

Recommended Reading / Movie List:

General Reading:

Three Cups of Tea (Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin)

Greg Mortenson's inspiring account of one man's campaign to build schools, especially for girls, in not only the most dangerous, remote, and anti-American reaches of Asia but also the breeding ground of the Taliban. In pursuit of his goal, Mortenson has survived kidnapping, fatwas issued by enraged mullahs, repeated death threats, and wrenching separations from his wife and children. But his success speaks for itself. *Three Cups of Tea* is at once an unforgettable adventure and the inspiring true story of how one man really is changing the world—one school at a time.

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down (Anne Fadiman)

When three-month-old Lia Lee arrived at the county hospital emergency room in Merced, California, a chain of events was set in motion from which neither she nor her parents nor her doctors would ever recover. The Hmong, traditionally a close-knit and fiercely people, have been less amenable to assimilation than most immigrants, adhering steadfastly to the rituals and beliefs of their ancestors. Lia's pediatricians, Neil Ernst and his wife, Peggy Philip, cleaved just as strongly to another tradition: that of Western medicine. When Lia Lee entered the American medical system, diagnosed as an epileptic, her story became a tragic case history of cultural miscommunication.

Development as Freedom (Amartya Sen)

Freedom is both the end and most efficient means of sustaining economic life and the key to securing the general welfare of the world's entire population. Releasing the idea of individual freedom from association with any particular historical, intellectual, political, or religious tradition, Sen clearly demonstrates its current applicability and possibilities.

The White Man's Burden: Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good (William Easterly)

A professor of economics pens an informed and excoriating attack on the tragic waste, futility, and hubris of the West's efforts to improve the lot of the so-called developing world, and provides constructive suggestions on how to move forward. Sometimes angry, sometimes irreverent, but always clear-eyed and rigorous, Easterly argues that we in the West need to face our own history of ineptitude and draw the proper conclusions, especially at a time when the question of our ability to transplant Western institutions has become one of the most pressing issues we face.

The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time, Jeffrey Sachs, 2005

Sachs argues in provocative fashion that extreme poverty (essentially, deep rural poverty in Africa, some parts of Asia, and parts of Latin America) could be ended with a relatively small investment of capital by the developed world. Sachs argued that the ending deep poverty was not only a moral necessity for the developed world, but that, in the end, it would work to their positive good. Sachs central point, I think, is that poverty has specific causes (bad infrastructure, bad geography, bad health conditions, poor education) that can be solved with specific types of aid programs. Such aid programs can eliminate the worst of extreme poverty in the world, and would be relatively inexpensive for the developed world.

Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet, Jeffrey Sachs, 2008

In the early pages of his new book on "economics for a crowded planet", Jeffrey Sachs makes the point that the challenges he is addressing don't conform to the neat theories and divisions of academic research. What's more, they vary in important detail from place to place. Tackling the linked scourges of global poverty and environmental disaster will depend on pragmatic, inter-disciplinary solutions to specific problems. This "new approach to development practice" is now the consensus among serious economists in development economics, which for many decades was an ideologically-riven battleground

of competing theories. (Exerpt from a review by Diane Coyle, Friday, 11 April 2008, downloaded from <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews> on 12/04/2009.)

Africa:

The Magic Journey (John Nichols)

Spanning forty years, *The Magic Journey* tells the tale of how progress transformed a rural backwater into a boomtown. At first, it was a magic time for Chamisaville-- almost as if every day were a holiday. But the euphoria gradually dissipated, and the land-hungry developers, speculators, and interlopers moved in. Finally, the day came when Chamisaville's people found themselves all but displaced, their children no longer heirs to their land or their tradition.

The Hospital by the River (Catherine Hamlin)

In her tender and candid account of 45 years of service to poor women suffering from obstetric fistula, Dr. Hamlin weaves her own story together with the history of the hospital and that of her adopted country Ethiopia. Her unyielding courage and solid faith will astound Christians worldwide as she talks about the people she has grown to love and the hospital that so many Ethiopian women have come to depend on. She truly is the Mother Teresa of our age.

Nine Hills to Nambonkaha (Sarah Erdman)

When Erdman enters the social fold of a village on the Ivory Coast as a Peace Corps volunteer, she discovers astonishing spirit despite the harsh realities of AIDS, poverty, the indignities of patriarchal customs, and child labor. Lyrical and topical, Erdman's beautiful debut captures the astonishing spirit of an unforgettable community.

Slave: My True Story (Mende Nazer and Damian Lewis)

A shocking true story of contemporary slavery: a young girl, snatched from her tribal village in Africa, survives enslavement in Sudan and London before making a courageous escape to freedom. *Slave* is a story almost beyond belief. It depicts the strength and dignity of the Nuba tribe. It recounts the savage way in which the Nuba and their ancient culture are being destroyed by a secret modern-day trade in slaves. Most of all, it is a remarkable testimony to one young woman's unbreakable spirit and tremendous courage.

