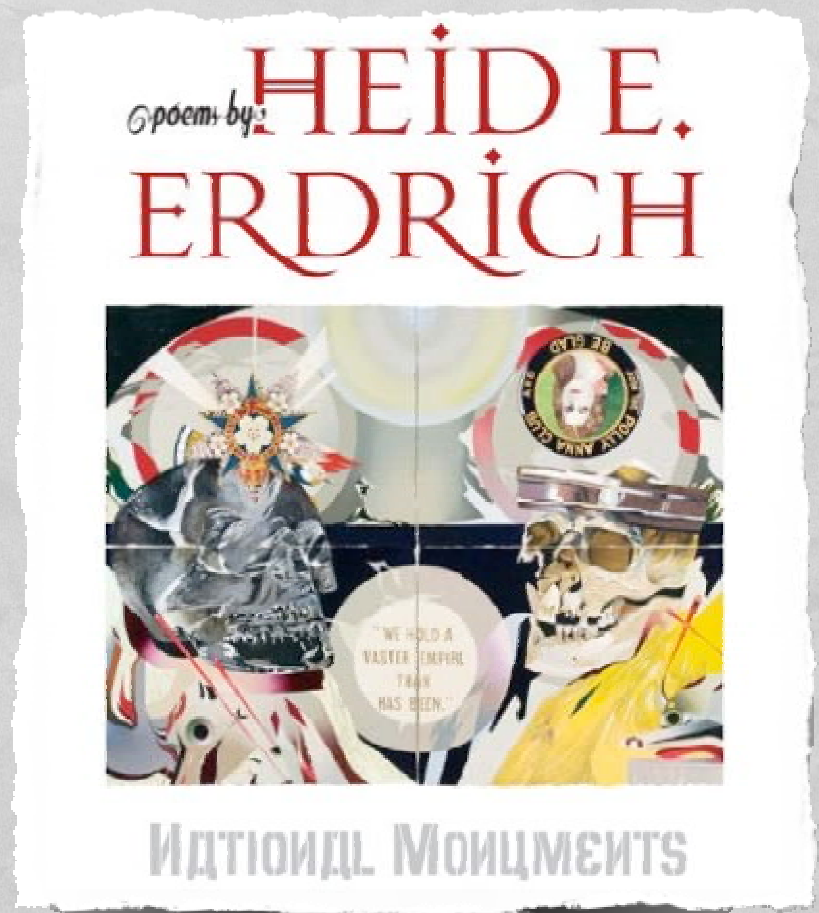


Approaches to Teaching Heid Erdrich's *National monuments*

- presented by
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Studies, UCLA
- Native American
Student Advocacy
Institute, May 23,
2012



Heid E. Erdrich Bio

- Ojibwe (Turtle Mountain Band)
- Degrees from Dartmouth and Johns Hopkins and fellowship from Minnesota Arts Board
- Awards from Loft Literary Center and Archibald Bush foundation
- Minnesota Book Award 2009
- Directs Wiigwas Press - Ojibwe language publisher
- <http://heiderdrich.com/>



PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES: INTRO TO THE TEXT WITH CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- “Grave Markers” / digital postcards
- “American Ghosts” / dialogic journals
- “Discovery - RSS Feed Series” / Webquest

Historical Context of National Monuments

- Antiquities Act, 1906: Theodore Roosevelt declared Devil's Tower a national monument
- Does not need congressional approval
- Only presidential proclamation



“National Monuments”

Low house of rough bark
small enough for a fairy
delights my sight

until its clear it covers a grave
and worse, it's stained deck-red
shingled with asphalt.

Some park official has kept up
what was meant to moss
and rot and fall.

Grave houses, clan-marked;
sturgeon scratched in pine,
simple lines of eagle and marten,

whiskered totems, some on crosses.
Other tribes carve headstones:
Six-Nations' eel flips its infinity of tail ∞

Bear tracks tell complete genealogy,
map land and tongue and history
to crane's stick legs and turtle's shell

Doodem signs, national markers
the body makes by being born,
that speak your only, only name,

your last word etched, kept, engraved.



