic* nature of the Homestead Acts which triggered the migration. By the mid-1930s, Big Open ranges were largely depopulated once again, and habitation in the region has steadily *lost* ground ever since.

  :Other *extractive* industries —including even some limited grain farming —have helped to keep hope alive in the Big Open through to the closing decades of the 20th century. But periodic droughts, hard winters, and other environmental factors – including sagging agricultural markets – have contributed to the endemic "boom-and-bust" cycles that characterize the region.

Environmentally inappropriate human enterprise has, of course, been *hard* on the natural landscape of the Big Open. Over the past century, there has been a slow but steady erosion of many of the natural aspects of the land –

:There have been reductions of wild plant and animal species, and restrictions of their ranges;

:there has been extensive disruption of native ecosystems, and a resulting loss of biodiversity;

:widespread environmental degradation —including soil erosion, saline encrustation, weed infestations, insect plagues, and hydrological disruptions —also has resulted;

:and, of course, this is not to *mention* the early and unfortunate destruction of the vibrant, indigenous societies for whom the Big Open was an important communal hunting ground...

The contemporary Period in the Big Open, then, is in many ways an extension of environmentally-

disruptive trends of the historical past ---

:The Big Open today is dominated by commercial agricultural uses - chiefly domestic ranching and farming - now aided by refined technologies and improved management systems;

:Nevertheless, continuous government subsidies and other public incentives are required to keep these operations running today, especially in the drier, 'marginal' areas. One outcome of these deficit economics is shown on this next map ---

[SLIDE 27: POPPER MAP]

The POPPER MAP: Today, those *few* who eke out a living in dry regions like the Big Open live in varying degrees of chronic land-use distress, as this map shows. Several years ago using demographic data from the 1990 census, Rutgers University planners Frank and Deborah Popper plotted out the human situation across all Great Plains counties, using six indicators. These are - [Map Key]:

1. Long-term population loss (1/2 or more of pop. Between 1930 and 1988);
2. Short-term population loss (10% or more from 1930-1988);
3. Low population density (four or fewer people per sq. mi.);
4. High median age (if 35 years-old or higher);
5. High poverty rate (if 20% or higher);
6. Low construction investment ($50.00 or less *per capita*).

Counties suffering three or more of these factors are shown here. When first viewing the configuration of the Poppers' data some years ago, the crosshatched pattern of distressed counties reminded *me* of another familiar pattern from the *past* – that of the disappearing bison plotted on Hornaday's map of 1889. By transposing the Poppers' *20th*-century data onto Hornaday's *19th*-century map, I obtained the rather *dramatic* convergence shown in this next slide -

[SLIDE 28: HORNADAY/POPPER MAP]

THE HORNADAY/POPPER MAP: *The visible geographic correspondence of these two maps reveals a mystery --*

- A *correlation* across 100 years, in the case of the maps themselves; or perhaps *always,* considering what we *now* know about the prevailing *absence* of sedentary human habitation in the Big Open prehistorically.

- '*What is the broad implication of this convergence?*' I believe it reveals to us a fundamental truth of the dry Great Plains: that 'w*here bison can thrive, humans tend to struggle*' – '*especially*', we must add, *'if these people are sedentary agriculturalists.'*

- And how can we explain this apparent convergence? What factors may have produced it?

-First, historical land-use and settlement patterns certainly have contributed heavily. Prime agricultural lands with the best water were taken first by early plains homesteaders, while dry, "marginal" lands like the Big Open were settled last.

-in this way, bison were gradually relegated to *remote*, more *arid* parts of the plains (as Hornaday's map clearly shows).

-The most significant of these areas historically, of course, was the Big Open of Eastern Montana. And here, the converging data are even more revealing, as our final map shows —

[SLIDE 29: MONTANA MAP -- TRIPLE CONVERGENCE]

When we superimpose Big Open boundaries (shown in red) upon the Hornaday and Popper maps locally, we see something *truly* amazing: a *triple convergence* of data spanning more than a century of time.

So, what can these maps tell us about why the last bands of wild bison held out in a few remote areas of the Great Plains – areas like Montana's Big Open?

First, a number of factors, like climate, topography, ecology, and demography, act to PULL bison into such areas:

-*CLIMATE* favors their presence —

:the Big Open is a semi-arid land of maximum sunshine, yet it is not a desert;

:the growing season is ideal for abundant production of native grasses to which the bison are adapted;

:there are relatively mild microclimates accessible in winter, with light snow prevailing in the uplands, and periodic "Chinook" winds to help reduce the occasional heavy snow cover;

-Next, *TOPOGRAPHY* favors their presence —

:the open, rolling uplands afford bison a big, open space in which to feed and breed;

:coulees, stream bottoms, and major river valleys provide native grazers with all the cover needed;

-And, *ECOLOGY* favors their presence —

:Big Open ranges provide a mix of highly nutritious warm- and cool-season mixed-grasses and high-phosphorous forbs, that are *abundant* and *accessible* all year-round;

:the native dominants are high in total digestible nutrients, but low in fiber, and they yield adequate nutrition in wet and dry years alike;

:there are abundant natural "*point*" sources of water throughout the Big Open uplands;

:and there are—or *were*—beneficial associations of bison with a myriad of other native plant and animal species, such as prairie dogs, which make up the *evolutionary context* of bison;

-Finally, *DEMOGRAPHY* also favors bison in the Big Open -

:a characteristically sparse human population in the Big Open means lots of room in which to roam;

:and the same factors that favor *bison* make *human* life difficult in the Big Open — -

:there is a prevailing *scarcity* of water and wood for heating and cooking fuel;

:there is a *scarcity* of shelter from strong winds and cold;

:and there is a *scarcity* of arable soils to cultivate.

Conversely, other factors combined to <u>PUSH</u> bison into areas like the Big Open:

-*aboriginal* hunting and habitation pressures were greater in moister lowlands of the Yellowstone and Missouri valleys, displacing bison to the uplands;

-and later on, the pressures of *White settlement* were greatest in these very same, more fertile, areas.

Several interesting speculations follow from all of this:

- *Perhaps* places like the Big Open are actually specially-suited cores of the bison's natural range, which act to *PULL* animals in ---especially at times of stress ---and to maximize the benefits of their close adaptations to the extreme environmental conditions prevailing there;

- *Perhaps* places like the Big Open act as natural 'refugia'---specially-suited *cores* of natural ranges where bison and other grazers fled when *PUSHED* by outside human activities;

- *Perhaps* complex environmental factors simultaneously *PUSHED* and *PULLED* bison and other native wildlife into core areas of their habitats, creating game 'sinks' or 'sumps', like the Big Open;

- *Perhaps* such a concept helps to explain the *paradox* described by early travelers and explorers: '*Why a dry, seemingly barren region called The Big Open supported wildlife in such remarkable abundance*.'

At least one old-time buffalo hunter had a head start on this idea: In November, 1878, Fred Whitside and his mixed-blood Indian companion, Joaquine, hunted in the Big Open:

[Whiteside, Fred 1980. *Three Hundred Grand: The Highlights of One Man's Life*. Frank Adams, Ed. Kalispell: The Estate of Fred Whiteside.]

Item: (ca. 1878) "We [Whiteside and hunting partner, Joaquine] decided to hunt in the country north and a little west of Miles City. Joaquine was familiar with almost every foot of the country for this had been the winter hunting grounds of the Nez Perce Indians... They staged a big buffalo hunt every year... After crossing the [Yellowstone] river, we went north on the Sunday Creek road". (1980:33-4)

Item: "We started the next morning, still following the same road to the northwest. We saw many antelope, some bands containing more than a thousand head. We also began to see buffalo in increasing numbers... Joaquine said this was the favorite winter range for buffalo... He said the number of buffalo we were seeing was unusual for early November [1878] and he thought it was a sign of early winter. // I asked, 'Why do buffalo favor this section for winter range?' // He said 'the soil is good which makes heavy grass. There is enough wind to sweep the snow from the rolling hills and expose the grass. And the country is semi-arid and this makes the snowfall light and the grass cures on the ground and is very rich for the strength has not been washed out of it'. // [Joaquine] 'Another reason they like this country is because it is well watered. There are numerous springs of good water that stay open all winter'. // The

road we were on was leading northwest on the divide between the headwaters of Sunday Creek and...Little Porcupine Creek". (1980:37)

[SLIDE 30: PRAIRIE BUFFALO HORN]

Whatever the complex reasons for their colossal productivity, the importance of the dry Plains as an abundant wildlife zone was grasped intuitively early-on, and our history has spawned *many* advocates for protecting and restoring a part of this region *and its bison*:

- Some simply protested the slaughter, while others urged *protection* for the bison and *preservation* of the wildlands that supported them. A few even became *active*:

American portrait artist, George Catlin, was one. He began speaking out publicly soon after his trip to the Upper Missouri, in 1832 —

[Catlin, George 1832. *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians*, vol. 1. 1841:261-62]

Item: Reader! listen to the following calculations and forget them not. The buffaloes (the quadrupeds from whose backs your beautiful robes were taken, and whose myriads were once spread over the whole country, (from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean) have recently fled before the appalling appearance of civilized man, and taken up their abode and pasturage amid the almost boundless prairies of the West. An instinctive dread of their deadly foes...has led them to seek the midst of the vast and treeless plains of grass, as the spot where they would be least exposed to the assaults of their enemies; And it is exclusively in those desolate fields of silence (yet of beauty) that they are to be found--and over these vast steppes, or prairies, have they fled, like the Indian, towards the 'setting sun' until their bands have been crowded together, and their limits confined to a narrow strip of country on this side of the Rocky Mountains.

"It is a melancholy contemplation for one who has traveled as I have, through these realms, and seen this noble animal in all its pride and glory, to contemplate it so rapidly wasting from the world, drawing the irresistible conclusion too...that its species is soon to be extinguished, and with it the peace and happiness (if not the actual existence) of the tribes of Indians who are joint tenants with them, in the occupancy of these vast and idle plains.

"And what splendid contemplation too, when one (who has traveled these realms and can duly appreciate them) imagines [the buffalo] as they 'might' in future be seen, (*by some great protecting policy of government*) preserved in their pristine beauty and wildness, in a 'magnificent park', where the world could see for ages to come, the native Indian in his classic attire, galloping his wild horse, with sinewy bow, and shield and lance, amid the fleeting herds of elk and buffaloes. What a beautiful and thrilling specimen for America to preserve and hold up to the view of her refined citizens and the world, in future ages! *A 'nation's park', containing man and beast, in all the wild and freshness of their nature's beauty.* [Emphasis added.]

"I would ask no other monument to my memory, nor any other enrollment of my name amongst the famous dead, than the reputation of having been the founder of such an institution".

None other than John James Audubon --the naturalist and wildlife illustrator --soon followed suit. From a trip through the Big Open region in 1843, he reports —

[Audubon, John James 1843. 'Buffalo Hunting at Fort Union' Quoted in McFarling, *Exploring the*

Northern Plains: 1804-1876. 1955:195]

Item: "Daily we see so many [bison] that we hardly notice them more than the cattle in our pastures about our homes. But this cannot last; even now there is a perceptible difference in the size of the herds, and before many years the Buffalo, like the Great Auk, will have disappeared; surely this should not be permitted..."

Even our intrepid military explorer, Gen. W.F. Raynolds, managed a rather half-hearted protest in 1860 —

[Raynolds, Bvt. Brig. Gen. W.F. 1860. "Report on the Exploration of the Yellowstone River", 1868:11]

Item: "When my party first reached the bluff overlooking the Yellowstone, the sight was one which, in a few years, will have passed away forever. ...the entire tract of 40 or 50 square miles was covered with buffalo...

"And here I would remark, that the wholesale destruction of the buffalo is a matter that should receive the attention of the proper authorities.

"I fear it is too late...and notwithstanding the immense herds that are yet to be found, I think it is more than probable that another generation will witness almost the entire extinction of this noble animal".

Few protests of Indigenous American buffalo hunters were given voice through *our own* history, of course. An exception involves the Ogalalla visionary and holy man, Black Elk. Through the graces of writer John Neihardt, Black Elk *does* speak today... *here*, about a buffalo vision he had in about 1872 —

[Black Elk, (tells Neihardt of vision he had in about 1872) *Black Elk Speaks*, 1961:35-40]

Item: "Then...the great Voice said: 'Behold the circle of the nation's hoop, for it is holy, being endless, and thus all powers shall be one power in the people without end. Now they shall break camp and go forth upon the red road... And as we went the Voice behind me said: 'Behold a good nation walking in a sacred manner in a good land!'... Then I looked up and saw that there were four ascents ahead, and these were generations I should know. Now we were on the first ascent and all the land was green... When we came to the end of the first ascent we camped in the sacred circle as before, and in the center stood the holy tree, and still the land about us was all green... Then we started on the second ascent...and as I looked ahead, the people changed into elks and bison and all four-footed beings...all walking in a sacred manner on the good red road together. And I myself was a spotted eagle soaring over them...Then the people broke camp again, and saw the black road before them towards where the sun goes down...and they did not want to go but could not stay. And as they walked the third ascent...all over the universe I could hear the winds at war like wild beasts fighting. And when we reached the summit of the third ascent and camped, the nation's hoop was broken...and the holy tree seemed dying and all its birds were gone. Then when the people were getting ready to begin the fourth ascent, the Voice spoke like someone weeping, and it said: 'Look there upon your nation.' And when I looked down the people were all changed back to human, and they were thin, their faces sharp, for they were starving. And as I looked and wept, I saw that there stood on the north side of the starving camp a sacred man who was painted red all over his body, and he held a spear as he walked into the center of the people, and there he lay down and rolled. And when he got up it was a fat bison standing there, and where the bison stood, a sacred herb sprang up right where the tree had been in the center of the nation's hoop. And I know what this meant, that the bison were the gift of a good spirit and were our strength, but we should lose them... Then a song of power came to me and I sang it there in the midst of that terrible place where I was. It went like this: 'A good nation I will make live/This the nation above has said/They have given me the power to make over'".

[Black Elk continues, (about 1881 or '82)]:

"To use the power of the bison, I had to perform that part of my vision for people to see... The ceremony was not a long one, but it had great meaning, because it made a picture of the relation between the people and the bison, and the power was in the meaning. I was painted red all over like the man of my vision before he turned into a bison... One Side had come over to help me... He was painted red all over...and wherever I went, he followed, as the people follow the bison. Then, after we had walked the red road, One Side and I went out of the tepee and the people flocked around us...to be cured. We went all around among the people, acting like bison and making the sounds they make. Then we returned to the tepee, and there the people brought their little children to us, and to each I gave a little of the water of life...that their feet might know the good red road that leads to health and happiness". 1961:210-12

L.A. Huffman, our frontier photographer from Miles City, MT, had a similar stress-induced moment early in *his* professional career, in about 1881, as he tells us now ---

[Huffman, Layton Alton "L.A." 1881 or '82. Quoted in Brown and Felton, *The Frontier Years*, 1955:49]

Item: "I, alone, twice crossed from the Yellowstone to the Missouri and back this butte-studded, gulch-sown, weird, lovely land which teemed with wildlife... The second time was on foot in mid-winter, leading...a 'paint' pack pony [named] Crackers...

"Somewhere up in the Frozen Dog Hills [Eastern Montana]...we holed up, Crackers and I, to await a favorable turn in the weather which had taken of a sudden a threatening change with a pitiless wind that cut like a knife, and the seething, blinding drift that it bore pelted and swirled half snow and half alkali dust, so we groped to the nearest washout we could find. We huddled there two days and two interminable nights that each seemed thirty hours long. Fuel, save a little sage and the buffalo chips, there was none. Except for a few tufts of salt grass that clung to the rim of the little washout we'd crept into, and an occasional mouthful of dirty snow...poor, patient Crackers had nothing. I dared not sleep, to sleep meant death in such a temperature as that so when not busy melting snow in an army cup or toasting hard bread and bits of bacon over my tiny fire I talked to Crackers of my scheme to make a great pasture of the [Big Open], to fence it with a great woven wire to banish forever the skin hunters, maybe enlist them in the army of wardens. How and where the great park gates should be guarded, how tame wild things would get--bison, antelope and elk--and too how splendid twould be when the yellow-green carpet of spring had come, to see it all teeming with life".

Meanwhile, Black Elk was continuing with his account of the bison slaughter and its aftermath, about 1883-

[Black Elk, cont'd. (Neihardt, 1961)]

Item: Black Elk continues story of mid-1880s: "...it was the summer of my twentieth year (1883)... That fall, they say, the last of the bison herds was slaughtered... I can remember when the bison were so many that they could not be counted, but more and more [Whites] came to kill them until there were only heaps of bones... You can see that the men who did this were crazy. And when there was nothing left but...bones, the [Whites] came and gathered up even the bones and sold them. The nation's hoop was broken, and there was no center any longer for the flowering tree. The people were in despair. They seemed heavy to me, heavy and dark; so heavy that it seemed they could not be lifted; so dark that they could not be made to see any more". 1961:217-18

- Others, though also given to heaviness, were moved to speak out as well. Our naturalist and specimen collector, W.T. Hornaday, was one of these. Wrote Hornaday in 1889, in his

classic work – *The Extermination of the American Bison* –

[Hornaday, W.T. 1887. *The Extermination of the American Bison*, 1887:513-14;527;528]

Item: "It is hoped that the following historical account of the discovery, partial utilization, and almost complete extermination of the great American bison may serve to cause the public to fully realize the folly of allowing all our most valuable and interesting American mammals to be wantonly destroyed in the same manner. The wild buffalo is practically gone forever, and in a few more years, when the whitened bones of the last bleaching skeleton shall have been picked up and shipped East for commercial uses, nothing will remain of him save his old, well-worn trails along the watercourses, a few museum specimens, and regret for his fate. If his untimely end fails even to point a moral that shall benefit the surviving species of mammals which are now being slaughtered in like manner, it will be sad indeed.

"The slaughter of the buffalo down to the very point of extermination has been so very generally condemned, and the general Government has been so unsparingly blamed for allowing such a massacre to take place on the public domain, it is important that the public should know all the facts in the case...

"There is reason to fear that unless the United States Government takes the matter in hand and makes a special effort to prevent it, the pure-blood bison will be lost irretrievably through mixture with domestic breeds and through in-and-in breeding...

"If we may judge from the examples set us by European governments, it is clearly the duty of our government to act in this matter, and act promptly, with a degree of liberality and promptness which can not be otherwise than highly gratifying to every American citizen and every friend of science throughout the world...

"At least eight or ten buffaloes of pure breed should be secured very soon by the Zoological Park Commission...and cared for with special reference to keeping the breed absolutely pure, and keeping the herd from deteriorating and dying out through in-and-in breeding.

"The total expense [of saving the bison species] would be trifling in comparison with the importance of the end to be gained, and in that way we might, in a small measure, atone for our neglect of the means which would have protected the great herds from extinction".

And in later years, in his expanding role as a wildlife advocate and early conservationist, Hornaday went even further. In 1911 he wrote –

[Hornaday, W.T. 1911. *Thirty Years War for Wildlife*, 1931:211;212]

Item: "At last the time came when people and states began to look about for suitable wild spots that could and should be converted into wild game sanctuaries... [I]t seemed necessary to convert the Snow Creek country [of Eastern Montana] into a public asset of that kind... During the years coming down to 1910 the fantastic canyons and grass covered mesas of Hell Creek and Snow Creek had lain in our minds [Hornaday and Huffman] as a charming memory with game-preserve possibilities... Small breeding stocks of antelope and mule deer were already there, and mountain sheep and bison could be added... It is unfortunate that the best feeding grounds of the Snow Creek Preserve have not been fenced; but the range is there; its title is in the state of Montana, and beyond reasonable doubt the time will come...when the state will feel ready to develop that bit of grassland and scenic wonderland into a well-stocked and useful big-game preserve".

(Importance of dry Plains, cont'd.) –

- The human urge to *preserve* and *restore* parts of the wild Great Plains continues into our own time:

Geologist Fritiof Fryxell, commenting in 1928 on his exhaustive field studies of the altitudinal limits of bison habitat, states the following ---

[Fryxell, Fritiof M. 1928. "The Former Range of Bison in the Rocky Mountains", 1928:139. In *Journal of Mammology*, 9:129-39, 1928]

Item: "By way of conclusion [I] wish to suggest that the data presented [here]...have, quite aside from their purely scientific interest, a practical significance in connection with a subject that has already gained the attention of a few naturalists and that...must surely sooner or later come into great prominence--*the restoration of the bison as a wild animal to such portions of its former range as are still adapted to receive it*. [Emphasis added.]

"The prospect of someday being able to observe wild bison under circumstances unmarred by fence or corral, of perhaps even restoring to a place among our game animals this noble creature, probably the most famous of American mammals, is an exceedingly fascinating one, in support of which strong public sentiment could doubtlessly be enlisted. Inevitably at some future time the practicability of doing [this] in other localities something [like] what has...been done with the bison only in Yellowstone Park and in Wood Bison Park, Canada, must come up for serious consideration".

And, in 1931, Black Elk, returning to the site of his earlier vision to pray, offers this closing thought ---

[Black Elk, (1931) returns to site of earlier vision, prays 1961:276;279-80.]

Item: "And I, to whom so great a vision was given in my youth,--you see me now a pitiful old man... I recall the great vision you sent me. It may be that some little root of the sacred tree still lives. Nourish it then, that it may leaf and bloom and fill with singing birds. Hear me, not for myself, but for my people; I am old. Hear me that they may once more go back into the sacred hoop and find the good red road, the shielding tree!".

- There are encouraging signs today that Black Elk's precept of the bison as '*not-quite-gone-forever*' is indeed sound.

  -Some programs, such as the Buffalo Commons' Million Acre Project, and Big Open Project, are still in the talking and dreaming stage. Yet others are further along. Organizations like the Intertribal Bison Cooperative – a consortium of some 54 tribal groups –and the environmental group, The Nature Conservancy, are currently working to restore bison ecologically, on small-scale acreages. Relatively small numbers of captive bison are involved in these operations, as well as in the critically important federal system of bison preserves scattered across the Western U.S.

  -On the other hand, some 95% of the roughly 250,000 bison in the U.S. today – *the vast majority of living bison* – are now being *ranched* domestically, even industrially. This raises serious questions about how we view and treat bison – whether we should handle them as *commodities* -- for industry and profit ---or whether we should protect them as critical parts of a natural *community* to which we ourselves belong. What I am suggesting is, '*the nation-wide proliferation of bison ranching is not the happy story of the salvation of bison that some would make out; rather, it is the unfolding tragedy of their slow destruction through creeping*

domestication.' But *that* is a tale for another time... and we now must move on --- -

What are the enduring values of large-scale ecological restoration? – of enhancing and utilizing the natural attributes of places like the Big Open as wildlands 'nuclei' or wilderness 'cores'? --

> *As a Biological Resource*, the Big Open will be a reservoir of biological diversity, with an *increased* number of species types, *larger* gene pools, *expanded* population dynamics, and renewed opportunities for the *fuller* expression of ancient plant-animal interactions;
>
> *As a Socio-Economic Resource*, the restored Big Open will also offer a more stable, perpetual base in an otherwise 'marginal' landscape, for a limited number of *human* residents;
>
> *As a Scientific Resource* – the Big Open will provide an area for long-term biological & ecological studies, pertinent and applicable to the entire Great Plains;

And there are other important values of large-scale ecological restorations, if we will only look for them - -

[SLIDE 31: EASTERN HORNED LIZARD]

> *As an Educational Resource*, a restored Big Open can provide natural 'workshops' for teaching and learning;
>
> *As a Recreational Resource*, the Big Open will be useful as a vast, untapped source for low-impact recreation and eco-tourism;

And, finally,

> *As an Aesthetic-Spiritual Resource* -- In this regard, the value of restoring a piece of buffalo land has been *way* understated and underplayed. An *actual* Big Open will be *much* more than just a restored bit of the "scenic" heartland: It will become again the mysterious root of inspiration and identity – the very well-spring of what we *are* as human beings, and what we are slowly *becoming*.

Over the years, people with vast scientific and humanistic training have raised many compelling arguments for bison restoration – arguments that continue to this day and, so, can bring that hidden impulse to all of us here this evening:

Victor Cahalane, Section Chief, Division of Wildlife Research, Bureau of Biological Survey, 1940 ---

[Cahalane, Victor H. 1940. "A Proposed Great Plains National Monument", 1940:125;126;139 *The Scientific Monthly*, vol. LI, July-Dec., 1940]

Item: "Progress of civilization with accompanying development is changing the face of nature. In the Eastern United States there remains hardly a square mile of unmodified vegetation. Even the surface of the earth itself--the hills and valleys, the courses of streams--in places has been changed... Life dependent upon these habitats must change with them or become extinct.

"Surely the prairie is a highly important kind of environment, and a small portion is worthy of preservation. The National Park Service, therefore, aided by the National Research Council and by the Ecological Society of America, has been for a number of years considering possible areas in the short-

grass prairie region.

"...if the larger members of the fauna of the Great Plains are to be restored under natural conditions a great acreage is necessary. Bison, antelope and elk need large amounts of forage, which in the short-grass type is not truly abundant. If the bison, particularly, is to be preserved as a wild species in the United States, it must be granted a large natural range free from the domesticating confinement of small fenced parks. From a consideration of all these points, it seems that a million acre tract would be needed.

"It is certain that there will be considerable public interest in a restoration of the prairie with its vegetation and fauna".

Karl B. Koford, zoologist and range ecologist, 1958 ---

[Koford, Karl B 1958. 'Prairie Dogs, Whitefaces, and Blue Grama', 1958:76 In *Wildlife Monographs*]

Item: "...grassland investigations have been carried on for decades at range experiment stations, but these studies...seldom touch on the influences of native animals or relationships in natural communities.

"To investigate such problems...we need large, natural grassland areas where all biotic conditions can be studied continuously. There are no such areas.

"The many advantages of creating a Great Plains National Monument for the preservation and study of grassland animals and plants in primitive state, and for public enjoyment, have been outlined by Cahalane (1940)... Many organizations including the Natural Resources Council, the Ecological Society of America, the Grassland Research Foundation, and the Nature Conservancy are working for the establishment of natural grassland preserves. If these are not established soon, the opportunity may be lost".

Gary Snyder, poet, essayist and visionary, writing in 1969 envisions the emergence of ---

[Snyder, Gary 1969. 'Four Changes', 1969:100 In *Turtle Island*, 1974]

Item: "--A technology of communication, education and quiet transportation, land-use being sensitive to the properties of each region. Allowing, thus, the bison to return to much of the high plains".

Mary Meagher, chief biologist, Yellowstone National Park, 1978 ---

[Meagher, Mary 1978. "Bison", 1978:133. In *Big Game in North America, Ecology and Management*, 1978]

Item: "Missing among the array of bison herds restored in North America is a Great Plains population, free-ranging on mixed prairie habitat and subject only to natural influences--including predation by wolves. Such a population would help maintain the species' full genetic variability. Generally, in the words of William Hornaday, such a population would restore 'a grandeur and nobility of presence which is beyond comparison among ruminants'.

"A free-ranging bison population on the Great Plains is not a likely prospect due to economic pressures, especially those related to agriculture, and to spatial demands for human occupation. Constraints, therefore, are indirectly associated with bison population growth and movement, and directly related to limitation of prairie restoration".

