

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Red Earth, White Earth. By Will Weaver.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0vq0k3hc>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 10(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

1986-06-01

DOI

10.17953

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Wiget is most convincing in his own arguments while still allowing other approaches and interpretations. Wiget himself continually stresses that language and place are complementary themes in conjunction with politics in all of Ortiz's writing in varying degrees. All literature—and certainly all literature which deals with the racial and economic exploitation and displacements of the American West is, perhaps, ultimately "political." And Ortiz, as a "Western" writer of the present but paradoxically earliest kind goes far to demonstrate this.

Wiget contends that whatever protest Ortiz wages in his poetry is really an affirmation of a more original and ideal America, and a more ideal American West—old and new—free of Red/White, man/woman, human/environmental and other antagonisms—a place envisioned in the beginning and somehow yet to be realized. That is both the regional and the aesthetic significance of Ortiz as yet another name in the ongoing series of "Western Writers."

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Red Earth, White Earth. By Will Weaver. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986. 383 pages. Cloth \$17.95.

Red Earth, White Earth is a novel about American Indians that definitely needs to be examined critically because of its current theme, Indian land, and the real struggle going on presently at White Earth Indian Nation in northern Minnesota, about 200 miles from Minneapolis.

Literature should be honest. This criterion has to be used to evaluate the worth of the book. A lot has been written about Indians that misrepresents the truth. For that reason, it is not a problem of reality versus art but of honesty.

There are two main characters in the novel, Guy Pehrsson and Tom Littlewolf. Guy is white and Tom is from White Earth. In the book, we can only see things through Guy's eyes. That is, we can merely see what the narrator, Guy, sees.

The novel literally begins with Guy receiving an urgent letter from his grandfather, Helmer, asking Guy to return to the farm because of an emergency. Guy has been away for twelve years.

Guy had gone to California after a bad business venture on the farm. Even so, he makes a lot of money in California. Guy grew up on the Pehrsson farm on the White Earth Indian Reservation. The Pehrssons are land holders on Indian land. As a boy Tom visited Guy a lot, and they became close friends, growing up together.

In the book, the author tries to describe the tension between the white farmers and the Indians on the reservation. He does this by concentrating on Tom as a fictive character, and his flowering into manhood and, eventually, leader of the resistance at White Earth.

In reality, the problem is that a lot of the White Earth land is being held with illegal or clouded titles. The farmers and the State of Minnesota and the counties of Becker, Clearwater, and Mah-nomen all hold land that has disputed titles. The author uses this actual problem of clouded titles to the land as the basis for his novel. How honest is he with this theme? In real life, the issue is land that has been illegally transferred from White Earth Indians to white people. This illegal expropriation of the land at White Earth has recently gone to the courts with resistance from those White Earth Indians who never want to sell the land. The author has taken this true point in question as a subject matter for his novel and recreates a fictive world—one seen through the eyes of a white character, Guy.

The farmers organize themselves into the United Township Defense League against the Indians who want the land returned to them as the original owners. The story then becomes potentially a strong novel that can be classified as fighting literature. However, it falls short of its potential. For one thing, Tom is a stereotype and prototype of what white people want to see in Indian leaders.

Although there are some good things in the novel, it is difficult to see them ripening. And we are left with guessing. I want to know what actually motivates Tom enough to become a Vietnam War protester in the 1960s and early 1970s, then a lawyer, and finally a leader of the resistance at White Earth. His consciousness about an unjust war, unjust laws, and the clouded titles is explained too easily. Actually, we are told rather than letting us see it emerge. I expected to see what arouses Tom so that he organizes and fights for the land. Tom's consciousness and actions and the question of the land are the pivot of the novel.

This brings us to the question of fairness. Is the author presenting the White Earth land issue justly, or is he exploiting the theme because it is publishable?

In chapter sixteen we are confronted with 1984, the present time in the novel. Tom and Guy are grown men in fictive time. But the remaining chapters barely begin to touch on the land conflict. In these chapters there are some potentially positive and penetrating scenes. Tom becomes the tribal chairman of White Earth and a lawyer. Regardless, in reality no White Earth tribal chairman has fought for the land like Tom does in the book. The un-lifelike, pro-land tribal chairman in the novel does injustice to those who are still struggling to keep the land in the hands of White Earth people. The fictive tribal chairman tries to force the white farmers to return the land and to buy farm land off the reservation. And he tries to give the tribe an economic base, wild rice. He is a dreamer in the novel, and dreamers have a difficult time with reality, according to the author.

The story finishes without any honest solution being worked out for the Indian people. It comes to an end unlike what I expected, leaving me unconvinced of the author's honesty. Remember, stories are important to Indians. The true story is not going to finish the way it does in the novel. In fact, Indian people are still struggling to keep the land up at White Earth for future generations. It seems as if the last few months has brought some quietness to the issue of White Earth. But has it? Even though in real life one of the major leaders against selling the land at White Earth has been jailed, the fight for the land is not over yet. If you go to White Earth, you will see a building that houses the Anishinabe Akeeng, People's Land, office. On the table, there are copies of a 115 page-long class action lawsuit. It is titled "United States District Court for the District of Minnesota." The plaintiffs are White Earth Indians, and the defendants are the United States of America, the United States Department of Interior, the Secretary of the Interior, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, State of Minnesota, Counties of Becker, Clearwater, and Mahnomen, the Commissioner of Revenue, and others.

Turn the pages, and you begin to circle "to recover title" and "possession of allotments" and "unlawfully denied." If you continue to read, you see that the White Earth Band of Mississippi Chippewa Indians are suing because the Treaty of 1855 guaran-

tees protection for the land and exclusive usages by tribal members. The defendants and their predecessors are being accused of taking the land because they "conspired among themselves and other unknown to plaintiffs to defraud, cheat and rob plaintiffs and other White Earth Chippewa Indians of their lands and heritage." The lawsuit points out that there was a violation of the treaties through a conspiracy, and White Earth land was illegally taken.

The 800,000 acres reserved from the original lands and placed in trust has been reduced to 57,000 acres, about seven percent of the original reservation land. The lawsuit also tells of illegal actions and inactions by defendants.

The White Earth Reservation is exempt from taxation and sale. The Treaty of March 19, 1867, set aside 800,000 acres as a permanent reservation for the Indians of the Mississippi Band. It provided that the United States would reserve and preserve their land. But the Acts and Amendments illegally removed all the restrictions on the sale of the land allotted. Thus far, 743,000 acres have been taken from the people at White Earth. There are a number of claims in the lawsuit: Tax Forfeiture, Minor Sales, Probate Without Jurisdiction, Blood Roll Discrepancy, Guardian/ Administrator, Non-Consent, and others.

The issue will always be important because, without a land base, Indian people become like other landless people. The theme of the novel is interesting. However, it does not quite fit into the fighting literature of a people long oppressed and colonized.

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