“Mahto Paha, Bear Butte”

Her blueness
her sleeping back,
curled to offer retreat,
respite from the dry land
surrounding for miles and miles.
Who wouldn't want to pray here?
Offer on the deep green pines and wind.
dream on this dreamer, share her vision -
Or rally up from the interstate on hawgs,
bullying noise like a second cavalry
bound for a biker's paradise.
Talk of tailpipes and chrome might drown
sacred words pines speak with wind -
But who wouldn't want to put their church
here?
To gather and praise at Mahto Paha
cool in the shadow of her curled form,
tucked right under her yawning paw.



“Grand Portage”

Here is the path my people walked
hauling immense trade canoes,
the semi-truck of centuries past.

Here between Great Lake and Great North,
earth curves visibly toward the arctic ice
that now flows in places never open before.

Her guests can hear a natural history
of the beaver, gold standard for
a century of trade from isle to inland.

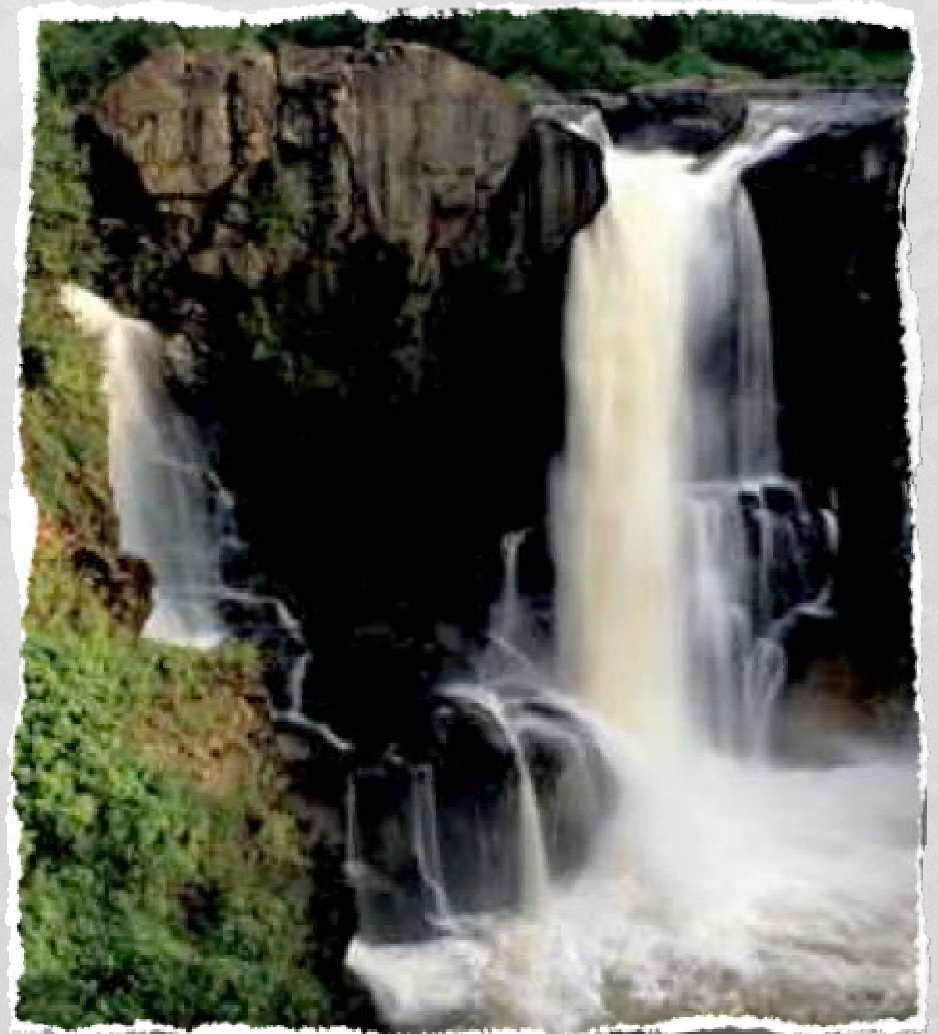
Here re-enactments and regalia
keep history current, preserve trappers’
ways, traders’ wares, all the era conveys.

