

Weaving the Dream

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There is a story that was told when the White people arrived. The people near what is today Fort Ross in California called the White people a word that translates into “miracles.” I used to ask the old people, “Why do you call White people miracles?”

And they said, “because when they came here and they were chopping down trees and damming the rivers and killing people and killing the animals, instead of them getting punished and things coming back on them, more of them kept coming. And we thought that was miraculous.”

Here is the intersection, if you will, between science and Indigenous ways of thinking. Maybe it just took a little longer, maybe in our case a hundred and fifty or one hundred and seventy or so years, but it has all come back on everybody. There’s not one body of water here that isn’t polluted, there’s not one particle of air that isn’t full of pollutants. There isn’t any place where there isn’t sickness. It’s all come back on us.

And so the question is “How do we deal with or walk in a poisoned taboo Earth? How do we move about here? What do we do?” I asked an old medicine woman that 40 years ago. We were driving in the area around Stanford University, where I was a graduate student.

Later, I wrote a book about her, *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream*. She said, “This is my latest dream.” She was looking at the hills. She said, “Everything’s going to go dry. Everything’s gonna burn up. That’s my dream. That’s coming.” Of course, I was a young man, and we didn’t even have the term climate disaster or climate change at that point.

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