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Author

Dunn, Carolyn

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The same is true with Chaco Canyon, where Meunch follows traditional formats of ruin layouts and late afternoon light, long shadows, and rich orange-red color; Current, on the other hand, focuses on details of the stonework, taking interest in texture, lightplays, and dynamic composition that comes with a very skilled use of black-and-white media. Although some shots seem dark at first, my eye picks out the faintest line of light that traces a far wall, giving the forefront depth. Suddenly, what first appeared as a flat wall with a dark curve behind it becomes a rounded wall by a tiny rim of stones catching the light.

Aside from Porter's two published photos of Anasazi architecture, Current far outdistanced the other photographers in his class. His work is well complemented by the masterful poetic writing of Jeffery Cook, whose words I found akin to my own interpretation and experience of these places. This book is a loyal representation of the Anasazi, their dwellings, and their landscape, and a sensitive portrayal of their relationship to their environment. William Current's photographic vision successfully captures the lure, the mystery, and the austere qualities of the Anasazi.

Carol Patterson Rudolph
Columbia Pacific University

Baptism of Desire. By Louise Erdrich. New York: HarperCollins Pubs., Inc., 1991. 96 pages. \$16.95 cloth; \$8.95 paper.

When classifying American Indian literature, literary critics seek to define just what is distinctly Indian about these writers. Most of the writers today come from varied tribal and nontribal backgrounds, so it is difficult to categorize Indian writers under that simple heading: Indian. Male writers tend to explore themes of ritualistic death and rebirth through a communion within the community; female writers tend to look outward in terms of the whole community, centering on female cyclical rituals of rebirth/death/regeneration and survival of their future generations. Broad themes of anger and isolation are common threads in the work of both male and female writers. But these questions arise: Is there a division between writers of nontribal background and those of tribal background? Does the idea of a

"genetic memory" take hold? Are writers from a tribal background describing the same experiences—myth, ritual, ceremony—as writers from a nontribal or nontraditional background?

Contemporary American Indian writers such as Louise Erdrich, Paula Gunn Allen, and Joy Harjo are addressing these questions—acknowledging their traditional tribal heritages as well as their non-Indian backgrounds and creating a new area in American Indian literary studies. What may be seen on the surface as distinctly "Indian" is actually a conglomeration of cultures that comprise the individual. The communal knowledge from each living, breathing heritage makes up the components of what Indian writing is; that, in itself, is a tribal concept. Indian writers take all of their cultures and articulate them as one idea, one concept—the self. One can be Indian, one can be white, one can be Catholic, one can be Black. It is not just one aspect of our lives that we are exploring but many aspects. In recognizing this multiplicity, we recognize our identity.

Louise Erdrich is a mixed-blood poet and novelist who is conscious of all of her traditions: French, German, Roman Catholic, Turtle Mountain Chippewa. Erdrich's first collection of poems, *Jacklight* (Holt, Reinhart and Wilson, 1984), demonstrated the author's penchant for telling a good story. In *Baptism of Desire*, we get not only the stories last shared in *Jacklight* but a glimpse of the storyteller herself.

In her novels, *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, and *Tracks*, Erdrich addresses all aspects of her mixed-blood heritage. In *Baptism of Desire*, she has done this once again, not in a novel but in a collection of poems aimed at gaining some understanding of life within diverse cultures. Erdrich is a mixed-blood, telling stories from a mixed-blood point of view or acting as a signifier or trickster character, an individual whose work speaks with layers of meaning while commenting on the situation at hand. All of Erdrich's work shows her skill at observation—examining her cultures and telling the stories these cultures have created in her. In *Baptism of Desire*, the reader is able to see all aspects of Erdrich: the writer, the poet, the storyteller, the Chippewa, the French, the German, the trickster.

Part 1 addresses the Catholic aspect of Erdrich's background; part 2 deals with the German-French side of her character; part 3 examines the female/mythological relationship; part 4 is her Indian self; and part 5 is the self-reflexive, the wife and mother, the

private Louise Erdrich she has so completely guarded the world against—until now.

Erdrich's pregnancies and her experience of motherhood are the topics she addresses in the poems contained in part 5. In "The Fence," she likens the vines moving up the fence in her garden to the child residing within her body:

the freeze of the vines, and then the small body
spread before me in need
drinking light from the shifting wall of my body,
and the fingers, tiny stems wavering to mine
flexing for the ascent.

The beautiful and complex ascent of vines speaks to Erdrich of the impending birth of her child. Life moves around and within her; watching the garden is like watching her body take on the ripeness of motherhood. The other poems in this section give insight into the home life of Erdrich, her husband Michael Dorris, and their five children. Home for Erdrich is husband, children, comfort in family ties. Her son's rites of passage, the garden's spring yield, and her daughter's dreams comprise her home life. Erdrich examines the connection between all life—plant, animal, human; all are one.

The son must come of age
in the margins and hem
of his mother's cloak.
It is spread over three dark meadows
where wind dies.