Here ghostly silver warehouses of bare wood,
a portage path eight and a half miles:
full of meaning, necessary, contested.

Here a National Monument arose by
Presidential declaration to urgently protect
Gitche Onigaming’s place in time.

Here begins North and territories beyond,
where ice opens a passage that, a century past,
would have made this path unnecessary, unprotected.

There the true path, the mark, the monumental.



Activity #1: Digital Postcards

- Go to Google Earth or Google News Archives
- Capture a screen shot
- Juxtapose old pics with contemporary images
- Annotate with text and shapes



“American Ghosts”

The Gift Outright

The land was ours before we were the land's.
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people. She was ours
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,
But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.
Something we were withholding made us weak
Until we found out that it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living,
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become.



Or the land was ours before you were a land.
Or this land was our land, it was not your land.

We were the land before we were people,
loamy roamers rising, so the stories go,
or formed of clay, spit into with breath reeking soul--

What's America, but the legend of Rock 'n' Roll?

Red rocks, blood clots bearing boys, blood sands
swimming being from woman's hands, we originate,
originally, spontaneous as hemorrhage.

Un-possessing of what we still are possessed by,
possessed by what we now no more possess.

We were the land before we were people,
dreamy sunbeams where the sun don't shine, so the stories go,
or pulled up a hole, clawing past ants and roots --

Dineh in documentaries scoff DNA evidence off.
They landed late, but canyons spoke them home.
Nomadic Turkish horse tribes they don't know.

What's America, but the legend of Stop 'n' Go?

Could be cousins, left on the land bridge,
contrary to popular belief, that was a two-way toll.
In any case we'd claim them, give them some place to stay.

Such as we were we gave most things outright
(the deed of the theft was many deeds and leases and claim
stakes
and tenure disputes and moved plat markers stolen still today...)

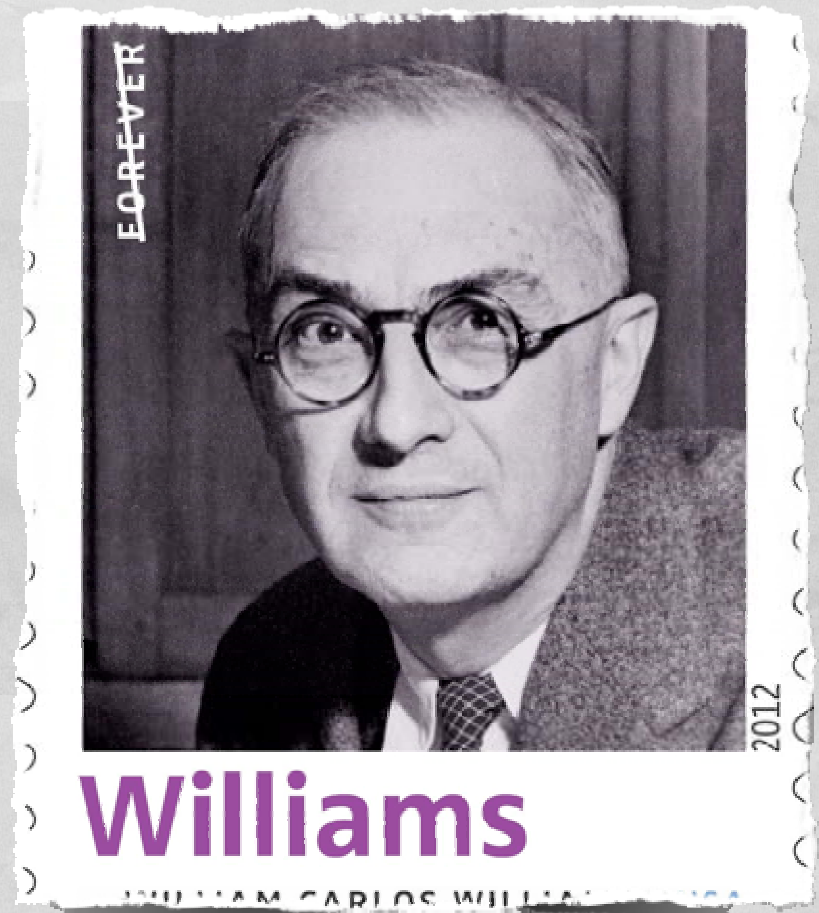
We were the land before we were a people,
earthdivers, her darling mudpuppies, so the stories go,
or emerging, fully forming from flesh of earth--

The land, not the least vaguely, realizing in all four directions,
still storied, art-filled, fully enhanced.
Such as she is, such as she wills us to become.