Jerry N. McDonald, evolutionary biologist/biogeographer, 1981 —- -

[McDonald, Jerry N. 1981. *North American Bison: Their Classification and Evolution*, 1981:269]

Item: "Further empirical work is needed on the physiology, ethology, and ecology of bison and other ungulates. This serves the immediate function of providing a better understanding of modern populations, but it also provides baselines for making inferences about past behavior and ecology and to influence predictions and management decisions for future behavior and ecology. Bison evolution is continuing, and the more completely we understand the present needs and responses of modern bison, the better we will be able to evaluate its future needs and evolutionary directions in this human dominated and directed world".

Today, at the turn of the 21st century, biologists point to a less-than-hopeful prospect for wildlife and the great American Bison. The fact is, the hoped-for resurrection of wild bison advocated throughout the United States for more than 150 years *simply never happened*. In their 1994 book, Bison: Mating and Conservation in Small Populations, Joel Berger and Carol Cunningham set a disturbing scene for us today –

Berger, Joel and Carol Cunningham 1994 *Bison: Conservation and Mating in Small Populations*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1994: xv.

> "Days of free-ranging large mammals are rapidly ending. Pere David's deer and Przewalski horses occur solely in manicured zoological parks; rhinos and elephants no longer roam without threats from poachers' bullets; and Yellowstone National Park is too small for its wintering elk and bison... Few places exist where unfenced prairies may be enjoyed. If the human population explosion continues, the earth will house more than 10 billion people in the [21st] century, and the future for intact faunas is bleak.
>
> "In times past, bison were a critically important ecosystem component, biologically and anthropologically. They provided food, clothing, and a focus for the art of native peoples and later for Euroamericans. They served as prey for wolves and lions. And they affected community structure, depositing urine and feces, removing and trampling vegetation, and occupying habitats from prairies to glaciers, deserts to forests. But the day of free-roaming bison is gone... Although North American bison were rescued from extinction [in the 19th] century, *the likely fate of their descendants presents an unfortunate model for the future*." [Emphasis added.]

CLOSING COMMENTS:

[SLIDE 32: DESSICATED PRAIRIE]

So now we know what we are up against today: The loss of North America's bison ecosystem, and with it the premier native grazer itself, *all* through an entrenched process of *industrialization*, *domestication*, and official *neglect*. In the U.S. today, there exists *no public initiative whatsoever* in behalf of large-scale bison recovery. Whatever hope wild, cursorial bison may have, therefore, *must* come from the private sector, through programs like Montana Big Open.

[SLIDE 33: INFINITE PRAIRIE STREAM]

Though decidedly visionary, the Big Open proposal is *not* some kind of radical new idea. It is, in fact, part of an ancient *tradition* – infinitely revised and restated through the centuries; recrafted now in light of *contemporary* realities. As the idea reemerges, we should ask ourselves, *"Why?"*: *'Why do these same*

impulses toward protecting and preserving natural landscapes appear, and keep on reappearing, across history and prehistory?' '*Why do visions of restoration spring up constantly -- like odd, dry-land mushrooms -- across the great, desiccated Plains of the past 150 years and more?*' And, '*Why do some of the same specific areas -- like The Big Open -- suggest themselves as sacred spaces; beckoning sanctuaries for all the denizens of Earth?*' Finding personal answers to these questions will not be easy; it will take time, research, and a lot more dreaming. Meanwhile, we should keep *on* asking "Why?"; and *that's* one reason we're *here* this evening.

[SLIDE 34: BACKLIT BUTTE]

Personally, I believe that The Big Open *is* a sacred landscape – a unique and irreplaceable part of our common natural heritage. *Biologically... historically... spiritually*, this fragment of buffalo land retains the essence of the bison, both as they were and could become again. And it holds a vital part of our own story as well. In fact, we *might* say that the Big Open contains the last extant chapter in the story of *two* important grassland species – Bison and Man – who *evolved together* through some two million years of Pleistocene glacials and interglacials, and who now face – *together* -- an uncertain future. Can it be that the Big Open also holds the *next* chapter in the life of this story?

Whatever the verdict, the Big Open represents a chance to *continue* this story of enduring mutuality as perhaps no other place can. Recovery of its *natural* landscape would return bison to the wild at the very *core* of their former range... the very *site* of their untimely demise a century ago. This would *make* history, *not* break it; for it would literally begin to *reconnect our lives* with the deep past that produced us all. As the converging maps reveal, it is the *natural productive potential* of the Big Open that is its *real* source of wealth. The presence of this source today portends *nothing* more strongly than the *simultaneous* revitalization of Bison and Man.

[SLIDE 35: BIG OPEN AND McGINNIS BUTTE]

To begin to *imagine* this land as it *could* become, let's climb once more to the very hump of the old buffalo country, atop the dry "Divide." Here we might regain a view of the ancients, and grasp – as Hornaday did – the wisdom of saving vestiges of the past. In so doing, we might begin to rebuild the knowledge of *who* we *really* are, and where we came from. And when we have saved this piece of buffalo land... resurrected it for posterity? Only then will we *truly* know: We have not retreated to the past; *far from it!* Instead, we have turned the precious key with which to unlock our future. *THIS!* will be poetic justice.

Doug Coffman

Map insert

BOB SCOTT INTRODUCTION:
One spring evening in 1987 —shortly after I began *my own* study of bison, in Eugene, Oregon —I was chopping vegetables for dinner at the kitchen counter when I heard a voice come on the NPR radio broadcast saying something like, *"...now I'm not talking about just a few bison here; I'M TALKING ABOUT THE BUFFALO COMING BACK!"* Dinner waited while I jotted down details about something called, "The Big Open Project." Early next morning, as soon as I could be sure a certain self-respecting former cattle rancher from Hamilton, MT would be out of bed, I phoned up this outspoken man... this "Bob Scott." Thus began a friendship and vigorous collaboration that has endured for nearly fifteen years now.

In 1992, this Professional Engineer, rare book dealer, and former cattle rancher – Bob Scott - *renewed* his call for bison restoration in the Big Open, thus joining the litany of historical voices you have just heard. We must now put *his* voice through the buffalo horn... I quote for you now one *last* passage, from Robert B. Scott. Writing in the Columbian Quincentennial Issue of the journal, *Restoration and Management Notes*, Summer, 1992, he states –

> "Restoration of the Great Plains to their original glory has gripped the imagination of the American Public, and nowhere are the prospects for large-scale restoration better than in Montana's Big Open—39,000 square kilometers of mixed- and short-grass prairie stretching from north of the Fort Peck Reservoir, on the Missouri River, south to the Yellowstone River. Lewis and Clark, the first Whites to explore and interpret the region, described a land teeming with wildlife of all sorts — bison, elk, antelope, bighorns, wolves, grizzlies, and foxes were regularly mentioned... Today the Big Open supports barely 3,000 persons, down from over 10,000 during the agricultural boom of the early 1900s. The Big Open is a powerful presence to those who visit the area for the first time; the emptiness and vast scale of the landscape are awesome. Intuitively, the visitor senses the restoration possibilities, and visualizes the plains as Lewis and Clark encountered them, teeming once again with wildlife and the symbol of the plains — the American Bison."

Truly, it is people like Bob Scott who have helped to raise awareness of bison, and to change public attitudes regarding the need for their wild recovery. If today we are less vulnerable to the prevailing myth of history – that *'once there were millions of bison, but now they are gone!...gone forever!'* – it is due in part to people like Scott. Today, the question is not so much, *"Does it make any sense to bring back the buffalo?"*; the question now is, *"Does it make sense to go any further without them?"*

I won't need this buffalo horn to tell you more about Bob Scott and the Big Open; Bob is here tonight to do that himself. It is my great pleasure to present to you now, my good friend – the ligitimate *"Father"* of Montana Big Open —Bob Scott!

PART II:
by Robert Scott

"Thank you, Doug, for that generous introduction. And thanks to Roger and the Wilderness Lecture Series for giving us the chance to talk about the region that's inspired me, and is surely one of the unique places on earth.

I have to tell you that Doug is now probably the foremost expert in the history of man and bison in the northern Montana plains. So you heard the very best summary of what really happened, but if we say some of the same things it's because we are driven by the same vision and the same motivating factors. Our collaboration - Doug and I - did begin with that radio broadcast about 15 years ago. Doug's perspective was that of a listener, pleasantly surprised to hear his own visions being amplified and expanded by a guest on "All Things Considered." My own perspective was that of a lone Montana man astounded and awed by the power and precision of an international media team with an audience of

millions. I was amazed that they thought my proposal worthy of presenting to the world. But since that time Doug and I have been jointly engaged in a grueling struggle to advance the Big Open cause.

The Big Open proposal has developed a certain life of it's own. Good ideas, obvious ideas, tend to carry on by themselves. Doug has given you the long history of something that just won't die - it can't die. But we have at every turn been faced with what seems to be the combined stress of acclaim and derision. But I am happy to report that my file of letters of support is substantially larger than my file of hate mail. But we have received it. We have been threatened, derided and ridiculed. Both our enemies and our friends have attempted to dismiss the Big Open, but they've never quite succeeded.

Doug and I and other Big Open advocates are sustained by the knowledge and belief that bison are important. The wild prairie is important. They're worth saving. Worth saving for ourselves and future generations. Not only important and worth saving, but critical. Doug has said this and I'll say it again: Wild bison and the wild prairie are critical to our survival as complete human beings. It's only wilderness and the natural world, the world that sustained and molded our species for millions of years; it's only that world that can carry us to the future with health and vitality.

The Big Open is impossible to dismiss. The vision of restoring a huge sector of the Great Plains ecosystem is simply too powerful, too compelling, too essential. It's too logical to dismiss. I always thought of my proposal as obvious. And you consider what Doug has told you about the history: The region was thought almost universally by early explorers to be an immensely abundant wildlife region, one of the best on earth. And it is certainly one of the premier bison habitats of the entire Great Plains.

And then you consider what the Euro-American conquest has done to the reign of the bison. We've brought environmental degradation; overgrazing, soil erosion, chemical pollution, and stream pollution, just to name a few. We've destroyed wildlife in what only can be called a holocaust. A campaign of extermination was launched not only on bison, but on every creature not imported from Eurasia: prairie dogs, ferrets, beavers, coyotes, golden eagles, hawks, rattlesnakes, gophers, mice, insects. Nothing was saved from the drive to make the world safe for cattle and sheep. If I sound a little strong, it's because that's what history tells us. Grizzly, wolf, bison, swift fox - all were extirpated from the Big Open. The mountain plover and the black-footed ferret, along with other endangered species, hang at near extinction. We've collectively brought a host of unnatural invaders: exotic weeds - leafy spurge and knapweed, to name a couple, and other species that came when we came bringing Eurasian grains and agricultural animals. And with all this, we've brought economic ruin. All the stratagems of modern technology could not save the earnest and hard working immigrants to the Big Open. And the first step in the dance of economic collapse was to destroy what has so far been the only successful economic system in the Big Open, the sustainable and harmonious system of the aboriginal peoples who developed it over thousands of years.

Much has subsequently been tried in the Big Open, and many lives have been used up in the attempts. We couldn't save the fur trappers and traders: when the beaver were gone, they were gone. We couldn't save the bison killers, the skinners, the bone harvesters. No more bison, no more industry. We couldn't save the open range cattle industry. Put an animal that needs a lot of water in a dry, cold place, and when winter and lack of feed prevail, the industry will collapse and did collapse. We could not save the homesteader. My wife is in the audience tonight. Her father left the Big Open in 1939; he was one of the last hangers-on, one of the four out of five who were there originally and are now gone. Cannibalized by who was able to hang on. We couldn't save the homesteader. The government and the railroads, for their own profit motives, induced the homesteader to take up 160 acres of Big Open land. Most didn't even make it a decade. And we are now in the final stages of trying to save an industrial agricultural system in the region. The system that followed the homesteader is now propped up by massive federal and state subsidy.

So you take the two basic salient historical facts in the Big Open, namely: that it was once an abundant wildlife region, and that it's now nearing the end of an economic decline. Then add that wildlife and wild spaces are in short supply in the world. Eco-tourism where it's been developed has been successful as an economic venture; it's booming. You add all that up, and the Big Open concept does become truly obvious. But I want to talk a little bit about what's going on now and what the future

might bring. Doug's talked about the past, and I guess my section of the talk is of the present and the future.

What we have is a vision, with a little bit of a practical backing. When we first talked about it, it seemed radical and wildly improbable. But then things happened - along came Ted Turner, then "Dances with Wolves". All of a sudden there was the Buffalo Commons. There was a rediscovery that the Great Plains was an equally valid region, compared to the High Sierras or some place else, to save. And little by little things started to change. None of you can probably see this map here, but afterwards you might want to come up and look. I tried to put a few things on the map that have changed since 1986 when I first stared talking about the region. You all know that the Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument has been approved. I have finally got the exact boundaries, and shown them on that map. The lower reaches of the monument are really the "snout" of the Big Open. This region now falls under a measure of protection, due to a battle in which we all participated. The Nature Conservancy has bought a 50-60,000 acre stretch of the range called the Matador Ranch, which is in the northern part of the Big Open. They have a combination of ecological restoration and cattle, but they have stopped further plowing, and they have stopped the hunting of prairie dogs. [See maps]

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation bought another 60-70 sections called the Two Crow at the Musselshell-Missouri confluence. They have dispersed it all, but some of it went into protection under the BLM and the State. Not shown on the map are more than half a dozen Wilderness Study Areas; and of course the UL Bend Wilderness is established there. There are now ranches that support themselves solely by hunting, which, in my view, is a transition to full eco-tourism. So, things are happening, and we maybe can say a little progress is being made. There are dangers, and the dangers are probably going to be different in the future. I live in the Bitterroot Valley, and we've seen the invasion of "trophy homes," you could call it. Subdivision and trophy homes. This hasn't begun in any scale in Montana's Big Open, but it remains a danger. Those who have sufficient money that ranching or farming is not needed, they can put up a casino or their own castles; they can fence their land. They can do whatever they want, and if they do something that's incompatible with wildlife, we may lose the Big Open bit by bit. There are still those in the Big Open who believe in subdivision. It hasn't started there yet, but those like myself who grew up in the Bitterroot Valley can remember when it was said, "It will never happen here" - and now our little struggling community of 10,000 is 36,000, and we're spread from one end of the valley to the other.

So, I want to read you something, one bit more, that comes out of our plan for the Big Open. I am mindful that no plan of this scale is likely to be accomplished exactly as it's written, and I'm fully prepared to look at a future in which any part of this vision gets developed in any way that it gets developed. But as we see it - and this section that comes out of our plan (which is a thick document something like the federal agencies turn out):

> *"Perhaps serendipitously, the Big Open offers the chance to replace a marginal failing economy with a vigorous prosperous one. Conventional agriculture; cattle, sheep and grain, has dominated the Big Open for the last 120 years, and has led to a collapse of the local human population."* -

Incidentally, just this week, I received 2000 census figures for Garfield County and, as in past decades, there was a decline from 1990. I think they're down to less than 1200 people in the entire county, which was a 20% loss in population. Remember, we not only have a collapse in local population, there is also a dependence on government subsidy and a crazy quilt pattern of land ownership. A close study of that map will tell you that. The land ownership pattern is devised as a protection and for agricultural purposes, not devised for natural purposes or wildlife. The Big Open is about 40% publicly owned and about 60% privately owned and it is intermingled in a pattern that interrupts ecological zones. The land ownership pattern largely stems from an attempt to adapt cattle and exotic Eurasian species to a dry North American steppe by fencing, intensive management, and private control of key water sources. The challenge for the future is to develop and enact an ecological recovery program that takes advantage

of the unique positive attributes the Big Open, while simultaneously correcting the historically accumulated damages to the landscape. Now to continue from our written plan:

> *"The Wild Bison Recovery Initiative"* - that's what we call our plan - *"is a bison management plan for the Big Open that proposes to restore bison in three steps:*
>
> *PHASE ONE, the Pilot Management Phase, is the acquisition of a central land base of 20,000 to 50,000 acres, the typical size of a Big Open ranch, and the introduction of a small genetically selected bison group to this key property.*
>
> *PHASE TWO, the Expansion Phase, extends the initial land base to a million acres, through a combination of cooperative mergers, purchase, leases, and private-public partnerships, and expands the initial bison group to an integrated, although, perhaps not fully nomadic, herd of 10,000 to 20,000 animals.*
>
> *PHASE THREE, the Culmination Phase, brings the entire land base under cooperative management, the public-private cooperative management of a single entity, and extends it to five to ten million acres with up to two hundred fifty thousand bison and places the bison herd with the Fish Wildlife and Parks Department to be managed as fully wild animals. The culmination phase could be reached in as little as twenty years, it might take up to one hundred years to reach full fruition and maturity."*

I might just add, before I close, that, due to the battle over the Yellowstone bison and due to the - you can only call it - panic, by the livestock industry, bison have been reclassified in Montana. There are no wild bison (although the law allows and speaks of them as hypothetical), and all other bison are livestock and are under the control of the Department of Livestock. So, in practical terms and to be legal - and this is an important point if you get into a discussion in any depth with anybody who might be either your friend or your opponent on this - to be legal today the only way to restore wild bison is to buy them and run them as livestock. In no way do we advocate this be done as it's being done by commercial bison ranchers, but at the present time the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks does not have jurisdiction and there is no legal method, no legal mechanism, especially since the closure of the Yellowstone bison herd migration, to do it other than to introducing them as livestock. It represents only a transitional phase, in my opinion, but it is worth noting.

This makes us a little different than some other environmental groups. We are talking about public and private land. We are not advocating the removal of those people on private land, but rather their cooperation in future ventures. Because of that we are not strictly a group that lobbies the government to do something. We would like to see something happen on our own.

I would like to make brief mention of what you might do in terms of this entire venture. Lots of environmental groups will ask for volunteer help and of course they all ask for money. We are not above asking for money, but the most important thing is to talk about the need to restore wild bison to the Big Open. When it enters the consciousness on a wide enough scale is when it happens. Each person here, everyone in Montana can do that little bit.

We end the overview of our plan with a paragraph that talks about how the full ecological restoration of the Big Open could be an achievement of global significance.

> *"Reaching this goal while simultaneously revitalizing a local economy will be more than noteworthy and interesting. Such an accomplishment will be a model and inspiration for the restoration of thousands of threatened landscapes around the world. Those involved in restoring wild bison will find the financial and human investment a small price, for they will be doing more than restoring the land, more than restoring a symbol of the American West. They will be creating a legacy that will benefit countless future generations."*

Bob Scott

Student Responses to Montana Big Open: Quest for the Forgotten Wild by Robert Scott and Douglas Coffman

1)

The Ten Year Old and The Rug

I reached up high, my tippy-toes making the effort too unsteadily. I was not quite tall enough to reach the big black brown bulge on the shelf. Pulling over a chair, I climbed up on its shaky seat and came eye-level with what I had been so eagerly reaching for. Gingerly I touched it, half expecting it to snort and shake, but it only laid there--still and dusty. I tugged on its corner and gradually pulled it farther and farther out until I couldn't hold its weight any longer and let it fall heavily on the floor. A plume of dust rose in a small mushroom cloud and I sneezed with discontent, climbing off the chair to inspect my treasure. The basement's cold cement floor hurt my knees as I knelt beside it and pulled, flattened, groomed and beat it into a semi-flat state. There it was. A genuine, authentic, bona fide buffalo rug.

I laid down on the thing and pressed my cheek into the hair, breathing in deep the smell of dust, animal hide, and ancient glory. I combed my fingers through the course hairs and sought out the smoother and softer hair below. Closing my eyes, I pictured the Great Plains that I had never been to and tried to smell the wide open spaces I had never seen. That we have never seen. Millions of buffalo spread out in my imagination, covering the hills and valleys like a carpet, moving and pulsating like a great rhythm. I pulled the buffalo hide over myself as one of those beasts, that one……there, to the south of that lone tree. The one in the middle…no, that one to the left…yes, the Great One. The one which shakes its massive body in defiance of the flies around its nose and eyes. Of the sun, which beats down on the herd, my herd, without mercy. Of the man who is encroaching on my grasses. I shake my enormous shoulders and stamp my legs in the dust and I bellow. Finally now. **LOUD**. I AM BUFFALO.

My nose started to itch and I uncovered myself, opening my eyes to the dank light of the basement--far from the reaches of the golden plains I had been just moments before. I sat cross-legged in the middle of the hide and contemplated my experiences with buffalo. I had once seen one born in the early spring in Yellowstone and have seen them cross the roads or mingle along the side of great lines of cars, vans, RV's and flashing cameras. I have seen them in the corrals along the highway towards Butte and three or four inside the elk refuge in the Tetons. Yet, never have I truly seen the buffalo.

They numbered in the millions, stampeded en masse over vast grassy lands and grazed under a billion stars in an untouched sky. Or so I imagine. I've never seen a buffalo stampede en masse a million. I never will either. America sure did a number on them back then. Yet…is it so hard to believe? Countless times mankind has slaughtered our future with the natural world. Trees, space, bison, insects, water, air, land, other people. The only remnants of the buffalo I have seen are the bloated carcasses we've left, dotting the land with a silence so deafening, it engulfs your very being. No more bison. Trees. Cultures. All have been left behind to rot in the sun as we settle for what we are apparently striving for.

Not all of us, however. Some want the bison back to treasure and revere. Others want to commercialize them, domesticate them. Still others await the day to shoot their mighty trophy with their loaded camera or well-oiled gun. And I…I want to be one.

Grinning at this last thought, I again wrapped the hide around me and shut out the light. I squeezed my eyes shut and listened to the trickle of imagination run though my veins as I again found myself in the middle of the herd. The bright sunlight dazzled my dark brown eyes and I could feel the surge of power rattle when I shook my horns at the wind. Breathing in deeply the scent of grass, sage, the lingering memory of a thousand ancestors……..I bellowed and started the stampede. I aM BuFFaLO.

Jessica McAleese

2)

Green Hills Like Buffalo

Looking out the window
Now all that remains is the orange light
From behind.
From the incandescent 21st century.
And in the window is only a reflection of
Myself, staring at myself.
And foolishly writing away.

I write "once upon a time."
Helicopters fly overhead,
Pavement under my feet.
This is not always the
Way it used to be.
-(sometimes it is hard to tell we are under the sun.)

Tracks run across the open plains,
And trains mean inherent confinement.
But here cannot be more open and free.

Once upon a time,
A bison roamed here.
Walked here
Breathed here
Lived here.
…once upon a time.

Once upon a time
Drinking a fine wine.
Tom and Bill say
Pow! Pow!
All the buffalo are dead.
Once upon a time
(all dead)
The sky was so blue.

I was once native here
Once upon a time.
And the green grass hills
Stretched out across the openness in spring.

Once upon a time the green hills
Moved like brown ants.
Brown hills like buffalo robes,
Rolling out on the largest western playground.
Brown ant buffalo robes scurry across the green hills.
Tom and Bill
Liked to kill the

Ants and hills.
For greed and conquest are America at its best.

So now I write a once upon a time.
About the brown hills like buffalo.

They are green and brown hills
But the brown is no longer
Buffalo fur like ants.
Only autumn brown grasses

---

we are in a dark room, talking about green playgrounds and old skeleton buffalo.
These are not the people buffalo are used to. We may be mistaken.

These are only words though.
Only words.
I say buffalo no longer.
But only in words.

A drawing on my page suddenly emerged during the talk. It was a rough buffalo shape. Then, suddenly, Thorns from the ground grew and reached around him. A thorny strangled bison. Suffocating.
Ironically childlike I guess. Maybe it doesn't say anything we don't already know. Maybe I should draw people and thorns, or cats and litterboxes for anyone who cares.
But I think it is a good allusion.
I am thinking of Jerusalem and crosses along a bloody, dirty path. Painful lives and ridicule, and sacrifice.
I call Bison bison, Rocky Mountain Jesus.
And I hope I do never take for granted or forget how things have come to be this way.

Jay Perret

April 3

The Country of Longing

Janisse Ray

Introduction:
When Janisse Ray gave a reading from her new book, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, at a local bookstore in the summer of 2000, I asked if she would participate in this lecture series. I had been a member of her MFA graduate committee and knew how strong her poetry was, and how gracious her public presence. But I hadn't seen her in four years and hadn't known how deeply a part of her south Georgia country she is. She was the first person I asked, and I did so spontaneously, on the strength of spirit she exhibited that summer evening. She exemplifies precisely the sort of presence I imagined as I began to plan the series; i.e., speakers who were able to express sustained, active commitment to a lived place or environmental ideal, people who spoke/wrote/acted from xin (heart/mind), whose experience was integrated into their intellect, their guts, and their stories. All of the speakers in this lecture series presented admirably. Janisse was over the top. She filled the lecture hall to overflowing with a spirit that was, how should I say, absolutely compelling, genuine, full. If you ever have the opportunity to hear her, don't miss it! She was equally stunning the next morning with the Wilderness Program students. Simply who she is in relation to her place, her south Georgia, Appling County, challenged us each to consider our own places of origin, of home. Raised in a junkyard by fundamentalist Christian parents on very little money on the outskirts of Baxley, Georgia, she knows the value of real.

This quote from her book is her father, describing to her his experience with "mental illness:"

> Mental illness, or nervous breakdown as some call it, is nothing to be afraid of, or to put it in better perspective, nothing to live in fear of. In some ways it is like death. Natural death comes in stages—stage one gets you ready for stage two and so on until the coma. Most of the time people with a mental disorder don't know it. Sometimes their friends can't detect it. Close family members usually can, as well as those trained in the field.
>
> Thirty years ago I had what people call mental illness. I call it one of the greatest experiences of my life. I would not erase it from my past even if I could. I would not sell it for a million dollars. Its value to me cannot be measured. I can only asssume that God allowed it to happen and was with me all the way through it--one in the Church said mental illness is of the devil, which I do not agree with.
>
> It taught me: 1) greater love for people. 2) greater love for the earth, the trees, the hills, the valleys, the streams, the soil, the animals. 3) the future is everything. 4) my wife is me. 5) to love my family. 6) the true value of my sanity, my health, my well-being. 7) to respect our Creator. I will not list the minuses because everybody knows what it would be like to be called crazy.
>
> I have nothing but praise for the state of Georgia's mental institution. From what I saw, top to bottom, it was good. In closing, I would like to remind you of what our Creator said many times. Fear not.
>
> (pp. 79-80, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*)

Bio:
Writer and environmental activist Janisse Ray lives on a family farm in the coastal plains of southern Georgia. Her nonfiction book about growing up on a junkyard in the ruined longleaf pine ecosystem of

the Southeast – *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* – was published by Milkweed Editions in October 1999. Besides being a plea to protect and restore the glorious forests of the South, the book deals with such topics as mental illness, poverty, and fundamentalist religion. It has won the Southeastern Booksellers Award for Nonfiction 1999, a Before Columbus Society American Book Award 2000, the Southern Environmental Law Center 2000 Award for Outstanding Writing on the Southern Environment, and the Southern Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction.

Author Wendell Berry called the book "well done and deeply moving." Anne Raver of *The New York Times* said of Janisse Ray, "The forests of the South find their Rachel Carson."

Ray has published essays and poems in *Wild Earth, Hope, Tallahassee Democrat, Alaska Quarterly Review, Missoula Independent, Natural History, Orion, Orion Afield, Florida Wildlife, Florida Living* and *Georgia Wildlife*, among others. Recent essays appear in *The Woods Stretched for Miles*, an anthology of Southern nature writing, *Wild Heart of Florida: Writers on Florida's Wildlands*, and *American Nature Writing 2000*.

"Naming the Unseen," her chapbook of poetry about biology and place, won the 1996 Merrian-Frontier Award from the University of Montana, where she finished a graduate degree in creative nature writing. She is currently at work on a manuscript about rural community, as well as a full-length collection of poems.

