to a wide range of information from the New World and plenty of opportunity to talk to persons who have been there. He had a passion for collecting information; indeed, he has been described by one unsympathetic scholar as a "bustling journalist." Much of his information on the Amerindian chiefs, for example, seems to have come from second-hand sources, both oral and written. Inclined as he was to boast about himself, when it came to his subject matter, he had a high respect for authenticity. The test of time has demonstrated that on the whole he used his information well.

Even more important than Thevet's writing is his use of illustration. As Schlesinger points out, his *Les singularitez de la France Antarctique* (Paris, 1577) was the first French book about the New World to be illustrated; it has been described as one of the most beautiful of sixteenth-century French publications. Some see the engravings that illustrate *Vrais pourtraits* as more important than the text. Not only are they generally accurate (Thevet went to great pains on this), but they have preserved iconographic data that would have been lost otherwise. Thevet could claim with justice that these portraits did much to popularize the new technique of copper-plate engraving. They were the culmination of his life-long interest in book illustration.

In contributing to the ongoing assessment of Thevet, this work also provides a sixteenth-century look at how Europeans saw themselves, and how at least one contemporary regarded persons from other regions and civilizations. As such, it contributes to a greater understanding of the European reaction to the New World and its adaptions to new realities.

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Raven's Song: A Novel. By Lee Maracle. Vancouver, British Columbia: Press Gang Publishers, 1992. 199 pages. $12.95 (Canadian) paper.

Lee Maracle is a feminist philosopher of aboriginal descent who lives in Vancouver. Her work reflects all of these elements. Although her first book was published in 1976, Maracle's best work has appeared since 1990. She has produced an autobiography, poetry, short stories, and a philosophical essay. *Raven's Song* is her first novel.

To understand what Maracle is trying to accomplish in *Raven's Song* it is necessary to look at her earlier writings, in particular the essay entitled "Oratory: Coming to Theory" (*Gallerie: Women Artists.* Women Artists' Monographs, 1990). Maracle states, "Words are not objects to be wasted. They represent the accumulated knowledge, cultural values, the vision of an entire people or peoples." She then describes how her people learn to understand the world. Stories told by elders are given to younger people. How the recipient uses the story is up to her.

Maracle's use of this theory is best illustrated by her short stories. *Sojourner's Truth and Other Stories,* for example, deals with the condition of aboriginal people living in Canada at the end of the twentieth century. The stories are well crafted, focused, and honest, often bitterly so. Words are definitely not wasted. At the same time, it is up to the reader to make the stories a part of his or her personal knowledge, and to act accordingly.

Raven's Song is subtitled "a novel," but at only 199 pages, it strongly reflects Maracle's philosophy. She seems to thrive on the discipline of brevity. It is tempting to compare Maracle's style to that of Linda Hogan, another first-time aboriginal novelist, author of *Mean Spirit.* Both women have extensive literary backgrounds and both are concerned with the nature of cross-cultural conflict. Hogan has chosen to write about the larger picture. *Mean Spirit* is the story of what happens when a government chooses to exploit what it should be protecting. It is a cultural clash on a national scale if one believes that Indian peoples are nations, not merely bands or tribes. Maracle, however, is concerned with the growth of a young woman learning to survive in two different worlds. She deals with cultural clash at a more intimate level.

In spite of its brevity the plot, of *Raven's Song* is detailed and complex. It tells the story of an Indian community on the west coast of Canada in 1954. The protagonist is Stacey, a young woman in her last year of high school, who has plans to attend the University of British Columbia. She dreams of becoming a teacher and returning to her village to set up a school. (The idea of a native-run community school is only now becoming a reality in Canada.) During that summer, a flu epidemic and a drought hit the community, killing the weak, both elders and babies. The catastrophes leave the villagers poorer than ever and demoralized because each of the dead had a specific role in the community. It is impossible to replace them.

At the same time, the mores of the mainstream society have begun to infiltrate and influence the native community, to the latter's detriment. Wife and child abuse have occurred on the reserve for the first time. Food gathering and preparation techniques have begun to disappear, along with traditional cultural values. Meanwhile, in "white town," a girl from Stacey's school has committed suicide, her "best white" friend's parents have decided to divorce, and Stacey is considering a romance with a white boy.

The most intriguing aspect of the story is Maracle's ironic use of stereotyping. The conventions are all backwards. The community we thought we knew is a series of anachronistic images. The reader is constantly reminding herself that this is supposed to be 1954. Carol, the girl whose parents divorce, has a telephone extension in her room. In 1954? Carol's mother puts the weeds from her garden into plastic garbage bags. In 1954? Is Maracle telling the reader that this does not matter? These people seem to be leading lives that are impossible for any thinking individual of Stacey's culture to understand, and, anyway, why would anyone want to do a great deal of research on people who are not central to the story? At the same time, Maracle's portrayal of the individuals living on the reserve is loving and complete.

A sad corollary to this is the fact that it is difficult to find out anything about a flu epidemic in 1954. Is this because the people most affected were native and poor and not central to the lives or thoughts of the mainstream community?

Raven's Song is a first novel, and, in spite of Maracle's tremendous storytelling talent, there are some problems with it. Stacey's militant feminism is jarring at times, because of her youth and her naïveté about life away from the reserve. In addition, it is inconsistent with the novel's timeframe. Stacey's attitude might have been more believable if her feminism were portrayed as a growing thing rather than a starting point.

Another problem is Maracle's use of mythical characters. Raven and Cedar seem to be an afterthought. Their characters are not as central to the story as they should be. Also, Stacey's younger sister, Celia, who acts as the link between Raven and Cedar and the day-to-day world, is often shadowy. She should be much better developed. The novel would have been more satisfying if all three characters were better integrated.

Lee Maracle is an author with a future. Her work is appearing on women's studies and Canadian literature reading lists

as well as in native studies. Her talents lie in presenting clear, focused stories. Indeed native studies instructors such as Janice Acoose believe that, because of writers such as Maracle, "white Canadians are finally going to know us."

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The Red Record: The Wallam Olum, the Oldest Native North American History. Translated and annotated by David McCutchen. Garden City Park, New York: Avery Publishing Group, 1993. $14.95 paper.

What can I say? Here is a book endorsed by a Delaware tribal council, with a foreword by Linda Poolaw, respected leader, and quotes from various Lenape elders. Here is also a book done with naïve but good intentions, but no scholarly authority. Maybe it would be best to say that all of my elders agreed, when I asked about the authenticity of the *Wallam Olum*, that it was "*nuchkway*, worthless and of no account." Even the elders quoted as saying that this text was like the Delaware Bible never actually thought so but were trying to be nice to an earnest visitor.

Still, a lot of work and graphic design went into this book. It is very pretty and will, no doubt, be bought by many romantics and used in many classrooms. It needs, therefore, serious evaluation.

Part of the problem with this text is its history. We know that bark or wood slabs decorated with images were collected from Delaware living in Indiana in 1820 by a Dr. Ward. He gave them to Constantine Rafinesque, a prodigy with a wide range of interests, from careful scientific botany, to wild claims about his findings, to the sale of various snake oil medicines. At that period, Rafinesque was the most distinguished scholar on the frontier, serving as professor of botany, natural history, and modern languages at Transylvania University in Kentucky.

The Delaware were just leaving Indiana at this time, and at least two Dr. Wards went through the region. One was the botanist John Russell Ward, and the other was the physician Malthus Ward. Rafinesque was intrigued by the gift of the slabs and pursued various lines of research, including a letter to the *Cherokee Phoenix* and a quest for a Delaware speaker who could provide words for the emblems. Terms were eventually attached to the designs on