Monument of Literature: William carlos williams “To Elsie”

- In 2012, USPS offers 20th-century poets as “Forever Stamps”
- [“To Elsie”](#)



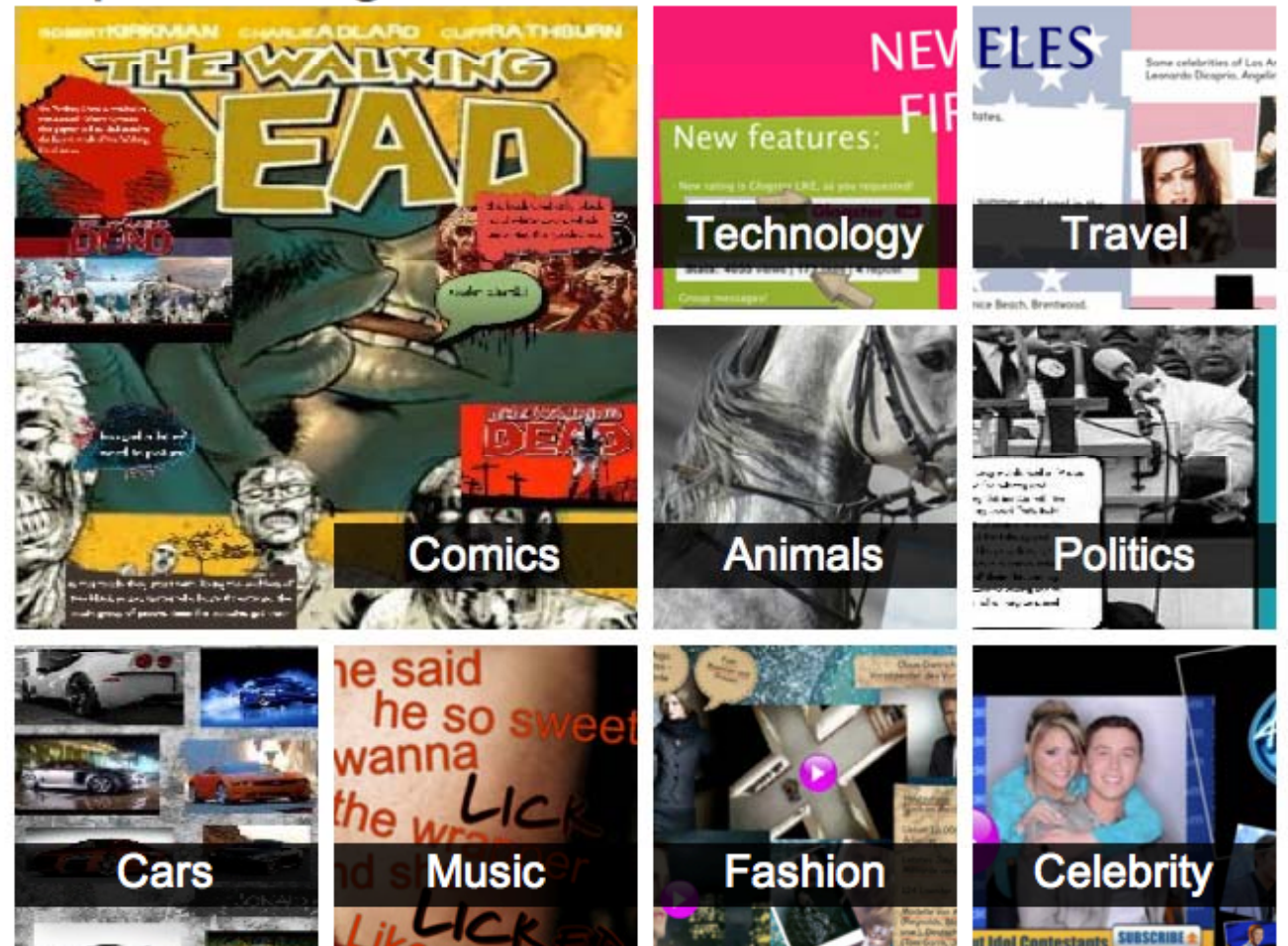
Erdrich's "Elsie" poems

- "Some Elsie"
- "Infinite Progression"
- "Elsie Drops off the Dry Cleaning"

Activity #2: Creative dialogic journaling

- Poetry collage
- [Glogster](#)

Explore Glogster



“DIScovery - An RSS feed series”

- SATIRE OF KENNEWICK MAN/ANCIENT ONE
- “Kennewick Man Tells All”
- “Kennewick Man Swims Laps”
- “Kennewick Man Attempts Cyber-Date”
- SATIRE OF NAGPRA
- “eBay Bones”
- “Guidelines for the treatment of sacred objects”
- “Desecrate”

“Kennewick Man Tells All”

We didn't go digging for this man. He fell out - he was actually a volunteer. I think it would be wrong to stick him back in the ground without waiting to hear the story he has to tell.

--- forensic anthropologist James Chatters in the *New Yorker*, June 16, 1997

Ladies and Gentlemen of the press --

Kennewick Man will now make a brief statement after which he will answer questions as time permits.

I am 9,200 years old

I am bone. I am alone.



"Kennewick man swims laps"

For more than 40 years, the bones of about 12,000 Native Americans have been kept in drawers and cabinets under the swimming pool of the Hearst Gymnasium, next door to the museum.

--- "Berkeley Accused of Racism over Failure to Return Tribal Bones," *Los Angeles Times*,