As an environmental activist, Janisse is working to slow the rate of logging of Southern forests. She is a founding board member of Altamaha Riverkeeper, a group dedicated to repairing the mighty Altamaha River. She helped form the Georgia Nature-Based Tourism Association and worked to save the 3,400-acre Moody Swamp in her home country, Appling. For the past two years she has organized a gathering of Southern nature writers on Ossabaw Island.

Speaker's Suggested Readings:

The Book of Yaak, Rick Bass.
"Natives," in Orion, Winter, 1998. David James Duncan.
Grassroots: The Universe of Home, Paul Gruchow, especially, "What We Teach Rural Children."
Collected Poems, Wendell Berry.
On Lies, Secrets, and Silences, Adrienne Rich.
"The Web of Life," Utne Reader, March-April, 1995. Scott Russell Sanders.

The Country of Longing
Janisse Ray

One day last winter found my son and me traveling Montana's Highway 200 North, determined to visit friends who live in the Yaak, the high wild valley near the Canadian border. It had been snowing when we left Missoula before sunrise, the snow sometimes flinging so thickly against the windshield that it blinded us. At times the January day cleared enough to marvel at snow-capped mountains, benign winter pastures, the Clark Fork River along which we drove.

Silas, who is twelve, played with his plastic purple video Game Boy.

Past Thompson Falls (the bank thermometer read twenty seven degrees), in that gorgeous section of highway where signs warn of bighorn sheep coming down from sharp, jagged cliffs, I noticed a flotilla of ducks in the river that there is wide as a lake. There were hundreds of them, ducks and loons, floating in water that had not yet frozen, but was edged with a margin of frosty lace. "Look, honey," I cried out to Silas, "Look at all those birds!"

Without the merest glance out the window, and in a fit of unexpected wry humor, Silas raised his bird finger to the glass. He made the gesture we call "shooting a bird" in the direction of the lake-river, moving his hand back and forth.

"I'm scanning for life forms," he said, in his computer voice, "scanning for life forms. No life forms."

"Silas," I wailed, "you're gonna miss them. Look! Look how many there are."

"Scanning for life forms."

We're past the birds now. "Mama," he says to me, in his normal voice, "when I get to twenty, I'll care about birds." That evening as he lay sleeping, I wrote in my journal,

> When you are twenty,
> my love,
> they may be gone.

Three years ago, I returned to my homeland, in rural south Georgia, the landscape of childhood, because I could not get that place out of my blood. I hoped that in a world increasingly urban, domesticated, alienated from communities both human and wild, and ignorant of real human needs, I might find a life for myself and for my son. I found this: what had been a mysterious, surreal, time-spread and swamp-churned land is now abysmally fragmented by silviculture, agriculture, and sprawl. The communities are as fractured as the landscape. People seem lost in a new world they never quite agreed to.

In an article about being native, in Orion magazine, David James Duncan says, "All my life I have longed for community." And I. We moved into the farmhouse built in the Twenties by my grandfather and great-grandfather. People wanted me to take my grandmother's place in this farming community that revolved around one thing: Spring Branch Baptist Church. But I'm not Christian, and the community, those first years, was mostly closed to me. Entire days passed when I did not interact with one soul except for my son. There was no one without a long-distance phone call I could talk to about the joy of my life, and the terror. There was not the comfort of beautiful, accessible public forests. For organic rice or tofu, we had to drive to Savannah, a hundred miles away, where you can find the nearest bookstore. There's where we found art, concerts, shows, movies--Savannah was a hundred miles, but a whole world

away. A friend from there would come to visit us. "When you go to Baxley," he said, "set your watch back a hundred years."

Silas didn't have the history in south Georgia that I had, and he survived less well. He had lived in places like Missoula, where you're thinking well about life. Where there's a carousel and a farmer's market and community gardens. But in this place, he watched his friends at school be beaten by corporal punishment. I had to go talk to the principal and ask that he never be spanked. In the cafeteria, children would say, "If you step on the black squares, you love niggers." And my son would stand on the black squares.

One day, picking him up from a friend's house, he didn't want to come home. He got in the car, and he was crying. He said, "I want to go back to Missoula, I want to go to Tallahassee, I want to go anywhere. I can't live here."

I said, "Honey, what is it?"

He said, "I can't live in that big old farmhouse with just me and you anymore. I can't do it."

I said, "What's wrong with it here?" I thought if he could tell me one thing that was wrong, that he wanted soccer, for example, we'd drive wherever it took to find soccer. "What's wrong with it here?"

And he said, "Here there's no imagination."

Barry Lopez, at Fire and Grit a couple of summers ago, said that fundamentalism, in any form, is a sign of a failed imagination. I think it's something that you probably are not suffering in Missoula. A lot of places across this country are suffering from a failed imagination.

During that time, I was on a panel in Spartanburg called "Conservation in the Age of the Bottom Line." Because I'm an environmental activist, they wanted me to talk about where money subverted land. As usual, I wasn't prepared. I was scribbling notes while waiting my turn to speak. I realized then that there is nothing I can say about economics versus the environment. To pretend that the environment is only an issue, and that that issue doesn't affect the core of our beings, is to collude with forces that would have us forget our humanity, and collude with the notion that life is expendable. I'm an environmental activist because I believe in life, in the possibility and the redeeming hope of a good one. One connected to the land and to each other. One that is mythic. I realized on the panel that day in Spartanburg that, though I am an activist every day, what I am fighting for is not to save a beautiful floodplain forest along the Altamaha River, or to stop Dupont from mining titanium in Okefenokee Swamp, or to keep the last unroaded areas in our national forests unroaded, or to keep Bush from drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, but to help remake a world in which we can be more fully human. Our most crucial, most fundamental challenge in the twenty-first century is to figure out how we can lead whole lives in fragmented landscapes and broken families and crippled communities.

"It was at the highest point in the arc of a bridge," John Cheever wrote, "that I became aware suddenly of the depth and bitterness of my feelings about modern life, and of the profoundness of my yearning for a more vivid, simple, and peaceable world."

I'm going to read a few poems, interspersed in this essay. This is one called *Moon Over Maryland*. I wrote it just about a month ago.

I had been traveling all day north along the interstate
city after city.
I had seen a tower in South Carolina made like a sombrero;

you could climb into the crown.
A monument to cigarettes in Virginia rose a hundred feet tall.
Somewhere in Delaware, a couple dozen grown trees
had been somehow filled with light,
their limbs lit glass.
In a tunnel beneath the Washington Bay,
a mile long--eerie in its engineering–I went underwater
and breathed.
All day I had seen highways on top of highways, concrete arches
through space.

So that when a lopsided ball of orange light
lifted from the dim fringe of trees in what
the signs said was Maryland
I thought it another human construction--
an almost perfect rendition but too orange,
flattened at the top.
And it would not take long hurling at 70 miles an hour
to reach this new attraction.
As I drove, the orb faded.
As I drove it lifted, until finally above
the glittering lights of endless city
it hung so high no human feat
could have put it there.

And I wept.
I have come to love the moon.
I have learned its habits.
It is the only moon we will ever have.
Nothing will be able to take it away.

Last winter, people asked why we had come to Montana for two months, me pulling Silas out of school and homeschooling him, living in Annick Smith's hundred-year-old log cabin, in a bowl of meadow, where in spring elk graze and in winter coyotes orchestrate the first hours of day. It was an experiment. I was trying to learn to be more fully human.

What does it mean, to be fully human? I believe essentially that we humans are connected and engaged with our landscapes, with other plant and animal species, with our clans, our communities, our families, our offspring, with the production and acquisition of our food, our water, our shelter, our warmth. And that we are spiritual beings, moored by spirit, those invisible workings, and connected to each other and all living things by it. To be fully human is to be at home in this world. Much of modern life would have us forget that. To be human means capable of great and inimitable love, for love is powerful and calls us to greatness. Not only love, but capable of decency, fidelity, courage, grief, curiosity, intellect, reason, fear, tolerance, intolerance, belief, and if necessary, madness. It means riven by passions, and in love not with money, or comfort, or politics, or society, although all those things are good, but with life itself, the mystery and pathos and glory of life. Also its uncertainty.

"We yearn to believe that our lives are significant," wrote my dear friend Bill Kittredge. "And that we live in constant intimate connection to what I can name only as holiness, the invaluable. Without such connection, we go increasingly crazy. We know that lives, too fragmented, lead to craziness. And that landscapes, too fragmented, also lead to craziness."

I've been thinking about fragmentation a lot, because I live in a place where ninety-nine percent of the native ecosystem is gone. There used to be 93 million acres of longleaf pine from southern Virginia to east Texas, in the coastal plain. By 1995, Reed Noss, a biologist with the National Biological Survey, found that 99 percent of naturally regenerated longleaf pines were gone, replaced by pine plantations, clearcuts, trailer parks, strip malls. That's what I mean by fragmentation.

Swallow-tailed kites once ranged as far north as Wisconsin. Now they're limited to the wildest, largest southern rivers. As habitat suitable for nesting and foraging dwindles, their numbers dwindle. In south Florida they are often forced to nest in flimsy Australian pines, an exotic species, with limited nest success. The nests fall out of the trees. To flourish is the challenge of the swallow-tailed kite, as it wings its way over the river-swamps of the South, diminished as they are, the kite searching for a cypress rising out of the canopy of green, in which it can build its nest.

It's true that once-prolific passenger pigeons were shot for food, but their numbers plummeted because of a mitigating habit. They nested in large colonies, their reproductive hormones stimulated by massing. While in these roosting colonies, they were lulled and content, and easy to kill. So at a certain point, a kind of population angle of repose that got disrupted; tragically, their need for community (although only biologically can we call it community) proved their demise.

Another example. The federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker functions at three levels: family, clan, and landscape. Theirs is a complex social structure which involves juvenile males assisting mating pairs in care-taking of young. When males are ready to find a female and to disperse, they must do so beyond the already established territory of the clan. Often, the forest does not exist. There's no place for them to go. RCW's need a tremendous amount of foraging habitat to survive, eating ants and arthropods from pine bark, as much as fifty to seventy-five acres per pair. Too much fragmentation, and we lose them. Too much fragmentation, and we lose ourselves.

Across the face of America, black bears roam the wild lands of an ancestral memory, foraging trash cans and dumpsters, and crossing four-lane highways. Each year, 70 to 80 black bears are killed on Florida's roads. How do black bears survive in the reality of altered wilderness? Doesn't some part of them long to have the world back the way it was?

I'm going to read you a poem here, called "Bird Banding With the Biologists." Some of you have heard it. I dated an ornithologist who worked at Tall Timbers Research Station near Tallahassee, Florida, and one of the benefits of that relationship is I got to go bird-banding with him. Have you all done this? You hang a big mist net in the air, and you have to walk it every five minutes or so, and take out the birds that have flown in. They can't see the net in the dawn hours.

Rufous-sided towhee,
when I hold you, you are mine
and when I release, you pause unblinking
before you take to wings not one of us has.
I love that.

White-throated sparrow, Carolina wren,
must I capture you to know you?
and how lucky I am this dawn
to walk the mist-net, a human spider web
appearing and disappearing in the weak fog
like milk poured down coffee.

The sun yawns and stretches.

Oh cardinal, you take my breath
as I draw you from the cotton bag,
careful of your sharp beak.
You are the color of spilled blood,
an oak fire's embers.
No human has feathers red enough for me.

The man from Antarctica tells me of living
in a tent in the ice, with a year's supply
of food, cans and cans of it.

Shakespeare to read, poetry to write
in the solid white silence.
The penguins are there.
The bottom of their colony, he says,
is hotter than hell.
It will disintegrate tin cans.

He comes back, tied with bags
like a bird hunter:
we record their weight, sex, body fat,
give them their registry number
on a tiny silver bracelet
they wear around wishbone legs until death.
And then for a moment,
we see them for what they are:
birds in hand,
creatures of the air,
songboxes of spring mornings
migrating across landscapes
of our design
and we praise them:
Oh, kinglet, Oh oriole,
tell us what you know.

Bird-banding with the Biologists.

Like the black bears, I think we are all filled with a longing for home, and a longing for wildness, for in wildness we are truly home. I know in south Georgia, I'm home, really home, surrounded by stories written deep in my bones, knowing the particular smell of the clay road after a thunder- storm, anticipating the blooming of the Grancy Greybeard, waiting for the return of the kestrels in fall, making jelly from the wild blackberries.

"On Traveling."

It was an evening after hard work all day.
My love wanted to walk through the pasture
past the bog,

looking for dewberries.

Picture plants were blooming--blooming!
and in a scrubby copse a newborn calf
lay in its leaf creche,
being licked alive.

The dewberries among thorned vines
shone darker than night.

They were sweet. He fed me, and I him.

When we stepped into the far pasture the dog
went chasing after the herd of cows
that before her stampeded this way
then that

like a cloak of cedar waxwings
lifted into sky.
We hemmed the woods toward
the watering hole dug before I was born.

Behind the hole the woods open
to a bottomless head where the creek
braids through quicksand:
my father once plunged a cane pole

twenty feet.
I never go in but stand under the water oaks
behind the bullfrogs
that squawk and plop into dark water.

This particular evening
a skein of meteors spun
through the red maple and the tulip poplar,
entering, burning out, reentering.

Fireflies! Hundreds! Like I hadn't seen
since a girl, barefoot
in skirts, even then paused
at an edge.

They carried their tiny blinking lanterns, searching
high and low for beloveds
who waited in the dimness
without announcement.

Any other woods, we might not
have seen them. Or any other night.

The secret dwelling place of fireflies

has been found!

Above ground
that could swallow a truck
and not a bumper
left showing.

A curtain between two worlds opens
for a time:
two people stand
in the cooler air, mouths strong

with extract of dewberry,
looking into unenterable woods, knowing
they have at last arrived
as far as is possible to go.

And then I want to tell you how fragmentation manifests in my life. Mostly in a deep loneliness, which is a kind of longing. This is how I have failed. This school year, my son Silas decided he could no longer live in Baxley, if he had a choice, and he did. He went to live with his father in Brattleboro, Vermont. I failed to make a family for this child. I failed to provide a place that functioned so his spirit could thrive. And every moment I spend lonely or filled with longing for community, for family, for wilderness, I fail myself.

In Paul Gruchow's book, called Grass Roots: The Universe of Home, there's an essay called "What Time is It?" If you haven't read this book, it's a wonderful book, a wonderful collection of essays put out by Milkweed Editions. Gruchow says that we have entertained two models of time so far. The first is that time is cyclical, an endless repetition of days and seasons and years, like a clock moving around and around, and history repeats itself. It's a circle. The second model is an uphill line that time progresses forward and upward steadily, and that we as a species advance as our knowledge grows. You know that one? We know now, from relativity, that time is a coordinate in space, and that history does not repeat itself. And secondly, we are coming to the end of our naive belief in technology. Sometimes I go to universities and I say that, and they just do not get it. We are coming to the end of our naive belief in technology because we are creating problems that technology cannot solve. Like the growing occurrence of cancer, the widening hole in the ozone, global warming.

Gruchow suggests a new way of looking at time, as dynamic, changing, or in his words, "an unfolding set of creative variations upon a finite set of basic materials." The model of it may be a wavy, meandering line. We try something awhile. We tip, we veer left, we correct. Which may mean that we face a lot of trial and error. We may be a part of a great experiment, to figure out how to lead whole lives, how to be fully human.

We live in interesting times. We're facing overpopulation, the end of fossil fuels, destruction of entire ecosystems, also local cultures and local economies, local communities and local biodiversity. We can no longer rely on science and technology to save us. We can no longer afford to live in the stories, our stories, that our foreparents said were ours. Big families, large cars, wild frontier, individual success, ownership above all. Bill Kittredge says in his book, Taking Care, "If we ignore the changing world and stick to the same story too long, we are liable to find ourselves in a great wreck. It's happening all over the American West. It's happening all over America, right now, to many of us and to our neighbors, as we attempt to live out rules from an outdated model of society." It is no longer okay to have six children, or drive an SUV. (I was talking to my friend Susan about what I should say to you. She said, "Get them

to promise that they will never buy an SUV. Carry little pieces of paper, and make them sign that they will never buy an SUV.") We've been struggling in the United States especially under four false beliefs: 1. That we have unlimited natural resources. 2. That we have a right, even an obligation, to use them up. 3. That pleasure is the purpose of existence. 4. That now is everything. You know this already. I only repeat it because slowly and surely this unfortunate credo serves to alienate us from who we are.

I want to tell two peripheral stories, short stories, about this country of longing I have been talking about, the imaginary place we would inhabit to be whole. I have a friend named Jackie Carter, who lives on the edge of the Okefenokee Swamp in Racepond, Georgia. He's a wild man, with big gaping muscles; long, white hair; forty-nine; Vietnam veteran. He lives right on the edge of the swamp. He's a nuisance alligator trapper for our area. If an alligator crawls out of the river and makes it to your pond and your yard, and you're afraid it's going to eat your dog, you call Jackie. I've seen him wrestle eight and ten foot alligators. He traps coyotes. I've seen him boil the traps and oil them and set them out, careful to leave no scent, whisking sand over them with a tiny brush. I've seen him remove a coyote from a trap with a gentleness that would make you think he was himself feral. He's a bear hunter. We still have a six-day, two-weekend bear hunting season around the Okefenokee. I've hunted all day with him. I've seen him tree a bear, I've seen him shoot it, butcher it out. Many of you might not forgive him for hunting bear. For eating them. His father and his grandfather were bear hunters before him, although they hunted in a landscape and a pine flatwoods that has been cut and replaced by very young pine plantations. Jackie is not a bad man. He has a rose garden in his yard. Between trees in his yard are martin gourds strung up, so that purple martins nest in them. His yard's full of purple martins. The other night, before I came here, I spent the night at his house, and he was making cinnamon rolls. He stayed up until 2:45 in the morning, rolling out cinnamon rolls. He was making a hundred of them, to donate them for Relay for Life. He's not a bad man. But he's living in an outdated model of society. His is a model of society that I am sympathetic to. Jackie wants to be completely and totally engaged with his place, with his landscape, with his community. And I would do anything to make a world that would give Jackie the life that he wants to have.

The other story is that six months ago, I quit e-mail. I'd sit down at my computer to write, and I'd think, I've got to check my goddamned e-mail. There's an unspoken rule that says you've got to check it daily, which means that you've got to check it constantly. And I'd get on there and there'd be 27 messages, or 42 messages, or 9 messages, and two hours later, I might finally get to writing. My life felt like it had become a response, a sad and ill-fated love affair with a box. The wave of the future, people say to us about computers. I think computers will always be with us. We know that. They are masters of tasks that are difficult for the brain. But we are human first. I know this. We cannot deny our humanity. Our computers may talk to us, but they will never hold us in their arms.

I'm going to read you a poem called "Sleeping in the Forest." All you activists, when you get burned-out, this is a story about resting, after a lot of activism work.

Heads of flowering wiregrass brush the brass bed
they have dragged into the longleaf pine forest.

Against the headboard, feather pillows go to seed.
Heads against pillows. A canopy of trees nods

far, not to wake woodpecker chicks
in comforters of down within the brown columns.

Their hearts have been hurting from all

they fought to keep, and lost.

The forest is in a place no one will look.
How the sleepers found it remains unsaid.

This is not the time to think if they got the bed there
by horse and wagon, or the old Chevy pickup.

Nor the time to question what the childrens' lives
will be like, or what will happen to the town

when the new mall goes in. At evening kestrels hunt.
Rest now. Limbs below limbs. Trucks of bodies.

Orange-fringed orchis and pine lilies
in bent grass, a rustle of lace. Sometimes

with small groans the trees touch each other, wrapped
as they are, as the earth falls away.

This is the place absolute rest is possible.
Where bluebirds transport the dreams.

When the coyote who knows both worlds happens
upon the sleepers he stands a long time, watching them.

Sleeping in the forest.

I want to say a few things about the presence of spirit in our lives. This is not something we understand well enough or are able, some of us, to talk about. The invisible, the unseen, the dark, the unknowing. My father says, "We think our bodies house our spirits." We're told that. But he thinks our spirits are these very big things, that the body's just this small manifestation of our spirit. My son's father and I learned Silas was a breach baby sometime in the last trimester of pregnancy. We found a midwife from the Celo community of North Carolina who was willing to turn him. She wore only purple, and loved chocolate, and we spent the day with her before she took us to the house of her apprentice, who was making strawberry jam. She laid me feet up on an ironing board, leaned against a bed. That was to give more space so the baby would slide toward my ribs. Before she began manipulating the fetus, she held her hands aloft over my belly for a few quiet minutes, and then she began to massage it. The baby did turn, and stayed head down until his birth, which was natural and normal. But that's not the story I'm telling. When the midwife was done she said to us, there's a little something wrong with his right foot. When Silas was born in the middle of the night during blackberry winter in a cabin in North Florida, he was perfect, except for one thing. The third toe on his right foot was one-jointed and turned under. The midwife had known.

Sometimes my family plays this game that you may think is very odd. I thought so, too, the first time I played. One person takes a piece of paper like this and a pencil, and the other person gets where you are, like this. We could play it, actually! And he writes a number down, or she. We just go one to nine, because it's easier with one digit instead of two digits. And all you do is look at the person, and you think that number. They've never seen it, and the paper's very covered. You just look at them, and they look at you. I swear to God, it's uncanny. Number after number, after number, we guess. Some of us are

better at it than others. It takes me a long time. I have to do a lot of staring, and what I do is, I go, is it 9?, is it 9?, is it 9?, is it 9?, and somewhere my head thinks, it's not 9. Then I go, is it 8?, is it 8?, is it 8?.. It takes me a really long time. But what my father does, is he just stares at you, and he says the number just bubbles up for him.

You know, I'm supposed to be talking about wilderness, right? You're wondering what in the hell is she doing talking about this psychic crap? I'm talking about spirit. Once my neighbor, an old farmer, was picking muscadines, it's a kind of a wild grape where I come from, beside the road. Along comes a car, it stops, and people get out and start picking the wild grapes, too. They're shape-note singers, and they start to sing as they pick. When they drive on, my weathered old neighbor said, the music hung in the air.

I collect these stories about spirit. I don't have enough of them in my life. I really think, I think it's something that we have to pay good attention to. I know, if this audience is filled with scientists and biologists, you're not going to believe a word I say, but I cannot NOT believe in the workings of spirit. The last time I knew it very profoundly was about a month ago. I went snorkeling in the coral reefs off Belize for the very first time. I'd never seen coral reefs before. And I was with a Guatemalan guide who had taken me under his wing, and was holding my hand as we snorkeled through the water. He taught me to dive. He could free-dive 35 feet and pick up a queen conch. We were snorkeling over these sea fans--I don't even know the names of these outlandishly beautiful things. It was a world I had never seen and did not know existed. We came across a ledge, and there was a stingray, a southern stingray. You have a 40% distortion under water. It looked absolutely huge. It was probably 12 feet long, and maybe about 15 feet down, but there it was. We were in the middle of the ocean. Nothing happened spirit-wise, except in me. The underwater is a place where words are useless. You can't talk. And spirit is a place where words are useless. And somehow in the coral reefs, I felt absolutely connected to the world.

"We have life," the prophet Wendell Berry writes in his newest book. "It's beyond us. We do not know how we have it, or why. We do not know what is going to happen to it, or to us. It's not predictable. Though we can destroy it, we cannot make it. It cannot, except by reduction and the grave risk of damage, be controlled. It is, as Blake said, holy. To treat life as less than a miracle is to give up on it. In understanding this," he says, "in deriving the standards of our behavior not from the capability of technology, but from the nature of places and communities, we might again make our work an answer to despair."

If we are really, really trying to make a world in which we can be more fully human, knowing the definition of human, we have to ask ourselves--before we attempt any project, any trip, any career, any business--this question: Does this honor the human spirit? Does this elevate the dignity of the human spirit? Does it make us more fully human? I think if we ask ourselves that about a lot of four-lane highways and strip malls, and more movie galleries, that the answer might be "no."

I think Missoula's got a good handle on what elevates the human spirit. You're very lucky here.

Does it make us more fully human? Does it help our lives be whole? As poet laureate Robert Hass said, "Is it the work of being restored to the body of love?"

We each have a mythological path, I think. A calling, if you will. You have a calling, I do. Mine for now is to be a voice for the southern landscape. Maybe yours is to be a gardener, or a teacher, or a mother, or a builder of temples, or a logger of trees. It can take years to find your path. Years of traveling and envisioning and wishing. Sometimes, as with my friend the ornithologist, you know as a small child what you are to do. The world will transpire to help you walk you path. It was your writer, Bill Kittredge, who said, "We all lose much of what could have been ours because we don't pay much

attention when we invent the future." I want you to think about that. There's a chance right now for us to pay really good attention.

I wrote this poem on a barrier island off the coast of Georgia. We had slept there, and I noticed these very odd wasps that I had never seen before, flying in a wad. So I drew a picture of one in my journal, with a question for this great naturalist I know named John Crawford: What are these?

"Flight of the Queen."

What are these
humming and fighting in a thick hive

near a rack of washed-up spartina
in and out of sunshine?

They land on sea oxeye flowers.
Clasping and chasing, they roil to the ground.

Certainly wasps, yes, with three parts to the body,
smoked-glass eyes

hugely naked and wise to ferociousness:
faces of topaz gods.

Yet like no wasps I've seen--bigger,
warriors whose battles swept them

sometime in the night
to this barrier island

where the tide came in and went out
while we slept, now returns again.

A painted bunting flies from live oak to cedar
above their distress.

What are they searching for,
among last year's dry reeds, hovering

low, and why when they meet,
do they seethe and curse

in high pitches, warlocked,
jousting with their stingers out?

Not long ago someone asked me:
What is it you most fundamentally want,

and what, to have it, will you give?
Good questions are long for answer.

It is mid-morning when finally
I see the queen wasp, she is even bigger

and not so dark, tangled in spartina, and like electrons,
males circle and zing around her a tight sphere.

Even as one mates, others bombard
to tear him loose and take his place.

They are not asking themselves, What?
The answer to that only question they were given.

The path to the queen
is not mythological, only brutal.

I am not saying I want my life fixed, calendar
on a wall. Nor that I want more.

I am saying I am still ignorant
and full of questions.

The tasks seem monumental before us, and you are the ones to do the work, you in this room. It's why you are here. You would not be here if you didn't understand some definition of humanity, and if you did not love life. You are the visionaries. You're the ones not afraid of work, which largely will be done in isolation and small corners in communities of the world. Usually by hand and with great expense and courage.

I want to say something here. Everywhere I go, I say this about courage. I think if there's anything the environmental movement needs, it's that we need to learn to be as courageous as we can. Rosa Parks was trained to sit down on the bus in Alabama. She was trained at the Highlander Center. She didn't of her own accord decide one day she was going to take a seat on a bus. A lot of people were deciding to do that. But she did do it. She had the courage inside herself to do it. What I am asking you is, whatever it takes to find the courage to speak out, to do what needs to be done, I am asking you to do that work. Especially women. If it means you need to go to counseling, you need to go to training, whatever it takes for you to be absolutely courageous, I'd like you to do it. Sometimes we have to speak when it's more comfortable not to do so. Sometimes we have to oppose accepted thought. Sometimes we have to act in spite of our fear. Not only fear. As Wendell Berry has said, we know that we are ignorant still about many things, things science may never be able to teach us. We have to learn to act in spite of our ignorance.

In your work, you will win battles, and you will lose them. The trick will be to find hope and to hang on to it despite the hugeness of the task before us and the losses that we've known.

I want to read one more poem before the end. It's called "For the Edge of the World."

