ENG220
Weekly Reading and Writing #3

Monday  Celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr

Wednesday  Sherman Alexie
- Superman and Me
- Listening for Stories, pages 1319 – 1323
- Poetry: pages 1323 – 1328
- Interviews and reviews 1350 – 1356
- The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven pages 23 – 28

Louise Erdrich  The Red Convertible, pages 67 – 74 and Indian Boarding School

“What sets worlds in motion is the interplay of differences, their attractions and repulsions. Life is plurality, death is uniformity. By suppressing differences and peculiarities, by eliminating different civilizations and cultures, progress weakens life and favors death. The ideal of a single civilization for everyone, implicit in the cult of progress and technique, impoverishes and mutilates us. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes a possibility of life.”

Octavio Paz, quoted in Primal Mind

WRITE:  Choose one or a few in combination
- Compare the different approaches to heritage represented by Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, and Sherman Alexie.
- Draw from any of Alexie’s stories and poems (ones in our text, or ones you’ve read on your own) and discuss the new forms Alexie is pioneering. Would you consider his work part of the Native American oral tradition? In what ways? Would you then consider Alexie a storyteller who is borrowing Western literary traditions with a distinctly Native voice to create an emergent form, “recreating the Native American tradition on the page”? Explain in what ways, using specific details from his stories and poems.
- When Alexie was asked what he wanted to see within the ranks of Indian writers today (de Ramirez 1355), he responded in this way: “I want us to write books about the way we live.” Imagine and write about a conversation between Alexie and Silko on this issue.
- Explore and write about the central conflict in Lone Ranger and Tonto. Begin with the reference of the story’s title (between the Lone Ranger, who represents white society, and Tonto, who represents Native American society). But then reflect on the deeper conflict within the narrator himself, between his Native background and the white culture he has chosen to enter.
- Write about the voices in The Red Convertible (Henry’s and Lyman’s) and the borders (like the borders which were crossed when Henry moved from the Native American culture to the culture of the U.S. Marine Corps. Would you consider this a story that illustrates a clash or one that illustrates a cultural border crossing?

FORMAT: one full page, single-spaced, a thoughtful and thorough response