February 27, 2008

*Aquamarine with navy lines to keep
me in my lane. Lap, lap, lap
again and again until I hear
their watery voices beneath
repeating all I said when dead:*

Peace, peace, peace and sleep.

*A few cry out: Remember me!
But I am older than prayer,
and remember only river talk.*

*Lap, lap, lap, then turn again in aqua *agua*.
I'm used to water, lay dead along
a river's edge nine millennia.*

*But water's here unnatural, vivid.
Still, I am older than religion,
-- gotta keep limber. Lap, lap.*

*Aqua's such an off color,
new to me like rubber, milk,
electricity and jealousy.*

*Tribes and pre-Christian Folk groups
claim my water-logged bones are their own.
So too, the dead under lane seven. Lap.*

*May Day the Morris Dancers, subversive
at sunrise along chilly urban river banks,
shake bells and batons and ribbon bands...*

*Perhaps my kind?
Lap. Turn.
There is no mine.*

*I am older than any name for God,
swimming in the voices of blue-green ghosts,
in a place where color speaks
the way pool water changes shades,
renames itself with every ripple, every wave.*



“Kennewick man attempts cyber-date”

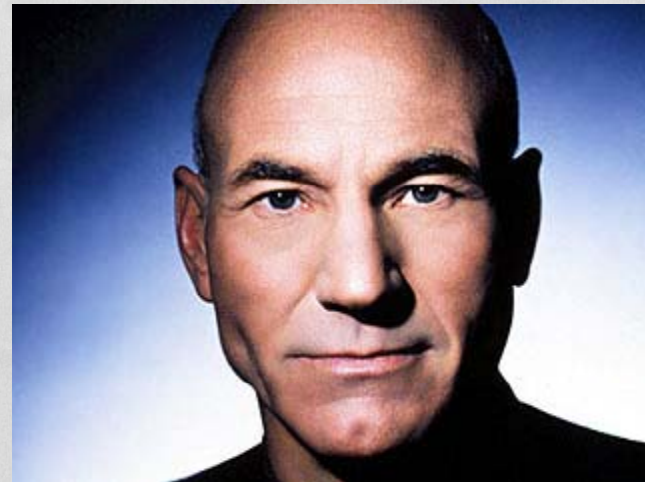
And then, one evening, I turned on the TV and there was Patrick Stewart--
Captain Picard of Star Trek, and I said, “My God, there he is! Kennewick Man!”
--forensic anthropologist James Chatters in the *New Yorker*, June 16,
1997.