In the dead tree by the brackish pond
in pouring rain, four great egrets.

The white of them preoccupies a somber sky
with its gray sheet of rain

whistling what must be a native orchestra
among outstretched boughs of cedar,

notes ringing down stalks of spartina
and pattering into the pond.

On a clear day shrimp and minnows rise
in ephemeral circles that quickly

go silent. What can I say
I have accomplished in this life?

Can I say I stood in solidarity with the rain
as it stormed the bilging marsh--

or that I remained loyal to egrets
on gray reaches of cedar?

Can I say my allegiance rested strong
with cordgrass?

I cannot live a quiet and simple life.
No, it must be desperate, flamboyant,

voluptuous, as if from another country,
and clumsily done. There is one small thing.

When I was in town--in the copy shop,
I met the bird artist, a local politician

whose errant gray curls plume from his head.
For a few minutes, waiting to complete

our business, we talked of birds.
The drawings he showed me were simple, and quick.

Have I stayed true to the great blue heron
balanced on one wand of leg

evenings, in the same dead tree
or to the wood storks

with their hindrance of bills at ebbtide?
Can I say I never abandoned them,

but was violent in my fidelity?
This: when I left, the bird-man gracefully bent,

kissed my hand, then waved me out,
into the rain.

Thank you to Roger Dunsmore, who asked me to come. To Laurie, who made the arrangements. To Bill and Annick and Dan and Hank, who were my teachers here, and who have continued to guide me. I have been very lucky to have friends like them, and also like Kelley and Leeann and Chris, lots of you are my friends, Elaine.

I want to thank each of you for coming. I want to thank you for all you've already done to make this a more vivid, simple, and peaceable place. And thank you for all that you will do.

Often in Montana, after we finished the day's studies, my son and I would dress in snow suits and wrestle in the snow. One day a couple of weeks before we left, we paused in our play to rest, lying in the powdery softness, the dogs in our faces. "Look up, look up, look up," Silas screams. A beautiful white-tailed bald eagle floated through the pure blue sky, flying low and exactly overhead. Birds lead us to the country of longing. They lead us out of the country of longing, into the place without words, where our spirits at long last find a home.

Thank you.

Janisse Ray

Student Responses to The Country of Longing by Janisse Ray

1)
…Only when we see the "environment" is not separate from ourselves.

Today I found a Dali poster in the dumpster. Says: "Contemplating An Invisible Mirror." (Pretty funny how things come up to write about.)

But now I suddenly do not feel like writing about our invisible mirrors, and how change occurs when we magically see these mirrors.

Suddenly!

In these invisible mirrors we come to the realization of self, in various capacities, but all in the capacity of true self. Like past and future self. The woman is a shell, and she is invisible.

But. Simultaneously I think about how we do not even have *drinkable rain*. (It's 4:54 a.m.). Frighteningly, this sounds familiar and acceptable in my head. Sounds of past voices tell me this in memory.
Tell me this is how things are, it's how I was raised; how the world is…and it's o.k.
Now I finally feel born, I think this is fucking ridiculous.

I feel sort of feeble and duped now that I reflect on this past.

Rain is singularly unique in southeast Louisiana. I even think it can be addictive in the summertime. Sometimes it is comparable to a sprinkler coming on in a steam room. Refreshing.
And then the thunder… (I am probably going crazy subconsciously not hearing the thunder up here).
. . . Catching these 'dercas' raindrops on my tongue, mouth gaping open, cocked up in the zenith…
This memory is only a brief existence. I remember now the memory stops, not by me running into a tree or pole for not looking where I was running, but from my dad's voice.
"I wouldn't drink that water if I were you."
"Why not dad?"
Well, it is because the water in the air, comes from the ground; and the ground is dirty was his answer.
"Ok."

Acid rain…our very purest and most adorable example of non-drinkable rain…
I have known this for a while. And for all my life ACID RAIN was a picture in a textbook, of some Renaissance statue corroding. A once proud-looking nude woman with curls in her hair before, and now an indented nose, one breast, and disgusting hair. That was one picture. And acid rain only happened in this one spot in my mind. Corroding one statue.

-A textbook from 7th grade

I do not wish to accept this like a child any longer. Things have not always been this way, and I don't wish to learn this reality. Right now I am wondering how my parents or grandparents see this change which unfolded in THEIR LIFETIME. I wish to preserve the memory of the Earth, not the follied, failed history of people. A new reality may be born simply in the case of people accepting ANY change I guess, and then teaching the children this new reality as how it is.

I merely put "the ground is dirty" idea into the overly simple physical reality of oily parking lots and puddles. HA.

"Childhood **IS** a mythological place."

We are wealthy beyond belief. And have the most resources to make a change. And the funny thing is- that it only takes social will.

Our will. That's it. Something you can't see; you can't touch. The most powerful thing we have is the part of us you can't see.

'Contemplating an Invisible Mirror' I only see my own eyes looking down when they should be looking back at me. Only eyes looking someplace else somewhat solemnly. My childhood tree is fading, 'dying on the vine' and it needs a new rain.

I am dreaming I'm a walrus.
Fat and easily caught by lurking dark sharks.
We are dreaming we are eagles.
Able to pick up and fly away.
We are dreaming it is not ourselves we see in the invisible mirror. . .

And we need to wake up.

Jay Perret

2)

What is my life? Should I feel obligated to return home to Cincinnati to the suburb of W.A.S.P.s that I grew up in? Should I, simply because it is my home and I should have an attachment to place, have to desire to fight a battle that I will never win? Am I needed there to fight against a bunch of money-hungry assholes for 3 acres of green space? Is it right for me to give up my dreams, my desires, my life as I see it to possibly improve my "home" for future generations? Is there anything wrong with Cincinnati the way it is? Am I a presumptuous, ignorant child for believing that people want it any different now? Is Cincinnati the only place where I have any right to discuss the way it should be, since I am a "native born" Cincinnatian? Are any of us "natives" of anywhere? Am I overstepping my boundary to try to affect the way Montana is governed? Should I feel guilty that I probably won't stay here more than five years? Can I develop a sense of place if I am always moving? Do things really need to change?

Janisse Ray's discussion prompted me to ask several questions- none of which I know the answer to. I do not think she knows the answers either, though, and I think she should examine a few of these closely and honestly herself. I found Janisse to be very emotional and entertaining but not always open to all of the insight the world has to offer. Maybe I just do not get it, or maybe I really just do not want to return home and try to prompt changes as Janisse did. I guess it is good that there are people like Janisse Ray. People who have their life figured out and are fighting to make it better. I do not think I will ever know what my life is, besides a fabulous adventure, and I do not think I ever want to.

Katie Parsanko

3)

She said *Thank you for all that you will do*

I feel like something happened.
I feel alive, excited for life, to live.
My heart is open, something is moving inside me.
The world is beautiful again.

When visiting a mine a couple of months ago, I absorbed myself in poems all day as we walked through the tunnels, let the ground-to-dust metals sift though our fingertips. I could no longer listen. Where had my passion for the environment gone? That which had been an automatic presence in me for years, was numb. And I let it stay that way, absorbing myself in myself, in exaggerated melodrama about

life details and love details that had never before drawn me away from my created calm existence. But the calm and contentedness that had carried me smoothly through last spring was also missing. In its place: a constant barrage of reality. An overwhelming onslaught of the complexities of human minds and hearts that created the mess. There was no ignoring the problems, or my own fading hope; I could only numb myself and fill my mind with self-created complications. There was a job I needed, got, kept for two weeks, and quit, and contemplation involved each step. Days spent deciding whether love is found here or there or here. By the week of Ray's lecture, I had completely removed myself from this place. And when I did intermittently go outside myself, I could not deal with what I saw. One night in my bed, awake, alone, the sudden nauseating pull in my gut- I would never be content again. The next morning, eyes swollen, I didn't quite believe it, but the heaviness was still there. How could I ever again find pure, simple beauty in this world?

That night, sitting in the lecture hall, that voice, her words swimming through the room, I found it. To ask the question, "Does this honor the human spirit?" in my life choices. To be courageous and challenge accepted thought. *To believe in life.* This is what she showed me.

Once again, I'm here. I'm present. I'm ready to believe in this life.

Lisa Kundrat

4) Instruments of the World

When he knows that something is wrong, my brother picks up his guitar. He doesn't just play, he breathes with it. When he starts he looks up, allows the resonating body in his arms to speak for him. Whatever words remain in my head soon are silenced and exhaled with a breath that has been patiently awaiting the music for ages. I'm never even sure that it is entirely mine, or that I am the one breathing. That is what's wrong but always this question is answered with more music.

I don't understand how he knows, but he never fails to recognize the limits of words and thoughts and the indications that someone has relied on them too long, asked them to solve too many problems, looked to them for the answers to too many unresolved questions. This is his gift and he offers it without request. I have seen him draw the attention of a room full of people away from the television gracefully with just the slow increase in the volume of his sound. They come to the unspoken conclusion that whatever else can wait. He never plays for himself alone and because of this music is sacred to him.

I'm not sure it's not a bit of arrogance but often I think that I'm the only one who really hears him. He never loses my attention; in a way, when he plays and I sit and listen, we meditate together and he smiles when I concentrate on perceiving what his fingers and his mind are trying to do with the guitar. I become hypnotized and hear myself creating and simultaneously absorbing the sounds in the air. Breathing. He looks exhausted and satisfied when we decide to stop playing. He is wordless yet attempts to relate what has been released though sounds and music.

He must have learned long ago how hard it is to speak to yourself plainly and how futile it is to explain yourself to someone else. He learned the beauty of life, its impermanence and the profound care involved in giving someone a gift which affirms that.

He never talks about the eternal, but he looks like it. He beams with joy when I tell him that I want to be a farmer because soil is much livelier than money. He likes to walk around in the field and look at the pond. He always follows me on these walks and lets his arms hang loosely and in line with his sides and legs when we talk. He thinks about the spectral tones with whom he shares his head while I talk about what I'm going to grow and where.

I think about how one day he will be gone, maybe before, maybe after me and how he never rushes anything. He is patient with everyone and finds interest in just about everything because to him, I think, it all sounds like music. He always reminds me through his actions that everything does have a tone, sometimes many and that it is often our job to find out how to let them speak for us.

Tom Moore

April 10th

The Post-Environmental Directions of Bioregionalism

Peter Berg

Introduction:

In 1977, Peter Berg, Founder and Director of the Planet Drum Foundation of San Francisco, in collaboration with the renowned ecologist and cultural historian Raymond Dasmann, published their highly influential article, "Reinhabiting California" in the journal THE ECOLOGIST. This is the seminal piece for the early propagation of the terms (concepts) "bioregionalism" and "reinhabitation." While some people initially found these terms to be a bit abstract or quasi-technical sounding, in time their overall usefulness, clarity, and intellectual elegance led to their wide acceptance: today bioregionalism and reinhabitation are a planet-wide movement of ecological and social/political realignment and restoration. To quote from their article, "The final boundaries of a bioregion are best described by the people who have lived within it, through human recognition of the realities of living-in-place. All life on the planet is interconnected in a few obvious ways, and in many more that remain barely explored. But there is a distinct resonance among living things and the factors which influence them that occurs specifically within each separate place on the planet. Discovering and describing that resonance is the best way to describe a bioregion."

To quote further, from the early Planet Drum Bundle for the Rocky Mountains, 1977, clarifies these concepts in terms of a specific place:

> Impractically managed timber harvests and mining, ill-conceived notions of water use and exportation, recreational and suburban development are all abuses that could do possibly permanent damage....The most alarming possibilities for abuse are in the rate of human population growth in the region....Population gains (percent increase) between 1970 and 1977 for the Rocky Mountain region are the highest for any similar number of contiguous states in the United States....Similar growth is occurring in eastern British Columbia. The mountains are attractive and there is no sign that these rates of growth will slow down.
>
> These are not simply environmental issues, but indicate a major cultural and political problem requiring new directions in education, land use philosophies and resources management. There is adequate new evidence for considering the Rockies as a whole a continuous biotic province...or biogeographical province...: a neutral natural zone whose real survival is based on biological and geological processes rather than on the priorities of nations, states or provinces, and corporations whose boundaries and self-interests run willy-nilly throughout the region.

Especially important for the purposes of our wilderness lecture series is Berg's commitment to green cities. Too many of us in Montana act as if the cities are not our problem. Too many of us have come here for refuge from the urbanization of society, believing that we can leave behind the problems of pollution, population, power-grabbing, and over consumption that go with urbanization. Berg has been very clear from the beginning of Planet Drum, 1973, that the wild areas of this continent, of this earth, are only as "protected" and long-term healthy as our cities are ecologically sustainable and beautiful places to live, raise our families, and work. To quote from his GREEN CITY PROGRAM: "Cities aren't sustainable because they have become dependent on distant, rapidly shrinking sources for the basic essentials of food, water, energy and materials. At the same time they have severely damaged the health of local systems upon which any sensible notion of sustainability must ultimately depend. Watercourses have become dumps for everything from petrochemicals to sewage, nearby farmland is continually lost to housing developments, soil and watertables are poisoned by seepage wastes from garbage buried in landfills, fossil fuel emissions increasingly mar the purity of air, and the small refuges for wildlife and native vegetation that still remain are constantly reduced or threatened."

Berg's decades long efforts on behalf of green cities, especially in the San Francisco Bay area, have eventuated in his current project of directing the project to create the biosphere's first ecological city together with the citizens of Bahia de Caraquez, Ecuador. He ends his lecture by describing this ongoing project.

Bio:
Founder and Director of Planet Drum Foundation, Peter Berg is a noted ecologist, author and speaker. He is acknowledged as originator of the use of the *bioregion* and *reinhabitation* to describe land areas in terms of their interdependent plant, animal and human life. He believes that the relationships between humans and the rest of nature point to the importance of supporting cultural diversity as a component of biodiversity.

Speaker's suggested Readings:

The Northern Rockies Bundle, Planet Drum Foundation.
A Green City Program for the San Francisco Bay Area and Beyond, by Peter Berg. Planet Drum Foundation.
Discovering Your Life Place, A First Bioregional Workbook, by Peter Berg. *Planet Drum Foundation.*

The Post-Environmentalist Directions of Bioregionalism
Peter Berg

The central subject I'm going to be talking about is the biosphere, the thin skin of life that surrounds our planet. A very thin covering, like our own skin. And the question is: how do we biosphere? It sounds like a verb, doesn't it? This is an interesting idea for two reasons. One is that we're all coming out of the industrial era beginning from roughly the 17th century to the present. We're at the beginning of late industrial or even post-industrial society. The second thing is that biosphere in the sense of "the blue planet" seen from space is a relatively new idea. It's not exactly the same idea as the older sense of Mother Earth. For example, a Hopi or Navajo representation of the universe would be from the southwest desert. Navajo sand paintings are done on sand, they're not done on Everglades muck. That's a local-cosmological vision of Mother Earth. But a planet-wide biosphere is a somewhat different concept.

There is a potential for some major considerations that can come into play when you begin thinking about the fact that we all share the earth together. One is that we are a species. *Homo sapiens* is a mammalian species. We are animals. The other forms of life that we share the planet with are similar to us in many ways. We evolved in the biosphere, we weren't spirited down from a spacecraft to colonize Earth. We are interdependent with all the other life forms and forces on the Earth. Which even includes interdependence with fleas and scorpions.

How does one grasp this? Well, it's not easily graspable. It's not the same kind of thing as knowing what's happening on channel four. Take as an example the nitrogen cycle. We know that the nitrogen cycle is active in the biosphere, we know that in fact we participate in the nitrogen cycle. The nitrogen cycle is one of the most important gaseous phenomena in the biosphere, but we don't know exactly how it operates with us in this room right now. It's necessary to have a little faith about this. We're not going to know what happened with everything we eat or where everything we eat goes. Or what happens with all of the elements that move in and out of us. The exact nature of our total interdependence with natural systems in the biosphere will remain a large-scale mystery.

Another aspect of being in the biosphere is that you have to be some place. This has sometimes gone right by people who are involved with environmental causes. Environmentalism has largely been an activity that was parallel to industrial society, which is essentially dislocated. All of us at every moment are some place in the biosphere, a bioregion. You may have noticed, in just the last ten years, that most major ecologically oriented organizations have begun to fit the notion of a biogeographic region into their programs. The Sierra Club, possibly one of the most conservative environmental organizations, has been persuaded by its membership to start an ecoregion program. It is becoming a more widely acknowledged idea that we all live in some life-place, and that maybe if we save those parts we can save the whole.

I want to tell a couple of stories from an urban context that point to ways we can fit into bioregions as a way to biosphere. Zeke the Shiek lived in Altadena, California. I learned about Zeke from a newspaper article that related how a man had been arrested in Altadena and charged with three civic crimes which were arson, violating the zoning laws, and operating a business without a license. This is what Zeke the Shiek did. He had built a compost pile that was over 25 feet tall in his backyard, and it worked so well that it broke into flames. The top of it caught on fire and necessitated the fire department to come and put it out. That was the arson charge. The business without a license was that he was distributing compost to his neighbors at an extremely small cost to cover his transportation expenses. He was giving out barrels of almost-free compost. He violated the zoning laws by having chickens on his place. He had simply decided to eat his own eggs. Altadena is a semi-suburban town so he was brought up on charges and treated as a criminal. Are you having the same thought I am, that he should have been appointed the minister of sustainability for Altadena? Instead of being arrested for doing these things?

In San Francisco currently there are explosions of feathers taking place outside of office building windows. Secretaries and CEO's turn and look out the window at a burst of feathers. They might believe that they are in the midst of some supernatural phenomena. It's actually the result of peregrine falcons diving down from the tops of office buildings and hunting pigeons. One of them has the poetically true name, Mutual Benefit Life Building. The birds are taking pigeons up to the rooftops and at the end of the day they fly back to where they roost under the bridge between San Francisco and Berkeley. The falcons have not only adapted to an urban environment, but they're commuting to work!

I could really go on at length about these native hunting birds because they are so inspiring, They are doing us a service by symbolizing what we can be. We are animals too. And we are wild at heart. Our dreams are wild. Our bloodstream is wild. We shouldn't solely cultivate postures and behaviors that are appropriate for operating machines, getting back aches and neck aches from driving cars or operating computers. We are human animals. The falcons are showing us that we can be wild in an urban environment with a high degree of elegance as well. Not wild like crazy, but the kind of wild our predecessors possessed who made beautiful cave paintings in southern France thousands of years ago.

There are two directions that I think post-environmentalism should and will follow. The first is urban sustainability. To many people, large cities are simply bad. New York and Los Angeles are not environments that they really enjoy. I also don't generally like cities that are over about 100,000 in population, and there have been some cities that had populations of less than 50,000 and still produced great music and art. The bad news is that our present large cities can be awful environments, and the necessary news is that they are becoming the dominant habitat for our species. Our population is increasing at an extremely rapid rate and within a few years more than 50% of all *homo sapiens* on the planet will live in cities of 25,000 or more. The World Watch Institute estimates that this will probably occur at around 2010, but it may happen faster. There are some ridiculously overblown populations in cities today. Almost half the population of the entire nation of Mexico lives in Mexico City. China is planning to build 100 new cities of one million population or more in the next few decades. They're moving the majority population of rural people off of the land in China to become urban dwellers.

Cities are not sustainable at present. They haven't been sustainable historically and they're not sustainable now. There are outstanding examples of great ruined cities. The Tigris- Euphrates Valley which is allegedly the cradle of human civilization is at this point incapable of supporting much more that goats. It's been completely deforested, the rivers have been diverted, and the soil was ruined. Some ruined cities are still incredibly beautiful. One wonders why people would abandon Machu Pichu or Angkor Wat? They are like whole pieces of exquisite sculpture. The reason is that their inhabitants destroyed their local regional bases of support to fill basic human needs.

The only thing that keeps our present large metropolitan areas going is that they can still exploit their region or other regions for their continued support. For example, Los Angeles gets water from the Colorado River and northern California. Its liquid natural gas is from Indonesia. A large percentage of its labor comes from Mexico. Its electrical energy is derived from coal that comes from the Four Corners area of the Southwest. It is completely dependent, like a hospital patient. LA is alive because it is getting continuous transfusions from other places.

If we don't attempt to transform these cities, we are performing a form of suicide for our species. I want you to answer the following questions as though you live in New York. Where does your water come from? A Manhattanite might say, "It comes from the faucet, stupid!" Where does energy come from? "The wall switch!" And food? "Everybody knows food comes from the store." And garbage? "I've been thinking about garbage. Garbage goes out. There's a parallel universe called out." And the stuff in the toilet? "This is a real miracle of civilization. It disappears. Totally!" That is a suicidal view of the basic underlying resources that are essential for our lives.

The transformation of cities is perhaps the greatest challenge that I can imagine a person undertaking. The bigger a city gets the bigger this challenge is. How would NYC get its energy, food and water sustainably? How would it deal with its garbage and sewage sustainably? These are really formidable problems. Urban sustainability is an enormous transformative proposition and I encourage all of you to begin thinking of how this can be done. You may question the particulars of what is meant by "urban", or question the term "sustainability", but making cities harmonious with the regions where they exist and with the planetary biosphere is undeniably a major problem for our time and our species.

The other direction for post-environmentalism is the restoration of habitats and ecosystems. I just attended a memorial for David Brower. The older generation of conservationists was there to make tributes. Some of the ways they described being in nature were touching and beautiful, and also essentially different from what motivates people today. They were primarily Sierra Club hikers, backpackers and yodelers. These aren't bad activities, of course, but they are different from what we think of now as the spirit of wilderness or wildness. We're moving toward a different consideration of the natural world. Frankly, there isn't a lot of it left. Have all of you seen the book from the Foundation for Deep Ecology titled *Clear Cut*? Please take a look at it. It's the most brutally honest view of forests destroyed by logging that you could possibly imagine. It's also a view that any one of you can have fairly easily just by taking a plane ride from San Francisco to Seattle, which I did this morning. You'll fly over many of the clear cuts photographed for this book. In winter they're particularly visible as checker board-like squares full of white snow that stand out from the uncut green trees around them. There is extremely little of the original primary forest left in North America.

We are even running out of water now. Naturally pure water is disappearing fast. In the American west, the biggest ecological question is becoming: where will sufficient water come from? We're polluting water, diverting water, and consuming water to a degree that will soon outpace available supplies. A lack of potable water may be the biggest limiting factor on the quality and numbers of human lives everywhere on the planet in the future.

Environmentalism wasn't really addressing the issue of "we are human species sharing the biosphere together interdependently with other species and should have the long-range goal of doing so harmoniously." The previous directions of environmentalism were mainly to stop polluting air and water, to protect human health, and to slow down the destruction of nature. This was essentially from the mental perspective of industrial society surrounding nature. Actually, nature surrounds industrial society. We're in the biosphere, not in the Boeing aircraft factory parking lot. We're not in a human created environment, we are animals in the wild biosphere.

Cities need to become more self-reliant. Suburban-type communities like Altadena, California need to develop a public presence or governmental presence about sustainability and restoring the ecosystems in that area. How do we sustain them? How do we restore the natural systems that have been destroyed in them?

First of all, we need to start seeing these sites for human inhabitation as existing in bioregions.

(Beginning of first slide presentation.)

What is a bioregion? This idea doesn't come from pure natural science. Bioregionalism is a cultural idea. It's an attempt to answer, "Who am I, what am I, and what am I going to do about it?" It's a way for people to look at the place where they live in terms of fitting into natural characteristics. As an introduction to this way of thinking, let me show a map of the continent of Australia that contains a few physiographic features. It shows wetness in green and dryness in brown, as areas of desert and

vegetation. Answer this question: where do 85% of people in Australia live? If you answered that they live in the green parts, you qualify as an instant bioregional expert! They live there because the average topsoil on this entire continent is only about two inches, and almost all of it is in the relatively small area where there is abundant rainfall and vegetation grows. This is also where the major cities are. People are conditioned by bioregional phenomena.

Next I want you to see a physiographic map of the western U.S. and it shows two kinds of information. Not only wetness and dryness, but also the political boundaries of the area. Let me start with the political boundaries first because this is a really unfortunate situation. Here we have what might be the longest straight line on the planet. It goes all the way from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean. Look at this photograph of part of that line running across the Cascade Mountains at the border between the U.S. and Canada. Not only is it a line on a map, it's a line on the ground that's herbicided and defoliated every year by both countries for about a space of 100 feet on each side. You can see the line of snow on the border running straight through a wilderness area, and it has identical natural systems on both sides. There's no justification for making this line, unless you think that Mother Earth will forget who owns her and therefore needs to be branded.

Here are more straight lines between U.S. states. Montana has mostly straight borders. Wyoming is a complete square, one of the more vertical and least rectilinear places on the planet.

In more natural terms, it's interesting that you can see on this map how storms coming in from the Pacific break on the coast, the Cascade Range, and the Sierra Nevada Mountains. That area is green which means it's wet, and then there's the brown, dry rain shadow on the other side in Nevada and the rest of the Great Basin. Then it gets green again where the Rocky Mountains are wetter. So we can see that there are large-scale different natural phenomenon here in the western part of the United States.

I want to show you an image that is a separate bioregion within this large area. The State of California was artificially patched together from several different natural life-places, but this is a bioregional map of Northern California. It shows San Francisco but not the area around Los Angeles because that is in a different bioregion. Half of the map is ocean, because we saw that is where most of our weather comes from. That's the source of San Francisco's fog, from the California Current running offshore at around 50^0 F year round. The climate is winter-wet, summer-dry, or Mediterranean. It rains in the winter and never rains in the summer. The bioregion is within a mountainous bowl formed by the Sierra Nevada, the Coast Range, the Klamath-Siskiyous, and the Tehachipes. It's an extremely large watershed. In the middle of it, two main rivers, Sacramento and San Joaquin.

In terms of vegetation, the totem species of this bioregion is the redwood tree. It doesn't grow anywhere else on earth. Douglas fir forests are strung along mountains on both sides of the bowl, oak trees abound in the valley. To give an idea of the great diversity of vegetation, there are as many species of oaks in northern California as there are species of trees in Alaska. The bioregion has been named Shasta for Mount Shasta at the northern end of the Central Valley.

These are the major characteristics of a bioregion: watershed, landform, native plants and animals, soils, climate, and an adaptive human relationship about living in that place. To reassure you that the map of Shasta Bioregion isn't just a single isolated view of reality, here is an image of the watershed of the Po River in Italy, which has a very active association of groups called the Italian Bioregional Network. At one end is the city of Milan in the Alps, and Venice is at the other end in the delta of the Po at the Adriatic Sea. The bioregional name that has been given to this area is "Bacino Fluviale del Fiume Po," the Water Basin of the Po River. The map has been made in the shape of an oak leaf because the climax vegetation form in that area is an oak forest.

(End of first slide presentation.)

So, the idea of a bioregion is based on natural characteristics and natural science, but it is a cultural view that's not only held by people in parts of North America, but also Europe. There are active bioregional groups in South America, Australia and Japan. Bioregionalism is becoming a popular movement that roughly follows the idea that people who live in a place have a certain inhabitory obligation to live in harmony with the natural systems that are there. We call this re-inhabitation, becoming inhabitants again.

