Assignment 3:7 Hyper-Linking Green Grass Running Water.



The purpose of this assignment was to hyperlink a chosen section from Green Grass Running Water, for this task I have chosen pages 101-114.

I chose this section as it best represented the two distinct narrative aspects utilized in this book. It begins with a series of short chapters all pertaining to the repeated attempts to share First Nations origins stories with a twist. This particular section involves where Ishmael adds the falling of Changing Woman into Noah’s arc, although Noah is not named, which differs from the tradition of Changing Woman landing on a turtle’s back. This is yet another exchange where King is challenging the conflict between First Nations beliefs and the imposing Christian equivalents. The scene than shifts to the Dead Dog Café that is relevant solely by its name. There are some accounts from settlers and American generals, most notably general George Custer, that First Nations peoples were known to eat their dogs. It should be noted here that in Custer’s accounts this act is attributed to desperation, as there was a major food shortage among the First Nations peoples he encountered. This passage shows many good examples of the interplay between past and present, and the references that he uses to tie his characters and storylines together.

Characters:

**Lone Ranger:**

The [Lone Ranger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lone_Ranger) is a fictional character that was made famous through his original appearance on radio broadcasts in the 1930’s. From here the legend only grew, and the story of this fictional Texas Ranger was adopted in the genre of film in the 1950’s. Significant here is the Lone Ranger’s Indian sidekick Tonto. *In Green Grass Running Water* (GGRW) King has Changing Woman playing the role of the Lone Ranger. On numerous occasions she escapes the prison in Florida by donning her Lone Ranger mask and walking out the front door. There is irony in the fact that King has chosen to adorn Changing Woman in the mask of a hero was said to be a Texas Ranger, a group that was designed to police the frontier, in many cases they came in direct conflict with various American Indian groups. His presence in the book also draws reference to a photo shoot that King was involved with where he dressed First Nations peoples in Lone Ranger masks.

**Hawkeye:**

Hawkeye was yet another reference that King was making to famous European pioneers who had some involvement with American Indians. His real name was Clyde Hopkins, and he was most notable for his aptitude when it came to being a woodsman, and his knowledge of the “Indian” ways. I find it interesting that King ties the four ‘Old Indians’ together by naming them after four non-First Nations characters. Besides Hawkeye and the Lone Ranger, Ishmael and Robinson Crusoe were the other two that will be explored later in this blog. It is almost as if King is reasserting the importance of First Nations people by imposing the names of “white” heroes upon the four pivotal characters in his book.

**Robinson Crusoe:**

The third character we are introduced to in this section is [**Robinson Crusoe**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robinson_Crusoe). This of course is a direct reference to the character made famous in Daniel Dafoe’s early 18th century work. Crusoe, the character in the novel, is constantly being mocked for his attention to detail and his penchant for making lists. I believe this is a critique to the systematic methods used in North America to divide and conquer this continent’s original inhabitants. The plotting of land, and in general the premise of land ownership, juxtaposes the traditional practices and beliefs of the First Nations peoples North America wide.

**Ishmael:**

The fourth of the old Indians was named Ishmael, his name being a direct reference to the biblical character and the narrator in Melville’s *Moby Dick.* Notable here is that Ishmael tells of the adapted legend in which Changing Woman lands in Noah’s ark. I think the use of Ishmael, particularly in his nautical capacity in Moby Dick, is a smart choice for this particular aspect of the novel. Even more appropriate is the mockery of the Christian legends and beliefs surrounding the Ark, that appear later in the novel as Ishmael continues his tale.

**Coyote:**

[Coyote](https://www.aboriginalbc.com/blog/meet-coyote-an-aboriginal-legend) is a character that we have become quite familiar with in this course, and I find him to be one of the most interesting characters in this novel. Coyote is a trickster who plays a prevalent role in many First Nations’ mythologies. He is often portrayed as devious or cunning, constantly creating havoc, but always there for important events. In this novel he represents the ties between the past and modern traditions. He is viewed in many First Nations mythologies, specifically the Cherokee, as having belonged to an ancient mythical race of human beings. He is said to have been there at the beginning of the world. King also makes this claim, but takes it further by stating that Coyote was indeed there, but he was in the middle of a dream where he meets Dog, who turns out to be God. In this exchange Coyote tries to make sense of Dog’s claims of wanting to be a big dog, ultimately poking fun at the Christian notion of superiority over groups and belief structures.

**Changing Woman (First Woman)**

[**Changing Woman**](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma97/dinetah/change2.html)is a common figure in many First Nations creation stories; she is believed by the Seneca to have fallen from the sky and landed on a turtle’s back. This led to the creation of Turtle Island, and the subsequent creation of the earth. In this novel she is placed in the mythical Genesis story that King presents. She is credited with the creation of the First Garden, and seems to pay little mind to God who pursues her while attempting to prevent her from eating the fruit in the garden during his vain attempts to evict her. Similar to the Genesis story, she is there with her partner, the first man, who is referred to in a more phonetic spelling of his name, Adahmn.

**Adahmn:**

Adahmn is present in the first Garden with Changing Woman, and subsequently plays a similar role in King’s work to that of his role in Genesis. I also think that King is having some fin with his audience in the spelling of Adahmn’s name, primarily because the pinnacle of this story is the destruction of the dam.

**Dead Dog Cafe:**

The [**Dead Dog Cafe**](https://socialistaction.ca/tag/dead-dog-cafe/)is yet another one of King’s jokes. On the surface the name of the restaurant is making fun of the belief that the Blackfoot people commonly ate their dogs. As earlier stated, I believe that this myth came from quotes by General George Custer who witnessed American Indians have to resort to eating dogs when food was scarce. Flick also believes this to be a play on Nietzsche’s belief that god was dead, which also ties into the ongoing struggle between First Nations and Christian ideologies and practices throughout GGRW. The Dead Dog Café is also the name of a long-running comedy show on the CBC that King was known for.

**Eli Stand Alone:**

Eli Stand Alone is the man who left his reserve to pursue life in a Canadian, non-traditional, manner. He left the reserve and moved to Toronto to complete his education, became a professor, and upon his retirement chose to return to his mother’s cabin. In doing so he defied the government by refusing to leave his house, which was the only obstacle blocking the completing of the aforementioned dam? Flick also believes that he is based on [Elijah Harper](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/elijah-harper/), the man who singlehandedly blocked the ratification of the Meech Lake Accord by refusing to sign it. He represents the longevity of First Nations culture, and shows his strength via his passive resistance to the expansion of Western ways and the encroachment onto First Nations territories.

**Clifford Sifton:**

Sir [Clifford Sifton](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sir-clifford-sifton/) was a major proponent of Western settlement, and in this novel the perfect foil to Eli Stands Alone. The real-life Clifford Sifton served as the Minister of Indian Affairs under Wilfred Laurier (1896), and he wholeheartedly championed the settlement of First Nations peoples in reserves, and of pioneers in the west. Another level of irony that King presents in GGRW is the running dialogue, and frequent conversations, between Eli and Sifton. In real life Sifton was deaf, making the causal, and constant, conversations between the two men quite preposterous.

**General Notes:**

A repetitive theme in GGRW, as well as many other of Kings works, is the fluidity of First Nations belief structures; which he repetitively juxtaposes against the rigid Christian belief structure. As this article in the Encyclopedia [**Britannica**](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Native-American-religion)explains the belief structures of North America’s First Nations groups was not only fluid, but also regionally diverse. This aspect would make the understanding and the acceptance of the more rigid Christian ideals even more unintelligible to First Nations peoples.

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