So when Cyber-date asks me what I look like,
I’m no liar.

Not like I expect to match a hottie.
Not looking for “Barbie and Kennewick Man”-
-

But to smell a woman’s neck again!

Or just fill in all required fields.
To simply state:
My age
My race
My God.



activity #3: webquest

<http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=88682>

Title

Introduction

Task

Process

Evaluation

Conclusion

Teacher Page

About Author(s)

Evaluate WebQuest

Reviews

Statistics

Export WebQuest

Share This WebQuest

Add To Your WebQuest

New Page

Table/Rubric

Quiz

FAQs

Photo Gallery

Google Map

Game: Hangman

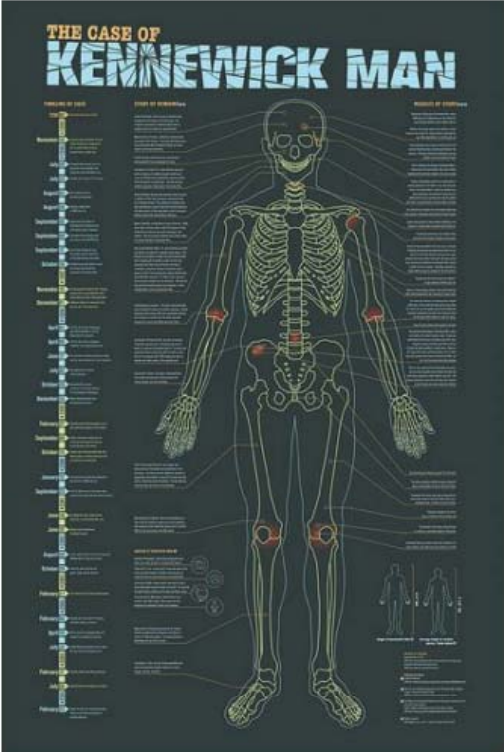
Control Panel

Settings

Publish

Help

* Title: Kennewick Man or Ancient One?



Update Image

Title: Kennewick Man or Ancient One?

Description: Students will explore the controversy surrounding the Kennewick Man/Ancient One.

Grade Level: 9-12

Other Approaches

Approach 1: Ojibwe Specific: “National Monuments,” “Maho Pahta,” “Bear Butte,” “Ghost Keeper,” “Star Blanket Stories,” “Girl of Lightning,” “Goodnight”

Approach 2: American Colonialism in Current Events: “Post-Barbarian,” “Ghost Prisoner,” “Antigone Finds the Fields Grown Full”

Approach 3: Postcolonial Eco-criticism: “Grand Portage,” “Not Seeing Ground Zero in 1995,” “Made in Toyland,” “Butter Maiden and Maize Girl Survive Death Leap,” “Do You Know the Secret of Johnnie’s Cole-Slaw Mix?”, “We Would Not Believe” “Earthbound,” “White Noise Machine”

Approach 4: NAGPRA, “Guidelines for the Treatment of Sacred Objects,” “Desecrate,” “Body Works,” “eBay Bones,” “Kennewick Man Tells All,” “Kennewick Man Swims Laps,” “Kennewick Man Attempts Cyber-Date,” “Nefertiti’s Close-Up,” “Pharaoh’s Hair Returns”

Approach 5: Native Feminist “Black and White Monument,” “Photo Circa 1977,” “Some Elsie,” “Infinite Progression,” “In Search of Jane’s Grave,” “Elsie Drops off the Dry Cleaning”

Approach 6: The New Gothic: “Ghost Prisoner,” “Ghost Keeper,” “Ghost Town,” “Ghost of Love,” “Ghost Nation,” “Ghostly Arms,”