What are some of the things these groups do? They are really quite diverse. It might be a group of Catholic sisters living on a communal farm in New Jersey. Or tree sitters who are resisting logging in northern California. It might be a group of farmers in the Great Plains who want to find a way to stop destroying the soil and water resources of that area, by finding human food and material resources from native plants, rather than the present monoculture of grain crops such as wheat, corn, soybeans. There are actually several groups doing this including the Land Institute which has a basically bioregional perspective. Also an organization named the Kansas Area Watershed Counsel, or KAW, the sound a crow makes. There is a group in the Ozarks called the Ozarks Area Community Congress, or OACC after oak, the dominant tree form there. There are several bioregional groups in Mexico. The most inspiring one for me is near the town of Tepoztlan in Morelos where local people resisted a multinational globalist invasion by land developers to build a golf course resort using their water resources. They called their resistance "The Golf War," and they were successful after five years and half a dozen people killed. They prosecuted the governor of the state on charges of bribery, and the new president of Mexico has given them back the rights to the water in a legal form so that they hopefully won't have this problem again.

From a bioregional perspective, water is one of the first things to consider. How can we live with available water sources without diverting or destroying them?

Agriculture. What kind of agriculture is important to this life-place? The most appropriate form of agriculture for a bioregional context is "permaculture". For example, you aren't able to grow the same kinds of things with natural means in the Sonoran Desert Bioregion in Arizona as you could in Cascadia Bioregion around Seattle. Agriculture should be bioregionally reconfigured.

Energy. We can't keep thinking that our future is going to be dependent on fossil fuels and nuclear power. We have to develop renewable energy sources. You can see right away that those are going to be bioregionally determined. For example, in Cascadia using mini-hydropower makes sense because there is abundant flowing and falling water there. But you wouldn't think of using small-scale, local hydropower in the Sonoran Desert where there is little water. That's a good place to be using direct solar energy instead.

We can't think of sustainability in a jingoistic, economic determinist way. We have to think of it in terms of regional realities, and the grounding for that has to be in harmony with local natural systems as they occur where you live.

About borders of bioregions, these aren't strict boundaries. They aren't straight lines such as on the map I showed before. They are usually soft, and can be 50 miles wide. They could in some cases be as sharp as the crest of the Cascade Mountains where you can actually step over from from one bioregion to another, from the wet side of the mountains to the dry side. But in most places, the phasing between bioregions is more gradual.

The practice of living in a bioregion is proactive, and I think this is an important point for making an aside. Environmentalism had protest as it's reigning activity. Most people have the view that environmentalism is somebody telling them, "no." Urban sustainability, and restoring habitats and

ecosystems, are positive activities. People can actually make their livings doing these things. Unfortunately, it's not a lot of people yet, but at some point in the future when hopefully there will be more subsidization and more local community support for it, there will be a great many ways that people can support themselves in this way. At present, for most people, it's mainly a life-way. Most of the bioregionalists I know are following a path that leads towards bioregional connectedness and identity.

The implications for bioregionalism are numerous. Politically, governmental borders should follow natural watershed lines. In terms of education, school children would learn the bioregional realities of where they live. Isn't it amazing that we don't teach that in school? That we've gotten to this point in environmental awareness and ecological destruction, and we're not teaching children the bioregional characteristics of where they live, or their connectedness with them, or the activities that are appropriate for living in a specific life-place? In terms of philosophy and literature there are obvious implications. Paintings can easily relate to the natural phenomena of the place where the artist lives, or poetry. Gary Snyder is a writer who will be known in the future for leading a transition for North American literature: from Europe to the Pacific Rim, and to life-places like his own Shasta Bioregion in northern California. Culture can go straight to wilderness for inspiration rather than just relying on industrial civilization.

How do you accomplish bioregionally based urban sustainability and ecosystem restoration? Even though I wrote a book titled "A Green City Program for the San Francisco Bay Area & Beyond," I've been frustrated trying to do this where I live in San Francisco. Our mayor on Earth Day last year said that he was very concerned with the "gashouse effect!" He must have meant greenhouse effect, but no one corrected him and it shows that urban sustainability doesn't have the highest political priority in our city. In fact, making cities compatible with bioregions is difficult to do anywhere.

I've been working in a city in Ecuador that suffered two major catastrophes in 1998. There was an El Nino during which it rained every day of the year and caused massive mudslides that wiped out whole barrios of the city, killing 16 people. The other disaster was a 7.2 Richter earthquake. The type of construction there is such that no building over two stories survived without severe damage. The people had to restore the buildings and infrastructure, and they decided to do that by becoming an ecological city. It was an attractive idea because they thought it would preserve some of the nearby surrounding wilderness. It might also attract eco-tourists for some new economic benefits. They asked various international groups for help, and a Japanese mangrove restoration organization named ACTMANG supported me to go down there. In no time at all I became absolutely intrigued because this is a place where you can do urban sustainability and ecosystem restoration at the same time.

(Begin second slide presentation.)

Let me show you a bioregional view of the city of Bahia de Caraquez in coastal Ecuador. The "bahia" or bay is actually part of the estuary of the Rio Chone river where it flows into the Pacific Ocean. The hillsides are covered with dry neotropical forest, a more rare form than rain forest. The city starts on a sand spit at the mouth of the river and extends inland from that point to include various barrios. The ridge tops of hills tore away in mud slides during El Nino, and whole hillsides came down into the city as mud flows. The distances of fallen away soil were 20 to 40 feet. This happened almost instantly and that's how people were killed.

The bioregional characteristics of this place are vividly obvious. There is an island in Rio Chone visible from the city where at least six species of birds roost in incredible density. It is common to see several thousand birds there at any time. This is photo of a boy standing in a boat in the river holding up a fish he's just caught. The house behind him is made out of bamboo that's been split and pounded out flat. Making a building like this doesn't involve using money. The canoe is dug out from a tree, which also doesn't cost anything. Bait can be obtained by scooping out some shrimp. The fish can be eaten or sold

in the market. Many people here don't make much money and they can live at least partially from natural resources, parallel to the money economy.

This is the main market place where the boy might take the fish to sell. There are only a couple of cars in front because they aren't the dominant form of transportation here. The most popular form is bicycles, and for cargoes, tricycles outnumber trucks. "Triciclo" drivers are strong and incredibly imaginative. They seem able to carry anything on one of these things. I've seen up to five people at once, fifty liter water barrels, enough construction materials to build a room, even a coffin.

The naked sides of these hills are what the mudslides left behind. There used to be a road here but it was carried away. There is a man standing in the middle of the denuded hillside and the top of the hill is above his head. We saw this as an opportunity to revegetate with native plants to help prevent further erosion in the next El Nino, and also create an urban wild corridor park. Unfortunately, El Ninos are becoming more frequent as part of global weather change. This has particular significance in Ecuador. If your house gets wiped out and you have to go live in a slum-like temporary dwelling, it can mean more than just inconvenience. Mosquitoes are everywhere in the rainy season. Around half of the children in temporary shelters have malaria.

Planet Drum Foundation decided to make a revegetation site where there was a mud slide close to the center of town, only two blocks from the main market. If we're successful, it will stop erosion and also establish the restoration of natural systems as a part of making an ecological city.

Within six months we were getting good results with some grass growing about four feet tall, called locally paja macho, "tough grass." Grass allows the rain to run off instead of soaking in to cause slides. We also pushed in stakes of native plants. They will become trees with roots that will hold the soil when it does get somewhat saturated. Perhaps one quarter of the arboral species in a neotropical forest will grow from a cut branch that is simply stuck in the ground. You can see this was cut and sprouts of leaves are just beginning to come out. When we were about half way through with this project we put up this sign to make bioregional language public. "The area in front of you from here to barrio San Roque has been revegetated with native plants of the bioregion of the Rio Chone estuary. They were planted to help prevent future erosion and to create a wild corridor of the neotropical dry forest." We don't have any signs like this in North America yet. I'm really proud that there is at least one somewhere.

There are other ecosystem restoration projects in Bahia, and this is a photo of replanting mangroves. Seed pods are being stuck in the mud between two mangrove islands. The aim is to restore the estuarian mangrove forests that were cut down to create shrimp farms. In the recent past, hundreds of shrimp farms were made in this way, with much of the shrimp coming to the United States.

This sign at the central market place says, "Bahia's people recycle garbage." It refers to sorting out organic wastes that are then used to make garden compost. Here is another sign on a building that says, "arte papel", or art paper. Economic reality dictates that paper should be recycled because it can be useful. In this women's collective, art paper is made out of office refuse and then decorated with parts of flowers and plants to be sold as special stationery. Planet Drum Foundation donated part of its office space to the dozen women who are now making part of their living from this activity.

This is an enterprising "triciclero" who decorated his tricycle with a sign for visitors, "Welcome to Bahia, the Ecocity." It also celebrates non-fossil fuel transportation. Here is a parade of the Ecology Club, about 150 children between eight and sixteen years old. They're marching on the first anniversary of Bahia's eco-city declaration.

Bahia still has major social problems. The national economy is in shambles and banks fail regularly, unemployment is high, incomes are low, education is lacking. Ecuador had a huge social transformation in 1999, an Indian-led rebellion. Many South American places have large indigenous populations. In Ecuador it's 40% of the people in the whole country, and 75-80% in the mountains. They brought down the government and have created a separate, inter-tribal, extra-governmental organization to represent social grievances. One month after the government fell, people began rioting in the area of Bahia that was built as temporary housing for victims of mud slides and the earthquake that has open sewers and malaria. In this photo they're burning tires to block the main highway, protesting malaria and the fact that the roads were impassible during the rainy season. They effectively stopped all traffic until the "municipalidad" sent out trucks to fill in malaria pools and smooth down the roads.

(End of second slide presentation.)

It's inspiring for me to be able to work in Bahia because the people, mayor and city council are behind making an ecological city. The main limiting factors there are money and skill. Ecuador is extremely poor, the average pay for labor in the field is $6 a day. In spite of the economic obstacles, the municipal sewer system is being studied for transformation into a biological, non-chemical type, using an artificial wetlands primary receiver of sewage that would be planted with native plants and create a habitat for native animals. The garbage collection service for the city can eventually be turned into a recycling company. We have just finished a project in the poorest barrio to separate garbage so that organic material can be used to make compost for growing fruit trees beside homes there. In January 2002, I'm going to bring a renewable energy specialist to help decide which form of renewable energy would be best to use there in the long term. It won't make sense if we come up with some elaborate thing that nobody can afford or nobody wants to use, so it has to be vernacular and as usual we'll be getting most of our ideas from the local people.

When I'm asked what should we do first or what do I think is the most important thing to do, I always say ecological education. Bioregional ecological education. Because sixteen year old high school students are going to be twenty-one in five years, and that's an age (especially in South America) when many are already married with children and probably have a career path laid out. Those are the people who are going to make an ecological city.

Isn't it remarkable that the idea of an ecological small-sized city is coming out of the undeveloped world in South America? This model is certainly going to make sense in the so-called Third World, much of Asia, Africa, parts of Europe, and the rest of South America. Since a lot of the early work of how to put these things together is being done there, Bahia de Caraquez represents a kind of teaching institution for visitors and students to see how the transformation into an ecological city can be done. The implications of this kind of work in Bahia and other places can actually flow back to the developed world as well.

As an appeal to your imagination, I'm going to close with a poem by Lew Welch.

Step out onto the Planet.
Draw a circle a hundred feet round.

Inside the circle are
300 things nobody understands, and, maybe
nobody's ever really seen.

How many can you find?

Question and answer section:

(Audience)

Berg: The questioner asked me to talk about Missoula somewhat. I'm ill-prepared to do that since I don't live here, and as a bioregionalist I believe the people living in a place ought to be the ones who state the problems and seek out solutions. Somebody told me that the population of this area has increased by 44% in Ravalli County, in how short of time? Within 10 years. It strikes me that this is a serious problem in terms of reinhabiting this place if it means increasing the number of people who are doing the same things that have been done before. Several counties in northern California now distribute a booklet called Watershed Owner's Manual. A watershed owner is anyone who lives in the county. The manual is a description of how the watershed works, what pollution occurs, where it comes from, how to recycle, and other aspects related to living sustainably. One of the things you could have is a Bitterroot Valley Watershed Owner's Manual, that said, "Welcome to the Bitterroot Valley and this is how you live here." There's something like this in Tuscon, Arizona. There has been a Sunbelt invasion there that increased the city population more than 200% in the last 10 years. So in Tuscon, which is in the Sonoran Desert, people are moving in from Chicago who want to have English lawns around their houses. There isn't enough water for that. The Tuscon Chamber of Commerce brought out a book that said, "You live in the Sonoran Desert, here are the plants that grow here - jojoba, saguaro cactus, mesquite. Love these plants, put them in your front yard and don't make a lawn, leave it sand. That's the way we like it in Tucson." This is necessary because their water supply is from a fossil aquifer, it's going to run out.

We have to begin practicing water reuse, especially west of the Mississippi. You have to do it here in Missoula. An example of water reuse would be to take the water from your shower and use it again to flush the toilet. For some people this seems to be unthinkable. They would rather use pure Rocky Mountain spring water to flush. They would feel unclean if their feces were surrounded by anything as supposedly dirty as the water from the shower. But we could cut water use by as much as 50%. I have been in homes where this was done without any mechanism: a small pump and a filter with a second set of pipes would be all that is necessary anywhere.

There are many examples of redesign that make a lot of sense. Here's a simple example. The Japanese have sliding doors in the interior of their homes instead of doors that swing open. Every door that swings open requires an arc of free space for the door to move. Japanese sliding doors eliminate that space. When they construct a building they make floor space smaller with just that one technique. If we are talking about living more sustainably in dense urban circumstances, those are the kinds of things we have to do. The Japanese got into that a long time ago, because they had a lot of people living in some very small areas. There are some wonderful traditional Japanese methods for saving heat, like sitting around a central small hibachi in the living room during wintertime with a blanket around everybody.

(Audience)

Berg: The questioner brought up the fact that we are currently having an energy crisis in California and asked what effect that has. These are the kind of opportunities we should look for. I don't see this as a single energy crisis, but as a clear indication of what the future is bringing in general. It is hitting energy use right now in California, it is going to hit water, it is eventually going to hit food throughout the Northern Temperate Zone. It is really important to see that all of these things - water, energy, agriculture, materials, building materials, and also education, culture - are the main areas that we have to stress for a bioregional sense of sustainability and locatedness. We are going to use this as an opportunity, we are going to say that we can't rely on fossil fuels, and we have to have a more reliable public source of energy.

(Audience)

Berg: She brought up the issue of water diversion in the Pheonix, Arizona area and how to handle limited resources in a local way. Often, practical issues don't actually begin with how cheap one thing is over the other or whether or not it's easier to walk than to ride in your car. They often originate with larger ideas. One of the large ideas with this issue is what is the basis for mutualism within a community? What is going to be our basis for mutualism? The people that dreamed up eighteenth century democracy didn't know what democracy was. The French Revolution guys running around yelling liberty and equality didn't know what liberty and equality were. They just imagined what those things would be like. In a similar way, we don't have to know everything about interdependence, living harmoniously in a bioregion, to describe it as a direction. We can sense that it is better than what we are doing now. In terms of cities, we are in a suicidal situation. In human species terms, I believe that we are losing our wildness at the same time that we are destroying wilderness. One of the reasons for achieving urban sustainability, by the way, is to maintain wilderness. So, I think we have to start lending our voices to the idea that there are higher purposes. Today, in a city council meeting you can stand up and say, wait a minute, we have one person one vote. We are supposed to have a democracy here. I have freedom of speech. We need to start standing up and saying we live in a bioregion together and should be thinking of bioregional sustainability, making cities harmonious and restoring ecosystems as a basic fundamental activity of government. Then people will say that it's most important to consider that the river that goes through Phoenix, Arizona is completely diverted before it gets to the Gulf of California. We have to begin expressing this kind of consciousness, raising consciousness about bioregional sustainability and teaching it to children.

(Audience)

Berg: Her question is, how does one get around to solving the serious ecological problems of larger cities, as opposed to smaller ones or in South America? You are absolutely right, the level of disinhabitation of the urban population in North America is profound. City people often have little idea of where they are or even where their resources are coming from, and the big city environment is a hurtful environment. It took me two years of living in New York to realize that after two years most outsiders leave. Naively, I imagined that people moved to New York to live there, but if they secure an economic base of some kind and continue working there, it's such a harsh environment that they usually go to live in Connecticut or even northern Pennsylvania.

The reason why World Watch Institute established a population of twenty-five thousand people to define a city, which is a small number in our perception, is because that level of population is quite large in a great part of the world: South America, Africa, and Asia. That's where only about thirty percent of the people live in urban environments and seventy percent still live on the land. This is changing very quickly, but the reason why you can't judge by the United States where seventy-five percent of the people live in urban areas is because of Africa, South America and Asia. World Watch felt that twenty-five thousand was about the number of people who could no longer self-reliantly support themselves. In other words, they couldn't farm to grow their own food. If you look at the whole planet this is about the size of a lot of places. There are more urban communities of up to one hundred thousand than there are over one hundred thousand. The number of communities is greater, if not the quantity of people living in each one. So it is very important that twenty-five to one hundred thousand range population urban areas are made ecological. It is especially important in the so-called developing world where people are coming out of agricultural backgrounds and entering urban environments. You may disagree with this personally, but it is a main push in the Third World.

For cities of over one hundred thousand, it's a case of not what you do but the way what you do it. We don't know what the human carrying capacity is for a bioregion, no studies have been done. We don't

know which adaptive techniques would yield the suitable number of people. How many people can live in a city? I previously gave the example of Japanese doors to show how a simple thing can have a large impact. What would happen if we began growing vegetables on rooftops of city buildings? In India it is not uncommon to find vegetables such as fava beans growing on top of house roofs. How about alternative energy installations? How many types could be used? In what circumstances? How much of the energy consumed in a city could be provided by renewable energy through direct solar or windmills or whatever? Water reuse, if you reuse fifty percent of the water how many people can live there? To me these are open questions even though I see the prospect as daunting. I was just in New York to make a presentation at the International Forum on Globalization conference in the heart of Manhattan. Somebody asked, can New York ever be sustainable? It was extraordinary to even consider it. It's like a Grand Canyon of impossibility there. What went through my mind was, well, how could we know this? How do we know what we can do unless we start doing it? For example, when Berkeley, California, proposed a law that fifty percent of the household waste should be recycled, the opposition said fifty percent was clearly impossible. Today it's over eighty percent without really trying that hard. I don't know about the biggest cities, but transforming Missoula would be a good place to start.

(Audience)

Berg: Her question is, how can you involve the resident population of the mainly rural west or mainly rural areas of United States in the kind of environmental activity that has been accepted by liberal populations in larger urban centers? There is a program that the US Bureau of Land Management has been trying out in northern California whereby logging plans have to be approved by a three-part group that includes BLM, logging companies, and local residents. In the areas where they are trying this out, the resident populations happen to be largely conservation oriented. They see this as an opportunity to positively affect logging plans so that clear cutting will stop and that the borders of cutting plans are honored. Traditionally, lumber companies are sloppy about the edges of places and may go over them by fifty yards on each side if they can get away with it. So, the plans are being reviewed and approved or vetoed by residents. That is a good model. If you can effectively organize the conservation-oriented population in an area to take part in that kind of activity, attend public hearings and push for public approval, this sort of model can only be beneficial.

Rural demographics are changing very fast. The reason why there is so much opposition to logging in northern California isn't because people who used to cut them suddenly fell in love with redwood trees. It's because back-to-the-landers and stay-at-home workers with laptop computers moved into former logger populated counties. When they saw a redwood tree fall outside the window they jumped on the computer and started bitching about it. When Freeman House is here next week ask him to describe the rural community that he lives in and how it operates and you'll see an example where the demographics have been completely reversed. There is more reason to trust the community to make ecologically sound decisions than there was previously.

(Audience)

Berg: You know, I don't think they would understand ecosystem restoration in Chicago now. It would be nice to show them somebody growing native plants in a vacant lot, but it is not going to really have enough impact for them to start reusing water inside condominiums. For this to occur there has to be a bioregional context. People need to think of living in a city sustainably so that they can preserve and maintain the basis of life.

There are three goals for bioregionalists: restore and maintain natural systems, find sustainable ways to fill basic human needs of energy, food, water, etc., and support the work of reinhabitation.

(Audience)

Berg: The question is, how to balance or whether to even attempt to balance methods that might not be agreeable from an ecological perspective. Methods that are used in the name of improving some sort of natural features such as removing noxious weeds by using pesticides. I am an extreme idealist. I believe that we have to begin thinking of ourselves as a human species and that we have to begin thinking that we are interdependent with the other forms of life, and that we live in a bioregion and that gives us a certain sense of obligation and responsibility.

However, I'm working in Ecuador where things need to be extremely practical. Somebody there may say, why don't we poison the hell out of those weed plants over there? I'll reply that poison costs money and there might be a natural way to do it, why don't we do that instead? You go to a meeting with ideals of living interdependently in a bioregion and that you have to be thinking in mutualistic ways, but phrase them in practical terms to get results.

(Audience)

Berg: Why is environmental education so important? Well, if I could have them from the sixth grade on, children would come home telling their parents that this is the way they want it to be. There was a wonderful article in the New York Times awhile back. It was a sardonic story by a woman with a title something like, "Thank God my daughter is going away to summer camp." She wrote that her fourteen year-old was giving her a badly needed break. While she was gone, it would be possible to smoke in the apartment without going outside. The mother would be able to just throw things into the garbage without recycling. She would buy whatever she wanted at the supermarket without reading labels for healthy ingredients, and she wasn't going to have to talk about the death of whales all day!

Kids are doing it in Ecuador, coming home and telling about ecological activities that they did during the day when we take them on field trips. Sometimes the parents report back to us that they used to do the same things themselves, eat this or that wild food and so forth. It's a beautiful thing to see a child describing something to the parent that the parent remembers in some way and feels strongly about as well. It is a sacred circle.

(Audience)

Berg: A good argument is the difference between price and cost. The gain that you get temporarily may not be worth the loss that you suffer in the long run. Where I have been working in Ecuador, a neighboring city council asked what they should do with the remaining dry tropical forests that surrounded the city. Should it be cut down? They said there was money to be made that way. I said, if you don't cut it down and wait five years people will come and pay much more money just to look at it. The dry tropical forest is rarer than rainforests, it has unique and spectacular species.

(Audience)

Berg: The question is, if China is urbanizing so fast, it is going to be a biospheric debacle, and isn't it a great opportunity to start using some of the ideas that have been discussed tonight? The current primary philosophy in China is materialistic and oriented toward industrial progress. The Three Gorges Dam project is a good place to do an action. It is already half built and if it is finished it is going to flood an incredibly large area of the Yangtze River Valley, drowning hundreds of towns and cities and displacing millions of people. It will also destroy much of the cultural heritage of southern China. It's supposed aim is to enable China to be able to make a materialistic jump forward.

Any action in opposition would have to be with the involvement of local people. I wouldn't be in Ecuador unless the city there had voted to become ecological. I am actually the consultant to the mayor of this city now. It takes the involvement of local people.

Gratefully, there are people in China that are talking about ecological cities, in the Academy of Sciences in Beijing. There are organizations in Hong Kong headed by enlightened environmental people.

(Audience)

Berg: The statement is that tourism is already the number two industry in Montana and that a form of eco-tourism would be a way to make a transformation towards sustainability. A group in England put out a list that said, what is the difference between tourism and eco-tourism? There were a dozen or so points. The first for regular tourism was, travel to foreign lands in a fossil fuel consuming means of transportation. It was the same for eco-tourism as well. The second was, stay in hotels where local people wait on you. That was the same for both kinds of tourism. All the way down the list they were exactly the same until the very last one for tourism that said, take photos of monuments. For eco-tourism it said, take photos of plants and animals. Putting "eco" in front of a word doesn't necessarily change anything, there has to be a bigger difference than that.

Peter Berg

Student Responses to The Post-Environmentalist Directions of Bioregionalism Peter Berg

1)

There are all sorts of parts around here. There's a box for broken bottom brackets. A box for misplaced headsets, one for forks, one for seats and a box for seat posts. There are boxes of old derailers, boxes of pedals and boxes of cranks. Hanging from the ceiling there are rows of old and broken wheels, some tweaked beyond repair, some just needing to be remembered. Tires hang from the walls, they are black nubs of rubber. Old decrepit bicycles lay and lean on the floor of the garage, they are neglected, forgotten joys of a world consumed in itself. None of these parts have any meaning except for the old rusted tools on the far wall in the back, black shades of metallic, they are coated in rubber and metal.

Everything is cluttered and confusing. The parts are in boxes and piles but that doesn't mean there is an order. It's a type of organized chaos that is not for those consumed in the standard form of order. Nothing around here is that way. Random boxes of parts and half-built bicycles are the specialty. Everything is broken, a place of abandonment. Striped, rare english bolts and pieces of Sturny Archer wheels are in wooden crates that say, "Wilson's Milk," nothing seems to fit when you look at all these boxes lying on the floor. It's a bicycle shop that specializes in the fragmented. It is the place of all the parts that have lost their place.

This community bicycle shop exists solely on the purpose that if enough of the parts are put together, there will be a whole, a working bicycle. It's a premise that functions within the dimensions of bicycles, and as the community comes and builds bicycles and as parts are put together, it's obvious that it works. But sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes none of the parts fit together. It's frustrating because you'd like to think that all things are universal, and that the parts, no matter how different, could be put together in some way or form. Sometimes they don't.

What if in all our attempts to put back all that we have taken apart we forget what it is that the parts made? What if all the random parts can't make up a whole and what if all we're left with are different parts from a different whole? When I think about the crazy amalgamation that makes up me, I wonder about all the random parts that make up who I am. Sometimes it doesn't make any sense, sometimes it feels lost. All the random parts in the world will never build a bicycle unless they are from the same place. I wonder about our place and our attempts to put together something as complicated as community and ecosystems, things that we only have parts of. I wonder if it's possible to recreate this whole again.

It all seems so daunting when we try to collect it all. Sometimes it is too much to even try. Most people don't even try anymore, living in lives of isolated fragmentation. They have forgotten the whole and only cling to the bits and pieces of their mind and body that is left. I know I don't know. I've only seen moments of it all put back together, just moments. It scares me to think that there are places and people where it can't be done. But everyday I go to the shop and everyday there are more parts. It may take time, but those parts will eventually find the whole they were made for. Maybe this is all that matters, the feeling of a metal wrench and the residue of an old chain stained on the hands of work, of putting it all back together again.

Travis Rosenkoetter

2)

"Let's do it!"

Lying on our backs on the rocks, feeling their cold quiet, listening to the river flowing past our feet, we dreamt of what he gave us: the possibility of people rethinking their ideas of city and transportation, of use and waste. The possibility of ourselves truly rethinking these ideas and working through them.

I had planned last fall to work in a city this summer, for a nonprofit publication working towards urban sustainability such as Planet Drum. Over a year spent delving into wilderness issues, I have been frustrated with the lack of focus on cities where over seventy percent of people live, and every issue becomes more urgent, surmising that if cities cannot be made sustainable, nothing else matters. Gradually, I decided to stay here for the summer, figure out how to create and work on my own sustaining life-way. Enforcing my decision was a discussion with a friend who suggested that once issues become urgent, it's too late. I wasn't sure if I believed this, but I also wasn't convinced I should immerse myself in a city's chaotic, overwhelming sustainability issues when it may be an impossible task. Now I realize I was isolating wilderness and cities from each other too much, when really they both belong to the same whole. Any separation or debate over the more valid cause is irrelevant.

But how do we begin to rethink and re-see our cities with a sense of bioregionalism? How do we begin discussions that encourage this kind of thought and vision in all of us and remain positive and proactive? How do we carry the attitude of the Ecuadorian mayor who responds to ideas with, "Let's do it!"? Well, Berg's response to this and the question of whether or not we can ever bring sustainability to one of these urgent places is, "How do you know what you can do until you start doing it?" I think it starts with education of myself, and others, and honest, unpretentious discussion. But it also means doing. So I'll be here learning how to live this summer, until, hopefully, I leave for Ecuador.