In "Wild Plums," Erdrich writes of her son's exuberance for life. As a mother, she recognizes her limits, understands that she does not provide all for her children. She knows that the land takes over where the mother stops:

The roots of cattail, daylillies,
the dandelion's sawtooth leaves,
the bitterness boiled from the unopened flowers
of the milkweed.
Even she cannot claim to have provided this.
He eats everything in front of him.
There is never enough.
Fistfuls and mouthfuls of the wild red plums.

Two characters from Erdrich's German heritage speak of the desperation that clouds their lives. "Mary Kroger" and "Poor Clare" are victims of negative Western views of sexuality and motherhood. "Poor Clare" seeks the comfort of men, Erdrich says, because she had no father:

A soft girl, heavy in the hips, with weak
blue lashless eyes and curdled cream for skin,
she altered herself for each occasion.
She wasn't bad, just dull, and much too eager
for a man's touch as she had no father.
At night, her mother nailed the door,
but Clare hid rope and swung down from the eaves
and met men there, so some of us believe.

While "Poor Clare" drowns the child she has borne in shame, Mary Kroger laments her own sterility:

I had my nerve, my shackles, and those dreams
that killed me with their vehemence and him,
who lit red votive candles for my womb,
but I was barren that way, it's just one
way to be empty, Otto, one
and I'd thrive a scheming mind
good with numbers.

In addressing the Catholic aspect of her heritage, Erdrich utilizes familiar stories of saints to express her rage at the church—a rage undoubtedly founded on the church's hand in the Allotment Act and on its mission system among the Chippewa. Erdrich's Teresa of Avila, Mary Magdalene, and Saint Clare embody both sacred and profane aspects of Catholic traditions. In "Saint Clare," she addresses sexism in the church:

... so we slept
and woke to find our bodies arching into bloom.
It happened to me first,
the stain on the linen, the ceremonial
seal which was Eve's fault.

Just as Saint Clare embodies the archetypal virgin for many in the Catholic tradition, Mary Magdalene occupies the throne of the whore. Erdrich's Mary Magdalene speaks of the darker side of

women's sexuality, the use and abuse of women by men, as sanctified by the church:

I cut off my hair and toss it across your pillow.
A dark towel
like the one after sex.
I'm walking out,
my face a dustpan,
my body stiff as a new broom.

I will drive boys
to smash empty bottles on their brows.
I will pull them right out of their skins.
It is the old way that girls
get even with their fathers—
by wrecking their bodies on other men.

Erdrich addresses the Indian part of her self in the stories of Old Man Potchikoo and his Catholic wife, Josette. Potchikoo is a trickster figure, transcending death and defying Saint Peter. For that matter, Potchikoo also defies heaven, hell, and the Mormons. The stories Erdrich tells in part 4, collectively entitled "Potchikoo's Life after Death," describe just that:

After Old Man Potchikoo died, the people had a funeral for his poor crushed body, and everyone felt sorry for the things they had said while he was alive. Josette went home and set some bread for him by the door for him to take on his journey to the next world.

Potchikoo has many adventures in the afterlife, visiting both the Indians' heaven and the white people's heaven (where he meets Saint Peter and a busload of Mormons). In the white people's hell, Potchikoo discovers that hell is full of people chained to the Sears catalogue:

They were chained, hand and foot and even by the neck, to old Sears Roebuck catalogues. Around and around the huge warehouse they dragged heavy paper books mumbling, collapsing from time to time to flip through the pages. Each person was bound to five or six, bent low beneath the weight. Potchikoo had always wondered where old Sears catalogues went, and now he knew the devil gathered them, that they were instruments of torture.

Potchikoo's adventures continue. He has relations with Josette, and, soon afterward, his evil twin takes over his body and wreaks havoc all around. Erdrich treats Potchikoo's stories with reverence, respect, and responsibility, but also with the humor that is characteristic of her writing. Her responsibility is that of the consummate storyteller, a woman who both respects and reveres her traditions—all of them. Through her telling of the stories of her people, these traditions remain alive.

In the last poem of the collection, "The Ritual," Erdrich writes,

In the tremor of the long, receding footsteps
we awaken. The day is ordinary
sunlight fans across the ceiling.

There is nothing ordinary in Erdrich's worlds, in the characters she creates, or in their stories. In these stories, traditions continue; they live, they breathe, they can even be dangerous—in the sense that when one hears the stories, one is changed. The ordinary and the extraordinary are woven into one seamless whole. That is Erdrich's talent, her shining monument to the cultures she embodies.

Carolyn Dunn

Big Eyes: The Southwestern Photographs of Simeon Schwemberger, 1902–1908. By Paul V. Long, with an essay by Michele M. Penhall. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1992. 204 pages. \$32.50 cloth.

Riding on the tide of interest created by the mass popularity of Edward S. Curtis's evocative turn-of-the-century images of North American Indians are a growing number of picture books and a heartening number of substantial scholarly monographs on less familiar photographers of the Indians. Simeon Schwemberger is a case in point.

Born in 1867, Schwemberger became a Franciscan brother and left Cincinnati for the mission at St. Michaels, Arizona, on the Navajo Reservation in 1901. With his superior's blessing, he took up photography as a hobby, and the Navajo named him Big Eyes, presumably in reference to his omnipresent camera. In 1908, Schwemberger left the Franciscan order and struck out on his