One of the most hopeful scenes I've witnessed in awhile, happened on a visit to Seattle. While sitting on a fountain at the University, talking and dreaming with a friend, a small girl walked up to the edge and glanced in. Then fists on hips, lips pinched tight, she said, "There's trash in the water!" I turned to my friend and said, "That little girl and her friends are going to save the world."

How to Biosphere:

1. Step outside.
2. Take a deep breath.
   Did your lungs catch, and reject the air?
3. Find the nearest patch of dirt.
   Dig into it with your fingernails.
4. Find a bug in the dirt.
   Ask him why he likes to live here.
   Agree with him profusely.
5. Crawl on hands and knees for fifty feet.
   Where are you?
   Do you feel safe?
   Would you live here?
6. Take off all your clothes and roll around on whatever you've landed on.
   This should be a rejuvenating experience.
   Is it?
7. Stand up. Climb the nearest tree. Find a bird and listen, then sing loudly.
8. Swing down, walk to the nearest body of water.
   Jump in.
   Are you contaminated? Refreshed?
   Is the water fast?
9. Dive to the bottom and gather a fistful of whatever you find.
   Smear it over your face.
   Does it feel cool on your skin?
10. Climb out. Walk to the city dump.
    Find something to cook with
    or something yellow.

11. Walk to the lumberyard.
        Lie down with the trees. Be quiet, smell the wood.
12. Scan the horizon for the highest point. Hike there.

Now you can see what it is spread out before you.
Now you're here.

Lisa Kundrat

April 17th

Wild Humanity: People and the Places that Make Them People

Freeman House

Introduction:
Freeman House first used the phrase "totem salmon" as the title on a piece he did for the North Pacific Rim Planet Drum Bundle in 1974. Rereading that early piece now, after the publication of his book, *Totem Salmon: Life Lessons From Another Species*, Beacon, 1999, I am still impressed by the clarity of intellect informed by having done the "real work" of commercial salmon fishing, while learning everything he could about salmon (from their biology to indigenous knowledge and ritual to hatchery economics). And all in the service of respect for them as a wild species to whom we owe the deepest debt of gratitude. That subtle, powerful silver salmon (woodcut by Philip McCracken) swimming through every word of the early piece keeps right on swimming through every pore of House's brain/spirit in his twenty years of work on the restoration of the Mattole River wild salmon run and the Mattole River Valley and watershed community. The morning after his presentation of the talk printed here he gave a compelling, detailed account of the whole community-building process as old timers and new comers in the Mattole River Valley had to learn to work together for the long-term good of the place. I wish we had recorded that too, and could print it here also.

When Freeman House first came to Missoula in 1975 with Peter Berg to help produce the Northern Rockies Bundle for Planet Drum, he was already deeply committed to the ideas of bioregionalism and reinhabitation. He has lived those ideas on the ground, in the water, done the practice, found the voice. One could say that he has Salmon's heart, though he would be the last one to make such a claim.

A quote from his book:

> In the close-mouthed world of reciprocal perception, there is no way to learn to live in place but from the place itself. Even the waters can teach us, if we can quiet our appetite for "rational" explanation. One of the few documented interviews with first peoples of the Mattole gives us this:
>
> Among the Matole, conduct toward waves is prescribed: The water watches you and has a definite attitude, favorable or otherwise, toward you. Do not speak just before a wave breaks. Do not speak to passing rough water in a stream. Do not look at water very long for any one time, unless you have been to this spot ten times or more.
>
> Then the water there is used to you and does not mind if you're looking at it. Older men can talk in the presence of the water because they have been about so long that the water knows them. Until the water at any spot knows you, however, it becomes very rough if you talk in its presence or look at it too long.
>
> (G. W. Hewes, as quoted by Alfred Krober and Samuel Barrett in "Fishing Among the Indians of Northwest California," *U. of California Anthropological Records*, 21:1, 1960.)

And if it is salmon that chooses to lead some of us back to our immersion in the natural world, then our first order of business must be the survival of salmon, the health of the waters. (*Totem Salmon*, page 99.)

Bio:
Freeman House is a founder of the bioregional approach to environmentalism, a watershed organizer, and a former commercial salmon fisher. He is the author of *Totem Salmon: Life Lessons From Another Species*, which received the Best Nonfiction Award from the Bay Area Book Reviewers Association for

1999. Freeman has been a visiting professor and lecturer at a number of colleges and universities. He has devoted more than twenty years to watershed restoration in Northern California.

Speaker's suggested Readings:

The Practice of the Wild, Gary Snyder
Totem Salmon: Life Lessons From Another Species, Freeman House
Coming Home to the Pleistocene, Paul Shepard.

Wild Humanity: People and the Places That Make Them People
Freeman House

Richard Manning writes in *Inside Passages*, "…people should cease drawing borders around nature and instead start placing boundaries on human behavior…we should begin behaving as if all places matter to us as much as wilderness. Because they do." We have not only set wilderness apart from our everyday lives; we have also made a distinction between human life and the very concept of wildness. The effect of this questionable distinction is to put a most dangerous limitation on our potential for adaptive human behavior. As Manning continues, both our parks and our culture set "a line between utility and beauty, sacred and profane. This line is destroying us, as it is destroying the planet."

A few months ago I heard Florence Krall summarize her late husband Paul Shepard's life work in a single sentence: *There is an indigenous person waiting to be released in each of us.* Our genome is "the sum of an individual's genetic material, a product of millions of years of evolution" (Shepard 1998). The human genome is as wild as the ecological systems out of which it evolved. Basic comfort as a human being requires a conscious interaction with the more-than-human aspects of the textures of life surrounding us, just as an infant needs the touch of other humans to thrive. Wild animals can survive for a while in a zoo. Contemporary humans are trained for survival in the zoo of an abstracted, objectified, and commodified world.

"The genome demands," writes Shepard, "that our cultures constitute a full and rewarding mediation between ourselves and the ecosystems within which we live. By this tenant, our genome, the structure within which our rational processes are imbedded, is requiring of us that we recover our niches in particular ecosystems." Strong and mysterious language: the genome demands. It suggests that we are impelled to engage the health of our watersheds and ecosystems as a first step in our search for sanity--for ourselves, for our communities, and for our species.

The title of this series is the *Poetics of Wilderness*, but I'd rather be talking about the poetics of the *wild*. Because it's among my assumptions that wilderness *is* a social and political construct, while the word "wild" is best used to describe the essential organizational structure of Creation; that Creation is a wild unfolding; and that we humans (as well as all our co-evolved life forms) are both expressions and agents of that unfolding.

Given these premises, it is quite possible that the self-satisfied technological advances of the last 500 to 5000 years of so-called civilization may not represent the pinnacle of evolution we encourage ourselves to believe they are. A good many of the cultural assumptions of modernity are, in fact, more easily understood as a temporarily successful construct of denial in the face of the finally unmanageable power of Creation. Wild Creation is full of dangers, and worse yet from the perspective of global capitalism, it's unpredictable! So we try to set ourselves aside from it. It's as if, knowing that we'll damage our eyes if we look into the sun, we deny its existence rather than simply indulging ourselves in the pleasure of its warmth on our faces and backs. But the body is wiser than the logical mind because our bodies have been shaped by the wild. The body always returns to luxuriate in the sun's warmth.

Let me back up a little and define the way I'm using the word "wild." As I'm using it, the word describes not individuated phenomena, but relationships complex enough to be self-generating, self-regulating, self-correcting, with no need for external regulation. By this definition, the experience of the wild is available to us at every waking--and sleeping--moment. (For the world of dreams is most certainly a wild world.) Any cubic foot of living soil is a wild phenomenon. So is the human autonomic system. One of the handiest reminders I have of my individual relationship to the wild is to imagine what a terminal mess I'd make of things if I tried to take charge of my own breath and heartbeat. The process of broken bones healing is wild. Grass pushing up through the cracks in the sidewalk is a wild resurgence.

The life work of the human ecologist Paul Shepard suggests that as a species, our physical and psychic evolution is in much the same state as it was during the Pleistocene, when we were small bands of people learning how to live in geographical ranges limited by glaciation. The deepest sources of our comfort as contemporary human beings, says Shepard, are the same as they were then- 25,000-50,000

years ago. Physical evolution proceeds at a much slower rate than our social and technological innovations. So here we are in the twentieth century zipping around physically at 700 miles an hour, and mentally at the speed of light. But the human identities that lie within our individual chromosomal structures are still seeking comfort in small communities of fellow beings, and our senses, which we have been taught to mistrust, are still capable of taking the things we really need to know from the cycles of the seasons, from the way the weather moves, and from the behaviors of the other creatures around us. Our senses are restricted to what we can see and hear and feel on our skins and in our guts. If we are able to regain our trust in them, we will find that our organs of perception are not a terrible limitation, but the most reliable informants of a true rationality. That's who we are, no matter how successfully we insulate ourselves against discomfort--against seeing and feeling--in our day-to-day lives. We're only at the very beginning of understanding ourselves as a species occupying every niche of the planet, but we've a million or so years of experience in learning how to live as tight communities in knowable places. This condition describes the source of our confusion at the same time as it provides some hints at how to work our way out of it.

It's an artificial conceit to imagine any wild system in isolation from another. Again the living world is a complex of nested relationships. In order to experience our wildness, we need every other living creature (most of which our analytical minds are unaware), and especially (this is the aspect most often missing from discussions like these) *other humans*. And we need each other in particular configurations that are only partly a matter of choice. These are difficult concepts for Americans in particular. Modern American culture encourages us to confuse identity with individuality.

For almost all of human time, we humans have known who we are and how we fit into the natural world. There has always been a thread in the fabric of societal or tribal behavior the function of which is to keep those relationships straight--the old nature religions and the tribal ceremonial lives that preceded them, for instance. That part of our collective consciousness has atrophied (but not died) over the last few hundred years. But we have traditions that go back to the beginning of time, if we can find them, that support the work we're engaged in now ---of regaining that balance, that benign participation in the natural world.

Wild humanity takes its cultural cues from specific places and from the conglomerations of weather and rock and life forms that constitute a place. This complexity has a great deal to do with the multiplicity of cultural patterns in the deep past. In deep time, cultures have differed from each other as places differ. Conversely, those human and hominid cultures have affected the evolution and structure of places for well over a million years. Let me give you a single concrete example from my home region. Until 150 years ago, the people in my region actively cultivated the wild community (of which they considered themselves a part) so that it would produce an optimum amount of acorn, deer, and salmon. Fire was used to maintain the health and productivity of oak groves, and to limit the invasion of other species, as acorn was a winter staple. Significant parts of the plant community were effectively arrested at a point of succession that best fed both humans and other omnivores. Fire was also used on upland prairies to augment the occasional lightning-induced blazes on which prairie ecology depends. Regular burning enhanced the forage for deer that became food for humans, and bunchgrasses that became baskets. Salmon production was maintained largely by ceremonially self-regulation of human consumption. Aboriginal people maintained an annual harvest of salmon in the same range of numbers as the peak catches of the industrial fishery around the turn of the twentieth century.

There has been no way to consider people and places separately until the last few moments of evolutionary time. If we are to rewild our human attitudes and endeavors--which I believe is the challenge of our time--then we are going to need to re-examine the relationships between people and places. If, as Peter Berg has said, our job is to "learn to biosphere,"--biosphere as a verb---it is likely that we'll do our learning in creeks and mountains and meeting halls close to home, and from the deep history of our home places.

A paradox of "doing biosphere" is that it is done for the most part in one small place at a time. In my own place, a three-hundred square mile watershed in northern California, the effort to maintain a hugely diminished native salmon run quickly evolved into an examination of human relationships to the

land and waters. Here, the search has revolved around the salmon native to the river that runs through our lives. It is fortunate for my community's endeavor that it has been enlivened by this planetary pulse of wildness. Salmon live the great proportion of their lives outside our place, roaming the vast North Pacific before returning to our little crease in the Coast Range of California. While salmon motivated us to examine our own behaviors on the land, it required of us at the same time to ponder our place's relationship to the biosphere. But while our minds roamed abroad, the daily work was practiced in the waters at our feet and on the lands between our eyes and the horizon.

Coincidentally it came to seem like the size of the watershed is of an optimal scale for this sort of undertaking. The place is small enough so that there is a possibility of maintaining communication paths between human and more-than-human residents. But it is a little too large for an individual to experience and understand viscerally. Such understanding *requires* a resident community of people intentionally seeking out its secrets and sharing their individual discoveries. Beginning with the perception that populations of native salmon were diminishing at an alarming rate, a handful of local practitioners invented a backyard hatchery system to augment reproductive success severely limited by a damaged river. Before a season had passed, it became obvious that they were engaged in no more than a holding action, and that the larger work required a generations-long strategy to hasten the recovery of salmon's freshwater habitat. The numbers of restoration workers grew; streambanks were armored; large woody debris was cabled into place to create complexity in waterways that had been simplified by floods; trees were planted upslope in the tens of thousands. We learned from our mistakes as well as from our successes.

But these projects, if isolated from our daily economic practices, were likely to perpetuate themselves as mitigation for extractive practices carried on as if there were no tomorrow. As I have elaborated on this notion elsewhere:

> As we became more skilled in repairing damaged areas, we became aware of the danger of becoming the sources of cheap janitorial services for corporate industry or others who might be opening up new wounds even as we were attempting to heal the old ones. It was not enough to become expert in putting back together what had been torn apart. Unless we adopted the cause of local ecological reserves, unless we tried to educate ourselves against destructive land use practices and tried to prevent them when education failed, unless we helped establish new small-scale resource extraction industries rooted in the ethic of ecosystem health, we were in danger of becoming Roto-Rooter persons for a dysfunctional society. If we practiced environmental restoration out of the same short-term assumptions that had created the disturbances in the first place, where could we end but as apologists for new deserts? Even the Roto-Rooter man tells the homeowner to stop pouring bacon grease down the toilet! We are now concerned with the cultural content of the *next 150* years because our experience tells us we must be. (House 1992)

The goal of creating a sustainable future in a resilient place incorporated itself into the project of restoring some of the historical watershed and ecosystem functions.

That goal involved communicating successfully with our neighbors--to study the challenge of treating each other as interrelated functions of a wild and healthy ecosystem. This challenge was only partially addressed by the publication of regular newsletters mailed to every resident and landowner in the watershed. Inevitably, restorationists were pushed to deal directly with landowners, resource professionals, and environmentalists who were in the habit of communicating with each other through remote centralized resource agencies or in the courts. The solution to this problem turned out to be taking our disagreements to the field. A forester could more easily see the good sense of reconsidering a stream crossing if the conversation was held at the site of the crossing. An environmentalist convinced that all forestry is bad forestry might experience an epiphany if walked through a functioning forest that had been selectively cut once in each of the three proceeding generations. We were discovering that the land itself speaks a language through which all factions can sometimes communicate.

It could be that there is only one discussion of the wild that is of any use to those of us who are neither professional philosophers or literary critics. That discussion is about how to rediscover a sense of the wild that includes human communities that are both ecologically and economically functional, first in a regional--and only then in a global context. Mitch Tomashow argues, correctly, that all ecological systems ultimately have a global context. My experience tells me that while the science of ecology teaches us to think in the context of biospheric relationships, it is in unique places that we *live* those relationships.

Pre-conquest North American cultures illustrate these rules of discovery more readily than most. Even a cursory study of those cultures reveals how closely traditional practices are related to specific landscapes. But we Euro-Americans read the cultural history of North America as a series of absolute discontinuities. We suffer a cultural disconnect in the continuous story of humans on the land in North America. Rebecca Solnit, in her lovely book *Savage Dreams* spells it out:

> Histories of conquest are stories of disjuncture, and the great curse of Euro-American history is its shallowness, its failure to take root in a place so different from its place of origin. There are other countries which have absorbed their conquerors, but the States can't absorb an immigrant population which can't remember where it is or who preceded it to the place. It is the conquerors and invaders, not the conquered or invaded, who have lost their roots, their ties, their sense of place. Amnesia is one potent means of overcoming the traumatic dislocation of the conqueror: Rather than lacking a personal past in a particular place, the amnesiac lacks any past.... The inability to remember the past becomes the inability to imagine the future, and it is not surprising that a country with a ten- or hundred-year past can't make wise decisions about the long-term future. (Solnit, 1994)

By functional human communities, I mean functional in an ecological sense, functional in a regionally secure economic sense, and functional in meeting the deep psychic needs of our individual humanity. We need to recover ourselves, our brilliant human species, as reciprocating parts of ecosystems, as humble participants in the processes of Creation. We are at an impasse that, although we have philosophized our way into it, we cannot think our way out of it. We can only act our way out of it as we invent contemporary indigeneity.

We have little choice but to begin these explorations at the level of the place-based community--for a number of reasons. It's fairly obvious that different ecosystem communities require different forms of reciprocity. What is not so obvious to our modern minds is the fact that no one person--indeed no one discipline of exploration--is adequate to the comprehension of the complexities of place. We are able to acknowledge that each individual perceives things a little differently, but we find it difficult to imagine these differences as atoms of perception each of which are necessary parts of a whole. The Quaker slogan that "each person holds a piece of the truth" is another way of saying this. Quakers have also found a way of integrating this phenomenon into consensual decision-making, a highly sophisticated communal practice of listening that in many ways resembles the traditions of some native North Americans.

Paradoxically, our search for a more fully human life may best be pursued through acceptance of our limitations as humans. I have already touched on the notion that no one of us can claim the truth. Let's take a step further and see what happens if we question the dominance of the intellect.

The utility of separating out our unique capacities for abstraction and analysis was clearly articulated some time ago by philosophers like Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes--and they were correct. To ignore sensations that cannot be objectified optimizes our human ability to use the fruits of the Earth for the benefit of the most ambitious among us. And so it has come to be.

The law of unintended consequence has always been with us, but nowhere in our long, long history can I find a larger example than the consequences of this rationale. We have slowly removed

ourselves from direct experience of our Earthly fields of being--at first so slowly as to be unnoticeable. But with the explosion of the industrial revolution a scant two hundred years ago, it is as if we have stepped into a machine that has the quality of isolating us from Earth at an ever-increasing rate of acceleration. We haven't yet discovered where the brake pedal is, even as the Earth disappears around us.

It is my experience that direct engagement with natural processes through work in "restoring" them can return us to a sense of our vastly larger human capabilities. The whole being experiences life through his or her senses and applies the uniquely human facilities of complex memory and analysis to evidence received that way. But in order for the rational faculty to do its specialized work, the majority of sensual perception must be filtered out or set aside. The human animal experiences nature through its senses --as what lies between our eyes and the horizon; the evidence of our noses within an extremely limited olfactory range; the evidence of our ears and a slightly expanded range of hearing. This is just the way that humans are, the point to which our genome has evolved.

The champions of the isolated intellect seem to hate this phenomenon; we tend to treat the fact that we perceive things rather than conceive them as a dreadful limitation to be overcome. I would like to suggest that we are in the process of abandoning the futile notion of overcoming the limitations of bodily perception, and treating them once more as the sophisticated tools they are. My own experience with these insights has been in the context of twenty years of work in a field called--rather arrogantly--- - ecological restoration. They have allowed me to see that watershed restoration can be an exercise through which we might learn to practice our reintegration in the natural world. As we size and clean gravel for streamside salmon egg incubators, or wrestle living salmon out of their waters, or plant trees in deforested landscapes close to home, we are gaining more information than the rational mind can process; we are gaining the beginnings of relationship.

The number of social and ecological challenges that not only can but must be dealt with at the level of the bioregion turns out to be large. Questions of water quality and distribution, food security, ecosystem integrity and biodiversity will, unless they are addressed from within bioregions, result at worst in certain regions becoming sacrifice zones for other ones. At best, centralized management of local phenomena results in over-simplified and impractical one-size-fits-all prescriptions. When we arrive at the challenges that extend beyond the bioregion--acid rain, say, or ozone depletion, or free trade--we may be identifying the context for inter-regional organization and exchange rather than the need for centralized global governance. We may also find that regional action is better than no action at all. Rather than react to national foot-dragging on the question of climate change, the Northwest Center for the Environment and others have begun to build a regional strategy to reduce greenhouse emissions. Strategizing at this scale leads people to hopeful action rather than into the despair that attends "thinking globally."

Even such seemingly intractable challenges as human population may seem less uncontrollable when imagined in the context of the local. Kirkpatrick Sale, in *Dwellers of the Land*, writes "...to come to know the earth fully and honestly, the crucial and perhaps only and all-encompassing task is to understand...the immediate specific place where we live. ... the limits of its resources; the carrying capacities of its lands and waters; the places that must not be stressed; the places where its bounties can be best developed; the treasures it holds and the treasures it withholds--these are the things that must be understood" (Sale 1989). The anthropologist Sherbourne Cook has developed a model of California aboriginal populations before contact that reveals scores of unique cultures maintaining populations very close to local carrying capacity over hundreds of years. If true, this is one of the most elegant achievements in the history of humans. What social mechanisms can have driven such stability other than the personal and social internalization of the knowledge of what the land holds and withholds?

This talk has wandered a long way from its original notion of a wild humanity encoded in the genes. The last fifty years have been as hard on humans as humans have been hard on the planet. We have witnessed industrial civilization carry us right up to the edge of our common existence --and we have suffered from the experience. Industrial civilization sometimes seems to have its own separate consciousness laid over on top of the consciousness that is life. Global capitalism has developed its own powerful and automatic mechanisms for its own perpetuation. It resists our efforts to reform it with utter

disregard for our lives or any of the trillions of others that we might hold precious. One of its mechanisms has been that to some degree, each of us has internalized some of those deadly behaviors, assumed responsibility for them, confused industrial behavior with our own behavior, and with human behavior in general. As we have been repulsed and sickened by the killing excesses of industrialism and global consumerism, we sometimes come to loathe ourselves. Human species self-loathing may be the most dangerous thing on Earth, since we have the capacity to take too much of the rest of life down with us. Better we invent social behaviors that lead to richer human lives. Better to remember Florence Krall's encouragement: *In each one of us, there is an indigenous person waiting to be released.*

Revised in November 2001 from a lecture delivered in April 2001

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Freeman House

Student responses to Wild Humanity- People and the Places that Make Them People by Freeman House

1)

In the lecture last week, Freeman House said, "As we loathe industrialization, we begin to loathe ourselves."

I find this quote to embody the struggle I have encountered with activism this year. I feel the more educated I become, the more I learn about disturbing issues. As I learn about what my ancestors have done, what this generation currently does, the decisions made in the past and present, I feel lost at how much "wrong" seems to surround us. I begin to look inward for answers. I am a contributor to all these evils. How can I feel ok with myself? How can I accept this society in which there seems to be so many incongruences?

I have learned of white man's domination over this country, the harsh behavior whites used over the Native Americans. I have learned about how we have continued to feel we must "conquer" the land within North America. It is something to be owned, occupied, used, divided, contained. What happened to appreciation of the land? What happened to acknowledging nature's supreme power over us? Where is our humble attitude toward this beautiful earth we have been allowed to inhabit? I have learned that America is the most wasteful of all countries, producing more trash than any other nation. I have learned that America occupies only a small portion of the earth but produced more pollution than any other nation. I have watched Bush erase years of work put forth to promote environmentalism, with the claim that our economy comes before all else. I live in a country where I am embarrassed of our president's decisions. I have learned that I support companies with sweatshops. I have become aware of my wastefulness. I have become aware of my laziness each day when I drive to school instead of walking. I have become aware of my lack of effort when I choose not to recycle a glass bottle.

I realize that many people's goal in educating others is to increase their awareness. In this sense, I am a success story. I am more aware of my faults, my peer's faults, my country's faults. But my continuing struggle each day is to love my country anyway, to love my peers anyway, and most importantly to love myself. With my newfound awareness I have found an incredible need to overcome guilt. Some say "ignorance is bliss". This year, I have learned what people mean by that. I feel my education has driven me to step away from that which I know I care deeply for. I am searching for a solution to deal with this guilt, this frustration that even if I make the changes, it's not significant. It's not enough. I have found myself just turning away, shutting off, stepping back from activism because I have so much guilt and frustration associated with it.

I know I do not want to do this. I just haven't found the much needed balance. At this point I feel so filled with questions, with discrepancies, unsolved issues, I feel unable to absorb new information. I am working on accepting the "right" and "wrong" engrained in the human experience. Our past was filled with right and wrong and our present will be as well. I am working on realizing that we must work with what we've got. I am trying to spend time seeing the beauty in the human experience. I would like to make more of an effort to project this beauty rather than let the ugliness and harsh things of this world consume me.

Melanie Flanders

2)

Cannery of Struggle

Listening to Freeman House reminded me of my Alaskan cannery experience. For two summers, I traveled north to make my fortune, much like the gold seekers came west a hundred some years ago and the settlers that came during the homestead era. It wasn't only for the money that I went, but the

adventure of seeing a place I had never been, a place unknown to me. I guess growing up in Pennsylvania and not leaving very much in the 18 years that I lived there made me yearn for lands unknown to me. I wanted to escape that place, I suppose.

The environment in a cannery is a work environment surrounded by death. A death song that is barely whispered, barely audible, above the cling and clang of machinery. You sleep little and your senses and body are numb, your vision is blurry and your mind is covered in a thick mist that the sun never seems to break. I remember a dream I had my second year, second season, second cannery. In my dream I was sleeping on a bed of silver bodies, their flesh a cushion for my weary bones, the last light of life was leaving their eyes, staring into my soul. I awoke sweating, unable to move, my hands were still cramped and curled from the previous day's work, I laid awake unwilling to think, not wanting to listen. Freeman House writes in his book, *Totem Salmon*,

> "Under such conditions, the nature of what we were doing- taking life in order to feed ourselves- became obscure, if not lost altogether. We could not afford to see the creatures dying slowly on the deck and in the fish hold as manifestations of creation equal in complexity and vitality to ourselves. We could only allow ourselves to see the salmon as objects, as product, a product that we hoped would allow us to pay the rent at home for a little longer than the duration of the fishing season."

I remember wanting to quit and walk away, take the ferry back to Washington, then a payday would come and I would stay, coerced by the power of money. Freeman goes on to write, "By denying ourselves the perception of our relation to the creatures dying on deck we are in some essential way denying ourselves a wholeness of being." I never quite felt right, restlessness was a part of everyday life, and I refused to come to terms with my position and never understood my discomfort. I have struggled to understand the lessons I have learned, and Freeman House has given me a crutch to help me along.

Matthew Ward

3)

<u>And the winner is…..</u>

I respect Freeman House immensely; his work in the Mattole River Valley and the subtle wisdom he articulates regarding the human relationship with "place" are critical to understanding how communities can sustainably exist on this planet. The physical, social, and spiritual re-connection to the place you live, House described, is essential for the recovery of the planet. Understanding where your water comes from, your food supply, how your waste is treated, and your relationship to the community of people you share space with are integral pieces of information to understand about your place. Once the realization is made that the ground you live on is a thriving community of life, people are apt to live more responsibly on the planet- the first step towards a sustainable community.

I was happy to break the silence after his lecture to ask the first question of Freeman. I said, "It seems like the people and communities that are in the greatest need of making this connection back to "place" are located in urban areas where access to the earth, by the very location of their lives, is for the most part denied." My thought goes on. For much of the day humans are confined to automobiles, offices, big buildings, and a controlled climate. The land has been paved over and I would argue that most city dwellers do not ever consider what the land might have looked like before the development occurred.

Freeman acknowledged that this reality presents a great challenge for the process of reconnectivity. He hemmed and hawed over the question before he articulated a response. He offered up examples of some West Coast urban centers gaining a better understanding of their local watersheds through education and awareness of local watersheds. I think it was San Francisco that began a program

that stencils the names of paved over creeks onto storm drainages to illustrate that there is in fact a working hydrological system, even under the urban landscape.

My heart stopped beating and my brain immediately, but silently, responded with, "a drop in the bucket." I wondered when was the last time Freeman visited New Orleans, Philly, or Atlanta. These places are big and heavily populated. They are ecological nightmares. The culture that drives these places could give a fuck about watersheds. This is a harsh generalization that reeks of truth.

I am an ultra-realist. Our current environmental crisis has now become an arms race. The tortoise versus the hare. The hare represents consumer culture at it's finest- swift, deliberate, and destructive. The tortoise signifies a noble community of sustainable human culture. Currently the hare has several thousand advantages over the tortoise; here are a few big ones- the domination of global capitalism over the world, the integrated cultural notion that happiness and success equates to the accumulation of monetary wealth, the nine to five work week, and the dubya. The tortoise has the motivation and dedication of the minority of people committed to saving the planet; they have limited funds, tons of electronic information, and are racing against the clock. If the hare wins, the global ecosystem has indeed collapsed. If the tortoise wins, well then that would be cool.

Currently the hare is out in front by billions of lengths, so when a strong thinker like Freeman House suggests painting the names of trammeled creeks on storm drainages, it doesn't give me any confidence that the tortoise is making significant progress. Maybe I have a hard time envisioning what the next step towards environmental enlightenment is after stenciling creek names on storm drains. Perhaps a city-wide competition to see if someone could answer the question, "If you live in San Francisco, which large body of water does your paved over drainage spill into?"

I know change is incremental, and grassroots education and reform on such a large scale takes tremendous effort. But remember, the hare is way out in front and my friends in Manhattan don't know what a watershed is? They just keep eating take-out and working 75 hours a week. Let's start talking about a revolution. It's time for the tortoise to pick up the god dam pace.

Bobby Grillo

4)

Dear Mr. House,

It's hard for me to put any of this into words. I wonder if words are even necessary when the feelings inside seem like enough to just be on their own. But, as a student, I have to do something academic with this whirlwind of emotions. So, here ya' go…

After hearing you speak, I am left with fragments floating inside my body, shards of light once forming a reality, beginning to heal, forming a tender tissue around those scattered pieces. I know this is abstract, but this is what I *feel* inside.

You hugged me after class, and I felt something pass from you into my bones. A green flame. You squeezed me tight, and I felt forgiven. Funny, I'm not really a religious person, and I never believed in evangelistic healing, but I can not deny feeling this. A green flame transcended from words to your body, and I got a taste of it.

I wanted to taste the green canopy of my secret-hiding place when I was a child. Succulent, deciduous leaves formed a 10-foot shelter over my spot next to the creek (or ditch as my brothers would say). A world of green-infused light fed my eyes and being as I imagined this place to be a far-off wilderness. I crushed sedimentary rocks and made paint for the cement tunnel I crawled through in the summer. Mimozas, kudzu, and honeysuckle seemed as native to me as the oaks and dogwoods. I had a walking stick/plow for my grass garden, and when I was feeling adventurous, I would set out with my smoothed stick, heading out from the canopy to an open forest of oaks leading me to gigantic boulders. I could only wonder about their beginnings. Did erratics occur this far south? After every adventure, I was always lulled back to my green canopy. Even during thunderstorms, I felt warm and safe there, where the

leaves grew so thick, few drops ever permeated down to where I was curled to the earth. In the winter, I cried and felt such a deep grief for my canopy gone; I was almost convinced it was an act by my brothers to make the leaves die and float helplessly at my feet.

Now I am grown, and I have watched houses sprout around the parameters of this forest. I have watched tree climbing crews come and take a chain saw to these trees, slicing them in a matter of seconds, which took lifetimes to achieve in breadth and height- trees that HAD TO BE REMOVED because of DANGER from ice storms and power lines. For a while, I thought my childhood was over, but now I wonder if much of what I felt and experienced was all influenced by my perceptions. The wilderness within meets the wilderness outside. My childhood may be over, but not the child in me that loves the Earth with more passion than can be expressed- so much so that I will cry if you barely even nudge me on the subject. And so much of what I experienced as a child I am seeing in people around me. Nature transcended into individuals. Just as it should be.

Mr. House, I felt something pass into my bones when you reached down to hug me. A little green flame. A sweeping green canopy, squeezing me tight. A whiff of succulent leaves reminding me these places still exist, if not in my back yard, then in individuals holding and releasing a memory, an energy, a flame with its roots in childhood wonder. And so I feel so convoluted, childhood grief begun to heal, and I continue to search for the places and people that hold this beauty inside. I hope this doesn't frighten you. This is who I am and what I feel, and I hope some of it makes sense. Thank you.

Joanna Tenny

April 24th

Coming To Grips With American Identity: Land, Culture, Community

Simon Ortiz

Introduction:
In thirty years of writing stories, essays, and poems, and teaching, Simon Ortiz has become the preeminant Native poet of our country. He was raised in the Pueblo of Acoma in what is now called New Mexico, and the land, culture, and community there speak directly through him. The following note, written inside the cover of my decade old copy of Woven Stone, the collection of his first four volumes of poetry, is dated December 11th, 1995. I was arguing with students about the significance of his work:

> When I say Simon Ortiz is one of the most important poets writing in America today, I mean (to borrow a phrase from Jason, a Wilderness Program student who went on to receive Rabbinical training)--I mean that Simon's poetry is thoroughly prayerful; i.e., full of prayers and praising. And prayerful in a way that works today because that isn't the result of any doctrine or creed or religion. It is the extension of thousands of years of dry land farming culture in what is called the Southwest, and the pain of five centuries of colonialism. He knows the loss because he has lived it--he also knows the life, the renewal, the fertile power in everything, including us. And he just tells it, sings it, moves it in language that is full of silence too, so that all the time it is praying, praising, respecting, alive, living. Always, even in anger, Simon Ortiz has "gone for the rain."

I would add a couple of points to this statement. (1) What makes this prayerful or sacramental quality so powerful in his work is that it does not call attention to itself as such, is left unstated and takes place almost casually in the course of writing about seemingly ordinary events= like the standing of a stone wall at Acoma or the gentle moving of baby mice out of a cornfield or his father bringing home a skinny dog. (2) His poems are an extension of the "ferociousness" with which the Acoma Pueblo people have "held to their history, culture, land despite...the forces surrounding them since... the advent of Euro-American colonization." (3) We must learn to listen for that "something that surrounds the song;" to listen for that "something more than memory of remembering that is at stake;" we must catch the language of motion/emotion, and, if we are to have a regard for "the sacredness of language," we must, like the old man, partially blind in the hunting camp, we must know when to let a pig become our deer (keep about us a sense of humor). (4) I would call readers' attention especially to the poem, "That's the Place Indians Talk About" (p. 205, *Proceedings* or p. 321-324, *Woven Stone*) as an example of the kind of poem Ortiz gives us often enough and that is absolutely necessary for the health and consciousness of this society.

They were amazed
at so much blood.
Spurting,
sparkling,
splashing, bubbling, steady
hot arcing streams.
Red
and bright and vivid
unto the grassed plains.
Steaming.
So brightly and amazing.
They were awed.

It almost seemed magical

that they had so much blood.
It just kept pouring,
Like rivers,

like endless floods from the sky.
Thunder that had become liquid,
and the thunder surged forever
into their minds.

Indeed,
they must have felt
they should get down on their knees
and drink the red rare blood,
drink to replenish
their own vivid loss.

Their helpless hands
Were like sieves.

(From Sand Creek, p. 67.)

Bio:
Simon J. Ortiz, Acoma Pueblo poet, writer, storyteller, has authored poetry, fiction, children's books, and anthologies, including From Sand Creek, After and Before the Lightning, Woven Stone, Men on the Moon, Speaking For The Generations, and others. As a Native writer, he states: "To Native Americans, oral tradition evokes a sense of cultural being, continuity, and identitiy. Therefore Native American culture based on oral tradition absolutely conveys a sense of Existence."

Speaker's suggested Readings:

From the Glittering World, A Navajo Story, Irvin Morris
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Ken Kesey

Coming to Grips with American Identity: Land, Culture, Community
Simon Ortiz

Hih-druutsi is my Acoma name. *Nuyuu da-ahshiya Aacquumeh stadseh-nih nih-yah*. I am *Hih-druutsi* in the Acoma language. My real name, so to speak. Simon Ortiz is my baptismal name, the name that was given to me because I was raised in the Catholic Church tradition. Since Acomas, like many or most of the Pueblos, were converted or imposed upon to accept Catholicism when the Spanish Conquistadores came to the American Southwest in the 1500s. Subsequently Pueblo people began to use Spanish last names such as Ortiz. That's why my surname is Ortiz. Other common names are Garcia, Chavez, and so forth, names from the Spanish through the Catholic Church when people became baptized.

Names were changed.

Aacqu is the name of Acoma Pueblo in the native way of speaking. *Ehmi hehya Aacqumeh studah*. That's why I am then a person from Acoma. Or *Aacqumeh*—of Acoma. The native names of Indian people, indigenous peoples of the Americas, and the names of their communities were changed so they could be written down. Acoma, as you know, is spelled A-c-o-m-a. *Aacqu*--itself in the oral tradition which is not written--is merely spoken. I shouldn't say "merely" but it is the main way of learning and of passing on knowledge. It is the oral tradition, word of mouth.

Aacqu is the correct way of saying Acoma Pueblo which is in New Mexico.

I grew up at *Deetseyamah*. *Deetseyamah* is McCartys. Do you know why it's called McCartys? Obviously that's not an Acoma name—right? McCarty was a railroad worker, an Irish railroad worker. Irish. Like some of you are, I'm sure. McCarty was a railroad worker in the early years of the railroad when it came through the Acoma Pueblo reservation.

McCarty worked at the pump house where trains stopped to take on water when trains still ran on steam and coal. The water stop became known as McCarty's Stop. Not long after, there was a sign post: McCarty's Stop.

But the real name is *Deetseyamah*.

Deetseyamah because it is north of Acoma. *Dee* is north. *Tseyamah* is door or gate. Or an opening between two mesas or flat-top hills to the north. *Tseyamah* is the trail or road between those hills. It is a descriptive name. It is an opening—"north opening"—to where the village and farming areas are located, where I grew up. These names are in the native language.

Often times it is easier to say "Acoma Pueblo, The Sky City." Sky City is another name that is imposed. New Mexico is "The Land of Enchantment," i.e., in New Mexico state tourist brochures—right? Just like Montana is Big Sky Country—right? Acoma Pueblo is located atop a mesa almost four hundred feet off the valley floor. Atop a sandstone mesa, it is some distance into the sky. Therefore call it "The Sky City." There is even a casino named Sky City Casino the tribe of Acoma Pueblo operates as an economic enterprise.

The language of Acoma Pueblo is *Keres*. And my name *Hih-druutsi* and *Aacqu* and *Deetseyamah* and the names of my children and grandchildren are in the native Acoma language of *Keres*.

The Native language is very much an indication of our land, community, and culture. That is very important when we look at Native identity and the forces that are at work in creating change. My name Simon Ortiz comes from one of those forces. Simon Joseph Ortiz is what it says on my driver's license, jail record, and things like that. *Hih-druutsi*, my Acoma name, as far as I know doesn't appear on any such records.

Nonetheless, I would have to say, the true and real identity of Native people is that they are the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.

Relocation, p. 76, *Woven Stone*

Don't talk me no words.

Don't frighten me
for I am in the blinding city.
The lights,
the cars,
the deadened glares
    Tear my heart
    And close my mind.

Who questions my pain,
the tight knot of anger
in my breast?

I swallow hard and often
and taste my spit
and it does not taste good.
Who questions my mind?

I came here because I was tired;
the BIA taught me to cleanse myself,
daily to keep a careful account of my time.
Efficiency was learned in catechism;
the nuns spelled me God in white.
And I came her to feed myself—
Corn, potatoes, chili, and mutton
Did not nourish me they said.

So I agreed to move.
I see me walking in sleep
down streets, down streets gray with cement
and glaring glass and oily wind,
armed with a pint of wine,
I cheated my children to buy.
I am ashamed.
I am tired.
I am hungry.

I speak words.
I am lonely for the hills.
I am lonely for myself.

Gallup is a border town off reservation. It is a small city in western New Mexico. Very close to the Arizona border, but it is in New Mexico. It is a border town close to the Navajo nation which is in Arizona and New Mexico. And it is twenty-five miles north of Zuni Pueblo, and west of *Aacqu*, about eighty some miles.

For Those Sisters and Brothers in Gallup, p. 88, *Woven Stone*

He is that twisted shadow
under the bridge: he is
that broken root.
I know where he came from: I've

known you for so long
I want to take you home.

He got hit outside the city limits:
once
I saw a scatter of flesh and blood
mashed into the highway
east of Gallup.
The car wheels
shuddered over a lump,
and my body and soul shud-
dered, o my god.
I turned
around up the road and drove
slowly back,
o my god.
It was a dog left in tatters
of skin, splintered bone,
blood, and I dragged raggy meat
which was the leg and threw it
as hard
and as far as I could
away from the Interstate
and prayed and moaned for us.

O my god, I now what is my name:
she stumbled like a stuffed dummy
against me, looked into my mouth
with her opaque remorseful eyes
and asked me for a drink.

I HAVE DRUNK AND TRIED TO KILL
MY ANGER IN YOUR GODDAMED TOWN
AND I'M AFRAID FOR YOU AND ME
WHEN I WILL COME BACK AGAIN.

Be kind, sister, be kind;
it shall come cleansing again.
it shall rain and your eyes
will shine and look so deeply
into me into me into me into me.

Colonization and conquest is achieved by the force of direct violence. And colonization and conquest is achieved through religion. The Catholicism imposed upon native Pueblo people in New Mexico and the economic system, particularly dependency upon the wage system, are the main ways in which colonization and conquest happens.

There are historical experiences and occasions that Native people have experienced. In January 1599, Acoma Pueblo was virtually destroyed by the first Spanish colonial governor appointed by Spain to rule and impose the dominion of Spain in the New World.

Northern New Spain was north of what we know now to be Mexico. This was Nuevo Mejico. New Mexico. That area includes the present states of New Mexico, Arizona, and southern Colorado, the region that is the American Southwest now.

Acoma was virtually destroyed by the Spanish conquistador and his troops.

The conquistador governor's name was Don Juan de Onate, the first colonizer of northern New Spain. Because the Aacqumeh hano had refused to gladly hand over provisions when Spanish soldiers had come to Acoma a month earlier. This was about three months after the Spanish empire had formally claimed the land.

It was in October, 1598 when the Spaniard, Onate, first set up his capitol across the river from what is now the Tewa pueblo of San Juan in northern New Mexico. And three months later, the Spanish came to Acoma which is to the south and west of what was the Spanish capitol then.

They requested provisions which they were given at first. And then they came back again. And that was when the Acoma Pueblo people decided they would resist. And because they refused to provide further provisions and refused subjugation and to submit to the Spanish crown, a battle took place. For three days, the Acoma Pueblo fought until it was eventually overcome by the arms and style of fighting that beset them, that was waged by the Spanish soldiers, until literally the Pueblo was destroyed.

Many people, rather than submit and surrender, jumped to their deaths off the cliffs of Aacqu. It is told in Spanish archives. It was a very gory and disastorous event. Eventually Aacqu surrendered. It had no choice. The people stopped fighting. After the battle, Onate himself sentenced the people for refusing to obey Spanish law. Onate's sentence included this: the Acoma people who were warriors had one foot and one hand cut off, and Acoma children below the age of twelve were sent away as slaves.

The Pueblo of Acoma was virtually destroyed in January of 1599.

It would have probably perished if other people had not come to help Aacqu after that. Because Acoma people left the Pueblo and went into exile. But they came back. Aacqu is one of the Pueblos with a number of different clans; some of the clans are from other communities, other Pueblos who came to help.

That's what happened in 1599. Acoma was one of those Pueblos, one of those Indigenous communities which faced annihilation by direct force of violence excercised by the Spanish conquistador-colonizer, the first Europeans in the American Southwest.

However, as I said earlier, conquest is not always by direct force of arms. It is also, like I read in the poems "Relocation" and "For Those Sisters and Brother in Gallup," through the loss of integrity especially caused by the use of alcohol. And it has had its toll on people such as myself, as well as our clans, families, and communities.

My Children, and a Prayer for Us, p. 125, Woven Stone

Raho says, "You take a feather
and this white stuff,
and you let it fall to the ground;
that's praising."

Yes, son, it is,
and your words will always
remain like that.
Be strong and think clear thoughts,
always see the wholeness
of what is around you,
touch their realness,
feel the vibrating motion
of mornings,

exult in your presence
with the humility
that true knowledge imparts,
that you are one part
among many and all parts.

Rainy
daughter dark eyes
touch wind quiver
the inwards of mountain power
full flow
know the innate tension
that is your life
in stones leaves insects
lights in frost crystals;
simple words I wish
for you
ours to share.

Allspirit, pray with me
my humble prayers: I give you
myself, my only hope I know,
knowing nothing else
except that I have truly nothing
to offer except that which
you have given to me;
I give it back to you.

Thank you.

Yuusthiwa was an old man who we also used to know as Shaa-rrlowkah. Tomato. "Amoo haash-tee-dzeshi Shaa-rrlowkah," people would say lovingly. Beloved old man Tomato.

Yuusthiwa, p. 137, *Woven Stone*

"Whenever people are driving along and stop
to offer Yuusthiwa a ride, he refuses
and says, 'I still have my legs,'"
my father says, saying it like the old man,
a slow careful drawl. And my mother corrects him,
"'While I'm still able to walk.'"
Yuusthiwa has been sick lately;
either something fell on him
or else he got bit by something, she heard.
Apparently, he still gets around though
pretty much because like my father says
one fellow had said, "'That old man,
he's still tom-catting around, visiting.'
You see him in Acomita along the road
or in McCartys." I chuckle at the expression
picturing the old guy in mind; after all,

Yuusthiwa is only 114 years old at last count.

"One time, David and I were coming
from Acomita," my father says, "and we stopped
for him. Recognizing me, he got in and said
'Ahku Tsai-rrhlai kudha.' And as we drove
westwards up this way, he told us things.
I had asked him, 'Naishtiya, how do you come
to live as many years as you have, to be so fortunate
as to mature as healthy and firm as you are?'
And he said, 'If you live enjoying and appreciating
your life, taking care of yourself, caring for
and being friendly with others; if you use the plants
that grow around here, seeing and knowing
that they are of use, boiling them into medicine
to use in the right way in caring for yourself,
cleansing and helping your body with them;
that's the way I have lived. 'That's the way
he said it," my father says.

Shaa-rrlowkah—Tomato—told about the time he was going outside early one morning to take a leak, to pee outside his house, when he saw off to the east, not where the sun usually rises but a little bit north, a light reaching up into the sky.

That was the time when the El Paso Natural Gas Company pipeline that goes through the Acoma reservation ruptured in Acomita. *Deechuna*, which is its real name. The El Paso Natural Gas Company had laid its gasline route right through our reservation. People had opposed it, of course. But nevertheless the pipeline had gone through. Through our best gardens, orchards, fields. Because it was the easiest route to take, just like the railroads. Old man Shaa-rrlowkah said the light—what he at first might have thought was the rising sun--was in the wrong place. I remember him saying that.

The El Paso Natural Gas company man came to the tribal meeting hall and promised his company would make restitution for the homes that were burned and the fields that were destroyed when the gas line blew up. The gas line is still there. It still carries gas for heating and whatever gas is used for from Texas and Oklahoma to California. It is one of the biggest pipelines that transport gas to the West Coast.

This is also the case with electric lines, and fiber optics that recently the Acoma tribe was talked into allowing to cross the reservation. The railroads were the first corporation to come through the Acoma reservation, years ago in the 19th century.

My father worked for the railroad. I think even old man Shaa-rrlowkah—or Yuusthiwah—whose American name is John Sanchez—used to work for the railroad. Many Acoma people did. I was just telling Professor Dunsmore about my father's first and only car, a Hudson Commodore 8 that he bought in 1953. My dad bought that big tank of a 1951 Hudson in San Diego. He was able to get that car with wages from working for the railroad.

> Changes have taken place because of the railroad. Yuusthiwah was part of those changes. I would see that old man—of course he is long gone now, after living for at least one hundred and fourteen years—going along sometimes. He was blind or almost so, but he knew roads and trails around the reservation so well. He would walk all the way down to Acomita, a distance of eight miles or so east of Deetseyamah where he lived. And on trails along the river and to the mesas. Yuusthiwah knew the land and the people so well. People would chuckle among themselves and say, "There's old man Shaa-rrlowkah tomcatting around." The old man, of course, would be visiting his clan members and other people, reassuring them that they were always a part of their community. This would be his role to do as an elder of the Acoma people.

A Designated National Park, *Woven Stone*, p. 235

Montezuma Castle in the Verde Valley, Arizona.
DESIGNATED FEDERAL RECREATION FEE AREA
ENTRY FEES
$1.00 FOR I DAY PERMIT
MONTEZUMA CASTLE ONLY INCLUDES PURCHASER
OR OTHERS WITH HIM IN PRIVATE NON-COMMERCIAL
VEHICLE
$0.50 FOR I DAY PERMIT
MONTEZUMA CASTLE ONLY INCLUDES PURCHASER
IN COMMERCIAL VEHICLE

AUTHORIZED
BY THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND
ACT OF 1965

This morning,
I have to buy a permit to get back home.

Birds,
they must of have been,
these people.
"Thank you for letting me come to see you."
I tell them that.

Secreted in my cave,
look at the sun.
Shadows on sycamore,
a strange bird and a familiar bird.
River, hear the river.
What it must be,
that pigeon sound.

Hear
in my cave, sacred song.
Morning feeling, sacred song.
We shall plant today.

PRESS BUTTON
(on a wooden booth)
"For a glimpse into the lives
of these people who lived here."

Pressing the button, I find
painted sticks and cloth fragments
in a child's hand,
her eyelashes still intact.
Girl, my daughter, my mother,
softly asleep.
They have unearthed you.

59th CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AT THE FIRST SESSION,

BEGUN AND HELD AT THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

ON MONDAY, THE FOURTH DAY OF DECEMBER,

ONE THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED AND FIVE.

AN ACT

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES.

And a last sign post quote:

BUILT SOMETIME BETWEEN

1200 AD AND 1350 AD

ABANDONED BY AD 1450.

s/ The Sinagua Indians

SEE MUSEUM FOR MORE INFORMATION

The loss of land has meant the loss of community--and the loss of continuity or momentum and disruption of continuity. We know I am sure that wherever we live there are sites, archeological sites where Indigenous people have lived. In the Southwest, the Colorado Plateau which is my ancestral homeland extends from Silver City in southern New Mexico all the way northward to Colorado and Utah.

These sites are ancestral sacred places where cliff dwellers, people who were ancestors of present-day Pueblo people, built their communities of Pueblo-style architecture which today you find pretty commonly, the kind of dwellings people have now, not only native Pueblo people but also present day citizens of New Mexico and Arizona. Dwellings that are, you might say, "Santa Fe style" or like my daughter says, "Pueblo deco" in the odd color spectrum of pastel orange, green, and purple. I'm not talking about hair! I'm talking about "Santa Fe style" or "Pueblo deco".

The Cliff Dwellers—the people who are the ancestors of present day Acoma and other Pueblos—have survived. The Spanish Conquistador first came as Francisco Coronado, and next as Juan de Onate. And then as Diego De Vargas after the Indian Pueblo Revolt of 1680 when the Pueblos drove the Spanish back south for a period of twelve years.

When the Spanish came back, they really settled in for good. Some of the co-optation has taken place through a reverse acculturation of lifestyles, such as with Pueblo architecture. Buildings made from stone and adobe, the basic ingredients for adobe walls, communities with architecture like that of Acoma and Zuni. I remember taking my nephew Larry to one of the sites. *Kahmahtsai-sru*, as we call them.

The National Park Service and current residents call them "Indian ruins," the remnants of homes where ancestral peoples used to live many generations and centuries ago. Pueblo Indian ruins: we call

them *kahmahtsai-sru*, like I said. There is no literal translation but it is more like ancient sacred or holy places. This *kahmahtsai-sru* had been uncovered by road construction that would eventually become Interstate 40 which crosses the nation from North Carolina through Oklahoma City to Tucumcari, New Mexico. And then through Albuquerque, then through the Acoma reservation and many other Native homelands.

We went to this *kahmahtsai-sru* before the actual construction of I-40 had begun, just to look at this place. This ancient place of our homeland, of our ancestors, of our people. The *kahmahtsai-sru* was on a hillside. Several buildings, several kivas, round religious structures or chambers where the people held religious activities. There were areas for storage and domestic household use.

I'll always remember that. Larry, who is probably six feet two now as a grown person, I carried on my shoulders. I was in high school then. When I think about it, I could not lift one limb of him now! But he was small then; he was about three or four years old; I was able to carry him.

We walked several miles to this place where our ancestors had once lived. It was near a wash or arroyo that comes from a mountainous area. *Kaweshtima*— Mt. Taylor on the maps of New Mexico. *Kaweshtima* is its actual name in the Acoma language. The Laguna people call it *Tsepina*. Both names mean about the same: Snow Covered or Cloud Veiled Woman Mountain. It is a sacred mountain north of Acoma.

The El Paso Natural Gas pipeline had come through the Acoma reservation in the 1950's and it blew up at that one place I talked about earlier. Old Man Tomato saw the light from the flames of the explosion. It was 1966, and I had just come out of military service when that took place. The railroad had come seventy years before then, in the later 19th century when the railroad tracks were laid. It had come through in bulldozer fashion and literally took the best farming lands along the river we, Acoma people, had traditionally farmed.

The railroad employed Acoma men and boys along the railroad route. Not only did *Yuustihwah*—Old Man Tomato--work for the railroad, but my father did also. Along with other Pueblo men, especially those from communities whose lands were bulldozed through by the railroad.

Right of Way, *Woven Stone*, p. 259

The elder people at home do not understand.
It is hard to explain to them.
The questions from their mouths
and on their faces are unanswerable.
You tell them, "The State wants right of way.
It will get right of way."

They ask, "What is right of way?"
You say, "The State wants to go through
your land. The State wants your land."
They ask, "The Americans want my land?"
You say, "Yes, my beloved Grandfather."
They say, "I already gave them some land."
You say, "Yes Grandmother, that's true.
Now they want more, to widen their highway."
They ask again and again, "This right of way
that the Americans want, does that mean
they want all our land?"

There is silence.
There is silence.

There is silence because you can't explain,
and you don't want to, and you know
when you use words like industry
and development and corporations
it wouldn't do any good.

There is silence.
There is silence.
You don't like to think
the fall into a bottomless despair
is too near and too easy and meaningless.
You don't want that silence to grow
deeper and deeper into you
because that growth inward stunts you,
and that is no way to continue,
and you want to continue.

And so you tell stories.
You tell stories about your People's birth
and their growing.
You tell stories about your children's birth
and their growing.
You tell the stories of their struggles.
You tell that kind of history,
and you pray and be humble.
With strength, it will continue that way.
That is the only way.
That is the only way.

The stories include those I've told you about old man *Yuusthiwah*— Tomato—whose American name was John Sanchez. They are stories like these. And stories that include my father. They are stories that include this man whose name I never properly learned. Although one time when I told this story which was in a poem, one person said to me, "It must be Old Man Ernest." And I said, "Yes, it was probably Ernest."

I had met this old man who said these words: "That's the place that Indians talk about; that's the place."

That's the Place Indians Talk About, *Woven Stone*, p. 321

At a meeting in California I was talking with an elder Paiute man.
> He had been a rangerider and a migrant laborer. He spoke about Coso Hot Springs, a sacred and healing place for the Shoshonean peoples, enclosed within the China Lake Naval Station. Like Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories in New Mexico, the naval station is a center for the development, experimentation, and testing of U.S. Military weapons. The elder man, wearing thick glasses and a cowboy hat, said, "That's the place Indians talk about."

We go up there and camp.
Several days, we stay there.

We have to take horses, wagons,
or walk.
And we would stay
for the days we have to.

The Coso Hot Spring would talk to us.
And we would talk to it.
The People have to talk to it.
That's the place Indians talk about.
That's the place.

Children, women, men,
we would all go up there.
You drink that water, it makes you well.
You put it on your hands, face, all over,
and you get well, all well.

That's the place Indians talk about,
the Cosco Hot Springs the People go to.

You take a flint like this,
a hard stone in your hand,
and you give it like this.
When you pray.
When you sing.
When you talk to the hot springs.
You talk with it when it talks to you.

Sometimes from there,
from down in there is talking to you.
You could hear it.
You listen.

Listen.
You can hear it.
The stones in the earth rattling together.

The stones down there moving around each other.
When we pray.
When we sing.
When we talk with the stones
rattling in the ground
and the stones moving in the ground.
That's the place Indians talk about.

Oh,
we stay there for some days.
You could hear it talking.
From far,
from far away inside, the moving power.
From far away, coming to us,

coming to us pretty soon.
Getting closer, getting close,
the power is getting close,
and the ground is hot and shaking.

Something is doing that
and the People know that.
They have to keep talking.
Praying, that's the Indian way.
Singing, that's the Indian way.
And pretty soon, it's there.
You know it's all around.
It's right there,
and the People are right there.
That's the place Indians talk about.

And now,
they have a fence around the Coso Hot Springs.
We go up there, but they have a fence around.
They have a government fence all around Coso Hot Springs.
Since World War II, the Navy of the government
has a fence around that place.
The People go up there to talk with the hot springs,
to use the power, to keep ourselves well with,
but there is a fence with locks all around,
and we have to talk with the Navy people
so they can let us inside the fence to the hot springs.

We go up there to talk with the hot spring power
but the Navy tells us we have to talk to them.
We don't like it, to have to do that.
We don't want to talk to the government fence,
the government Navy.
That's the place the Indian people are talking about now.

For many years,
the People went up there.
Families from all over.
From Nevada, from Utah, from Arizona,
from north California, from south,
from all over, from anyplace.
Families have to travel by horses,
wagons, and now by cars, and walking.
We keep going up there,
for all this many years, we have to.
To keep talking to the power
of the power in the earth, we have to.
That's the Indian way.

We don't like to talk to the fence and the Navy
but for a while we will and pretty soon

we will talk to the hot springs power again.
That's the place Indians talk about.

Listen,
that's the way you hear.
Pretty soon, you can hear it,
coming far away
deep in the ground, deep down there coming,
the voice of the power coming,
closer and closer.
Listen, that's the way you hear it.
From the earth,
the moving power of the voice
and the People talking.
Praying, you know, singing soft too.

Hearing,
that's the way you listen.
The People talking,
telling the power to come to them
and pretty soon it will come.
It will come,
the moving power or the voice,
the moving power of the earth,
the moving power of the People.
That's the place Indian People talk about.

Community meetings at Acoma Pueblo used to be held regularly once a month. Now with the way social and cultural changes are, sometimes tribal meetings are not as timely nor held regularly like the people want them to be. It used to be that one of the Elders would get to telling old time stories. He would sometimes go on and on. Until someone would say, "Beloved, *Naishtiya*, I think we heard those stories before," stopping him, otherwise the meetings would go on and on and on.

Nonetheless, the stories are important to be heard. I was always glad when a man like Amado or *Tsewaimih* would stand up to speak, even though younger people would want to get through with the meeting at hand. Elders like that are true examples of the oral tradition which are a basic core of the identity of Native American life and how people see themselves and who they are as Acoma people.

Acquumeh-titra as a tribal people had their own cultural significance. My grandfather's name was *Mayai*. *Mayai-shaatah* never knew himself as American. Because "American" is a political term. Because *Mericano* is usually associated to mean "white American." So *stha-nana-shaatah Mayai-shaatah* always knew himself as who he was: an Acoma person, never an American because he wasn't. He did not recognize himself an American citizen. He always lived at *Aacqu* and in the village of *Deetseyaamah* and that was the world to him.

I want to close with a last poem and then with last remarks which will include the last bit of a letter I wrote some months ago. The poem is called "A New Story" which ends the book *Woven Stone*. I am glad that you were recommended to read *Woven Stone* where all these poems I've been reading come from.

A New Story, *Woven Stone*, p. 363

Several years ago,
I was a patient at the VA hospital
in Ft. Lyons, Colorado.
I got a message to call this woman,
so I called her up.
She said to me,
"I'm looking for an Indian.
Are you an Indian?"
"Yes," I said.
"Oh good," she said,
"I'll explain why I'm looking
for an Indian."
And she explained.
"Every year, we put on a parade
in town, a Frontier Day Parade.
It's exciting and important,
and we have a lot of participation."
"Yes," I said.
"Well," she said, "Our theme
is Frontier,
and we try to do it well.
In the past, we used to make up
paper mache Indians,
but that was years ago."
"Yes," I said.
"And then more recently,
we had some people
who dressed up as Indians
to make it more authentic,
you understand, real people."
"Yes," I said.
"Well," she said,
"that didn't seem right,
but we had a problem.
There was a lack of Indians."
"Yes," I said.
"This year, we wanted to do it right.
We have looked hard and high
for Indians but there didn't seem
to be any in this part of Colorado."
"Yes," I said.
"We want to make it real, you understand,
put a real Indian on a float,
not just a paper mache dummy
or an Anglo dressed as an Indian
but a real Indian with feathers and paint.
Maybe even a medicine man."
"Yes," I said.
"And then we learned the VA hospital

had an Indian here.
We were so happy,"
she said, happily.
"Yes," I said.
"there are several of us here."
"Oh good," she said.

Well, last Spring
I got another message
at the college where I worked.
I called the woman.
She was so happy
that I returned her call.
And then she explained
that Sir Francis Drake,
the English pirate
(she didn't say that, I did)
was going to land on the coast
of California in June, again.
And then she said
She was looking for Indians. . .
"No," I said. No.

And the last of the letter I wrote: "In November of last year at a Harvard University Seminar Conference called The Ecological Imagination, Reflections on Nature, Place, and Spirituality, I felt the attending intellectuals, scientists, writers, professors were appalled when I said the American ecological and environmental debate, discourse, and discussion was being waged over stolen property. Although a few privately agreed with the way I stated my concerns for the environment and our cultural and ecological responsibilities, some of the scholars did not agree with the way I portrayed U.S. policies as policy machinations of an evil empire. American—or should I say American white identity?--~~is~~ tied in with Native indigenous identity, yet it is somehow inconceivable to white Americans that we have the same responsibilities to the natural world. In a sense American whites have been unable, truly and honestly, to come to grips with their identity as Americans, and they will be unable to do so until they acknowledge the past that they deny."

Native people must admit to being victims of genocide and the loss of their lands. There has been a loss of culture and community to a great extent. They are not gone. There is no way I would ever say that. There is obviously a cultural and social continuity that has taken place which must be expressed as much as the loss of it is expressed.

Acoma was destroyed in 1599, like I said, and it wasn't necessarily spoken about in the oral tradition mainly because of self-censorship. There are some things that you don't talk about. Colonized peoples often find themselves in that kind of dilemma. However, they and all other Native Americans have to speak about those things no matter how painful and how awful that the memory is.

And "white" Americans? The answer is obvious I think. They have to be willing to face the truth and face themselves. Recently I wrote a book blurb. This is the blurb: "Ask Native America if European America is a nation of liars, thieves, and killers. With profound articulation, Shari Hundorf's *Going Native* confronts the belief that white America owns America. Her brave and honest insight urges one to wonder if American will ever be brave and honest enough to face its past. Again ask Native America."

America must tell itself that it will face itself, and do it. That will be, I believe, coming to grips with American character and identity.

Thank you very much.

Question &Answer section:

Questioner: Hang on. What does that mean, what you're saying about for America to find its identity we have to face our past? What does that mean for the individual person?

Simon: I think there's a real sense of apathy or purposelessness. I find that too much to be the case. We don't know what to do, what kind of personal responsibility that it would take. I think we have to look for and see there are things we can do personally to acknowledge. I would say looking at our own family's history, our stories. Where are you from?

Questioner: Me?

Simon: Yeah.

Questioner: Boston.

Simon: Boston, okay. Which is quite a long ways from here—but it's not that far in terms of why you're here, the reason why you're here. You're a student here at the university, right? There's a …Oh, I forgot one of the instructions from the radio person was to paraphrase your question. And your question I think had to do with, "What does the individual do to be helpful?" That's the way I interpret the question. As I was saying, it's important to find something that will speak for yourself individually or personally. Especially in some responsible way. I think the environmental questions that society is faced with, that communities are faced with, is something all of us have to make personal choices about. What's your major? Are you in the….

Questioner: Literature and environmental studies.

Simon: Okay. Which is fairly recent as an academic discipline. And yet it's very, very pertinent to what kind of knowledge that's developing. Knowledge and developing social and socially relevant responsibilities regarding communities and the environment. We have to not only exploit resources but also make sure it's done in a healthy regenerative way. Too often the economic system just makes use of resources in order to create profit, and that's about it--without looking at the consequences. What's needed are studied ways, studied considered ways. So that we're not a human society and culture just purely exploiting and using natural resources, but returning things too so that future generations can have a good life, so to speak. And I think that that is something. It may sound like something you yourself as an individual can't do, but you and others can. Oftentimes we are in an apathetic or purposeless mode because we find ourselves basically helpless personally or individually. But if we think more in terms of communal or collective work and function, we're not alone in the struggle. We're working with others in carrying out what we want positively to take place.

Questioner: So how would that be different from fighting the environmental war over stolen land? What you've described I agree with, what to do. But if it's a white community figuring out how to wisely use their resources in a sustainable way, how is that any different from the environmental war on the stolen land?

Simon: There are ways in which people in the community as a whole can work toward joint consideration of land and resources. For example, right around here, Missoula, there are Native people very close by. They have tribal governments. To the north, the Flathead reservation. And to the south,

the Crow people. And others in the state. They should be part of any land use proposal and planning that goes on regionally in the area. Whether it be for the use of water or forest or land for farming or raising livestock or protection of wildlife. I think we can all work for collective and collaborative planning with Native people. Too often because Native people are not very present or prominent in the political process, American society sees that as Native people not involved in the electoral process. Therefore, they must not be--~~it~~ does not matter--~~we~~ must make decisions for them. That is an exclusionary process, simply to not take into account the fact that people have different cultural ways of approaching circumstances and conditions. I think that we as citizens can insist upon consultation with local Indigenous tribes, and that we plan with everyone in mind especially when people are neighbors. But often times whoever is in power only concern themselves with that part of the population that is like their own; and perhaps also, like I said, with whoever is politically present or evident.

Questioner: Do you have any theories or insights about the Anasazi and the Pueblo, on what happened to them three hundred and forty years ago?

Simon: Anasazi is a term that is likely a Navajo word meaning ancient people. People who lived at what are now archeological sites, like Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon, Aztec National Monument. Or Canyon de Chelly, Puye Cliffs, and many other countless places in the Southwest. People who are their descendants are the present-day Pueblo people of New Mexico and Arizona. People of Hopi, Acoma, Laguna, Taos, San Juan, Santo Domingo, Cochiti, and other present-day Pueblos are the descendants of the people sometimes called the Anasazi. It is a generic and categorical term. Some people say it is a derogatory term but it is really not derogatory. It is simply a convenient term to use, the Anasazi as a homogenous group. There were many, many people who are identified as ancient peoples, who have been designated the Anasazi. They are the present-day Pueblos. For example, although we don't trace a direct connection—that is, with a connect the dot sort of directness—the Acoma people always point to *yunah-deeyah buudyu*, saying "*Aishtyuu tu-deh-muuh*," meaning we arose from or came from the northwest direction where it is known our ancient people lived at one time. At *Kashkatruti*. The translation of that is: a place where there were white buildings. And that, as close as anyone can figure, is in Chaco Canyon in northern New Mexico. The descendants, the people who left Chaco Canyon, went toward Acoma and other Pueblos, especially those Pueblo peoples who speak a similar language, the Keres language which I spoke before I spoke English when I first went to school at six years old.

(Audience)

Simon: The question has to do with, what do I mean by my insistence about Americans coming to terms with what has taken place to Native people, the Indigenous people in the Americas? That is a very pertinent question. I am very glad you asked it. Because I think it is a question that you ask yourself. Is it admitting to guilt? "Guilt," I think, is not a helpful term at all. Because "guilt" has to do with kind of an ethical or moral question. But we have to, I think, look at what has taken place in the past and consider the factual nature of the experience, of the historical experience, and the fact that Acoma was a thriving Pueblo before the Spaniards came and "discovered" the place. And because the Spaniards were looking for wealth and those material items that would give them material power or gain, they imposed a system of control upon the people, which resulted in outright violence and genocide. That is a fact, and that is only one instance. When that has taken place over two whole continents, North and South America, we see the Indigenous population reduced by tens of millions. There was much violence, whether it was violence of arms or violence of disease and starvation; those things took place. People are afraid of that term "guilt" and the nature of "guilt"—because they were not personally involved. However we are still the descendants. For Acoma people, for example, to not be informed about what took place in 1599 is unfortunate. It is a kind of self-censorship that derives from the fact that you are in a lesser position and being told it is best if you forgot about it. It's like the colonizer conquistadors making it evident they would disapprove and you would be punished if you talked about certain things.

And so self-censorship began. Massacre and genocide are hard things to take. Take a look at Wounded Knee in 1890. There were more than three hundred Lakota people killed by the U.S. Army's Seventh Cavalry. Yet people do not really admit to it in a sense because of that term: "guilt." Or the violence in 1864 at Sand Creek in southern Colorado; and violence, I am sure, here in Montana also. The land loss---land that is now Missoula or New Mexico, that is now Albuquerque and Santa Fe--that was Native land. So to come to terms is really coming to be honest. About three years ago in 1998, the state of New Mexico wanted to honor Juan de Onate because he was the first official administrator for new northern Spain, which became New Mexico. The state wanted to honor Onate with commemorative events. Many people protested because of the kind of leader that Onate was. Some people insisted he go ahead and be honored. There is a statue--a bronze statue that stands at the site of the first Spanish capitol in New Mexico--that stands across the river from San Juan Pueblo. Juan de Onate is seated astride a horse, and like the conquistador he is dressed in armor and mail and so forth. In 1996, somebody in the dark of night went and cut off the foot of Onate as a protest. And symbolic of what Onate had ordered his troops to do at Acoma! The state of New Mexico got really pissed obviously!

Questioner: Was he (the person who cut off the statue's foot) honored?

Simon: He was not honored. At least he wasn't found, officially.

(Audience)

Simon: The first question, did I go to Vietnam? and I said no. I was in the U.S. army during that time, 1963, '64, '65, '66. I am glad I didn't go to Vietnam although I was a soldier, like I said, which was rather ironic. I mean it is ironic in the sense that Native people have been faced with assimilation and acculturation sometimes to the point of agreeing to change so that they are no longer who they were as Indigenous people. I mean as Indigenous people, serving in the United States army—yet that is what has taken place. The second question, did my experience offer any insights into the European American? I presume you mean my experience in the U.S. army. I've been experiencing America all my life. So, yes, insight, learning experience is lifelong. As colonized American Indigenous people, we have to be always aware that what we think and what we say is a matter of always being "experienced" by our experience. And our experience has always been America! Earlier I said my grandfather never admitted to being American. He always saw himself as Native or Indigenous. *Tumeh emih Aacqumeh dzah*. He was only an Acoma person. I may be a little bit extreme when I say that he never saw himself as American, because I am sure he was faced with the dilemma of having to go along with what American society and culture offered as experience. He never worked, as far as I know, for the railroad. He was a medicine person, a healer; he was a traditional person. Most of his contacts and responsibilities were with the Pueblo and with the people at home. He raised sheep, and sheep were not native; sheep raising was not a traditional native means of livelihood. So he would have had to deal in the economic system with American dollars and cents when he sold the sheep wool. Or when he went to the trading post and the exchange was in dollars and cents. And then he saw his daughters, including my mother, going off to school and learning English; so he would have had to be faced with things that were of America. Insight is an ongoing process. Sometimes I wonder about that in a serious way because I am concerned as a writer. And having so much use of the social means of communication, meaning writing and speaking in the English language which is non-Native, non-Indigenous, non-Acoma. And in some ways even anti-Indigenous and anti-Native. I mean "anti" in the sense that some concepts and principles in the English language spoken and written are anti—they have been used as weapons against Indigenous people. I have to admit I have concerns about this. I may not be the best writer in the world but I have concerns about this, which I have addressed to some extent, although not to a large extent. About what we must look out for. We are immersed so completely, not absolutely perhaps, but we are immersed so much in the American socal and cultural system. Yes, there is insight that's been helpful not only to me but to my children and grandchildren. I have three children. Raho, my son, the oldest, is a lawyer who studied in

American law. Although his focus is Native people and legal situations and matters they are faced with, his training is really in American jurisprudence. Sara, my youngest is in college at the Institute of American Indian Arts where the focus is on Native art and Native art expression. Her older sister Rainy is a young mother faced very much by American social forces which we are all faced by.

(Audience)

Simon: The question had to do with my use of the word "purposelessness," particularly when I answered a question earlier when I used the word. At that time I used it—and will use it again—as apathy. It has to do with apathy. Often times I find that young people especially…well, I don't want to cast any blame…don't have a sense of purpose. Maybe it's a case of looking for purpose, that I find to be the case, looking around. There are a lot of diversions and distractions that have to do with the immediate social circumstances that we have. I think perhaps this is a bit unfair but I will go ahead and say it—I came from the generation of the 1960s which I would have to say is sometimes seen a bit stereotypically. The 1960s was a fermenting ground. The Third World Liberation struggles of Red Power, Black Power, Brown Power was taking place. Young white people, hippies, looking to be free of their parents' generation of the 1940s and '50s, were very active. There was a sense of motivation, energized excitement, and experimentation with alternative social directions that sometimes weren't always the best. There was a great deal of drug use at the time. LSD, marijuana, and probably the first large scale use of cocaine in the Americas. Not to say that was the whole direction of the 1960s or that the era did not have its own kind of "purposelessness" or apathy, I think, if I do make a comparison, I don't find that same kind of fervor in today's life. We have to have a sense of direction and spirit, especially when it comes to the natural environment. I was really excited to hear about this course and the series of speakers planned for this semester. Because I think that's a really vibrant direction in which to go and to have a purposeful and energized direction. There's nothing wrong with being enthusiastic and excited about bringing about change. That's another thing: change. One of the things notable about the 1960s I spoke earlier about was that people wanted change, even if it meant going against the wishes of parents and grandparents.

I remember the struggles during the Vietnam War when young people and old people—actually elders who were and still are in the anti-nuke movement—were together. You see those elders now carrying signs and things. Elders, like seventy and eighty years old. Some of the ones maybe who demonstrated against the Vietnam War (who weren't elderly then, in the 1960s). I know some of you probably weren't born yet during that time in the 1960's—1965 to 1975—when there were demonstrations and protests against the war waged by the U.S. against the people of Vietnam. So compared to that kind of socially committed and determined action I think if I say that sometimes I observe too much purposelessness or apathy today, it's because that's actually the case.

Teacher, thanks Simon for coming.

Simon: Thank you very much.

Simon Ortiz

Student Responses to Coming to Grips with American Identity: Land, Culture, Community by Simon Ortiz

1)

The Writing in the Leaves

Americans love to read books about Nazi Germany. We love to watch movies about it….*Schindler's List* was one of our favorites. We love to traipse over to Germany and Poland to cry at the sites of Nazi concentration camps. We love to cry about it, we love to tell our children about it. And we love that our men were the heroes who swept across the great white waves of the Atlantic Ocean to save Europe from itself. There is not a school child in America who does not know this about our history. We have heard our grandfathers' stories over and over again. My grandfather was in Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He had lunch with Ernie Plye two days before he was killed. He will not eat at a Japanese restaurant. He will not look a Japanese person in the face. He is well-loved and respected by all who know him in his community. He is a veteran, he is a retired doctor, he has wealth and family and friends. He lived the American dream of growing up in a poor farmer's family, destined to be a poor farmer himself, and then, through hard work and the GI bill he became a well-respected doctor. Pulled himself up by his bootstraps. Now he's a steadfast Republican. Even voted for Bush. Tax returns and military spending over the environment…technology will save us from ourselves.

"We are a result of our history," said Ortiz. Yes, we are a result of our history, spoken or unspoken. We are a result of our history even if we do not know the full truth of our history. Because there is something that I have come to learn since coming out west and learning to listen to the land: history is alive and well in the land, in the sky, in our genetic memory. I believe that my genes know what my ancestors have done: past love as well as fear and destruction is recorded there in my DNA along with my hair color, skin color, eye color. I also believe that the land remembers and tells the stories of what it saw in whispers: the rustle of leaves, the wind on the water- it is all there. I don't remember smashing skulls of babies. I don't remember raping young women with children at their sides. But that violence is remembered by my fingers that tingle as I walk across open desert and feel some strange stirring within.

My grandfather has never spoken to me of the violence of war but I see the fear on his face as he adverts his eyes from the violence on the television screen and leaves the room. He hates television. I hate television too. And violence. I am my grandfather's granddaughter. I have inherited his blue eyes and smile and his memories lie within me too, I know. It is not enough for me to cherish the history that we are proud of as Americans. If I am to be whole and balanced I need to confront the fear and violence that is also a part of my history. I need to look at it long and hard, memorize it until I am sure that I will never commit the same mistakes…and them memorize it some more.

As a nation we are as good at forgetting as we are remembering. And so the violence continues unabated, though we've designed ways to further remove ourselves from it, to forget that it is happening even as it is happening. When will the violence stop? When we stop and read the writing in the leaves.

Jenny L. Eck

2)

bleeding ground, this ground

bloody stump of warrior foot
red gush

into mesa ground
corn field, potato, old man tomato

tomato feet know river trail
eight miles to visit blood
family
blood tie pulls blind to blood

blood of my own buried too
in this bleeding ground
buried with bloody hands
bloody hands which baptized

baptized Simon Ortiz
to wash away the memory
of bloody stump of warrior foot
red gush into mesa ground

bleeding ground, this ground

Shasta Grenier

3)

Numb

There is a glass ball resting in the back of my throat
I cough to clear my airway
without shattering it into hundreds of pieces
I look down at my feet
for reassurance that I am still grounded
grass that is alive
weaving in and out of my toes
wind bending the tall strands over the contours of my feet
struggling to surrender to the earth
blades showing me a different shade of green
a side that even the sun has previously never been exposed to
it tricks the eye into perceiving a slivering snake
with scales as variable as the changing shades of the ocean
swaying back and forth in a wind that I can't feel
I know it is right there in front of me
I am watching it brushing up against my skin
but the glass bubble around me has numbed my sense of touch
all I can feel is the smooth cold feeling of aged sea glass
as if my ball has been floating in and out of the tide for years
it is no longer in my throat
but all around me
like a film of smoke

that you can see lingering around your head
I put my hand through the layers
touching nothing.

Nina Kahm

4)

"Refusing My Guilt…"

I am sitting outside on my lawn in the lower Rattlesnake. It is far too nice outside to go in and write on my computer. I feel sorry for those w/office jobs who don't feel they have a choice. My cat Frannie runs around chasing butterflies. I wonder about the history of the place where I am sitting. Right now it is green grass, fragmented by small rock gardens that grow iris. A white picket fence surrounds me and separates me from the rest of my neighborhood. It was not always this way. One hundred years ago I suppose there were a few scattered farms here. Two hundred years ago I imagine there were native people living here. Maybe trading here or picking bitterroot. Maybe they hunted deer and elk that came down from the mountain sides. Tribes moved in and out through the nearby canyon and were sometimes killed by warrior tribes.

Today sitting in this sunshine I do not feel so guilty. Clearly there was unending pain and suffering and what this country did was wrong and inexcusable. We are still doing these inexcusable things today which is why I can sit here so calmly in the sunshine in my nice American picket fence house. But today I do not feel so guilty. Nor do I feel responsible. It's too much to feel this way everyday. I could be crushed by these feelings if I let myself. My ancestors came to this country after some of those things happened. They didn't hold slaves, they didn't kill Indians. My whiteness doesn't make me responsible. There are things that I am responsible for. I am guilty of buying cheap clothes that some child made for me in some factory in conditions no child should be subjected to. We are all responsible in some way for the suffering of others…people and creatures and plants. Suffering is natural and unavoidable. I will always try to eliminate suffering where I can. I will always try to fight the empire and "creepy" institutions. I will try to be the best person I know how to be. Unfortunately I do not know the effects of my every action.

Guilt is a useless feeling. I accomplish nothing and today I refuse to be guilty.

Erin Altemus

5)

You can escape people quite easily. You can escape designated campsites as well. You have to look a little harder to escape trail signs and markers, but it can be readily done. City light and interstate noises are harder than ever to remove but it can still be done with legwork. It is ironic to me that one can run away from human impacts on the land however rare it is to find yourself someplace that has never been visited before. Funny, that with all the torture we have put our earth through, and all the time and energy we spend protecting it, we can still separate ourselves from its scars if we need to.

But no matter where you run or hide yourself away the sky is always above you. And we have lost our sky. Flight is no longer a mystery. Birds no longer awed. Places, which are conquered, are no longer sacred. While sleeping up in a ledged wall of sandstone carved by ghostly water I watched through the night as the earth rolled through the stars. I was disappointed to see a satellite keeping straight in its orbit though the wonder of the night sky. I guess this is nothing new, but its obscenity is yet to fade. The satellite, however, is just a side note…an after thought to the fucking brutal rape of our blue skies. There is a constant assassination of the very thing that the desert, and other wild worlds, provide. In very few places I have been does the sky appear so close at hand (the middle of big lakes too). The sky

is a part of this place, not as a separate world which you look up at with lost breath, for they are one, and in no place is that more evident than here in the center of the desert. There are no abrupt horizons to cut lines in the sky where you can point to one or the other as earth or sky. If there is a horizon close at hand, the vastness of this place, it's open without end presence, lends not a feeling of a wall or barrier but rather just a place where the red earth was left tall and just over the other side the sky and earth roll back down together and on again somewhere far away. You don't breathe in air or take breaths here, for nothing is yours to take. Instead, you draw in the sky from the winds that blow over us all. All one. The sky is the music and the light of an otherwise silent, dim world. The welcoming of the sun and its goodbye to night throws colors which run through the horizon with colors that swing from the sun in the rock crawling to your feet. One light. So when airplanes rumple their awkward straight lines of smoke and noise, it does not just remain where they fly. It streaks straight down and shakes the red earth where I stand and sky through which I breathe.

Brian Huntington