Things Fall Apart: A Novel (Chinua Achebe)

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, is a powerful novel about the social changes that occurred when the white man first arrived on the African continent. In attempting to understand behavior in settings different from those in which the discipline evolved, causes for the failure to articulate the relationship between the individual and social change are explored. The novel is based on a conception of humans as self-reflexive beings and a definition of culture as a set of control mechanisms.

Other books by Chinua Achebe:

No Longer at Ease

After studying in Britain, Obi returns to Nigeria full of high principles. He is, however, forced to adjust his moral values and succumb to the pressures of a corrupt society. Achebe uses the 'fall' of one man, a descendent of the hero in *Things Fall Apart*.

Arrow of God: *Arrow of God* (1964)

A political and cultural novel, is set in Nigeria in the early twentieth century when colonization by British government officials and Christian missionaries was well underway. In this novel two cultures confront their differences. Achebe portrays the disrupting effect an externally imposed power system

(the British) has on an internally imposed power system (African tradition and customs). Conflicts within the Igbo society coupled with repercussions from external invasion result in disaster for the Igbo society which disintegrates from within and reorients itself to Christianity. This reorientation will lead not only to the assimilation of Western values and beliefs, but also to the eventual loss of the Igbo cultural identity.

A Man of the People

This novel foreshadows the Nigerian coups of 1966 and shows the color and vivacity as well as the violence and corruption of a society making its own way between the two worlds.

Anthills of the Savannah

The book deals with three friends who have come to play major roles in the fictional African nation of Nangan, one as the country's corrupt president, another as a troubled statesman, and the third as an opposition journalist. A riveting portrayal of an educated elite losing touch with the common people

Another Africa

Another Africa is a book that fuses photographs, poetry, and text to create a view of present-day Africa that moves beyond the stereotypes commonly held by most westerners: an open-air ethnographic museum, a continent in constant turmoil, a vast expanse of beautiful sand dunes and tropical savannas where herds of wildlife roam. This work peels away myths to explore the complexity, diversity, and human dimensions of a place called Africa--one that celebrates the commonplace and exotic simultaneously. The photographs are highly subjective, a personal investigation that reflects the sensibilities, formal concerns, and the ongoing engagement of the photographer in this part of the world. With the brilliant Chinua Achebe--a Nigerian--contributing his poems and an essay, the book takes on a further and critical dimension. He presents a concise view of Africa today, including the individual and political issues facing its countries. He deals with Africa on its own terms--from within, not from an outsider's perspective.

Facing the Lion: Growing Up Maasai on the African Savanna Joseph Lemasolai Lekuton's

Joseph Lemasolai Lekuton gives American kids a firsthand look at growing up in Kenya as a member of a tribe of nomads whose livelihood centers on the raising and grazing of cattle. Readers share Lekuton's first encounter with a lion, the epitome of bravery in the warrior tradition. They follow his mischievous antics as a young Maasai cattle herder, coming-of-age initiation, boarding school escapades, soccer success, and journey to America for college. Lekuton's riveting text combines exotic details of nomadic life with the universal experience and emotions of a growing boy.

Native American Experience:

On the Rez (Ian Frazier)

On the Rez, by Ian Frazier, is about modern-day American Indians, especially the storied Oglala Sioux, who live now on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in the plains and badlands of the American West. Frazier visits their descendants on Pine Ridge Reservation -- "the rez" -- now one of American's poorest places. Frazier finds a modern reemergence of the Sioux hero who saves her people; and he learns about the ancient and enduring Sioux concept of the hero, in its pulse-quickening, death-defying, public-spirited glory. Most of all, with compassion and imagination, Frazier brings up into the private world of the reservation. He portrays the survival, through toughness and humor, of a great people whose culture has shaped American identity.

Black Elk Speaks (John Neihardt)

Black Elk Speaks was the result of a series of interviews between Nick Black Elk, an American Indian from a Sioux tribe, and John Neihardt, a white poet. Black Elk, a holy man who fought in the Indian

wars of the late 1800s, struggled throughout his life with the firm belief that he was supposed to save his people from the encroachment of white settlers. Neihardt wrote the narrative, which is about Black Elk's early years, in the first person, as if the words were spoken by Black Elk himself. Neihardt also added information from his own research and included passages that are represented as the words of other American Indian leaders.

Louise Erdrich

Her Native American Series: *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*, *Plague of Doves*, *Love Medicine*, and others are set in the world of the Ojibwas of Northern Minnesota and Southern Canada. Well written, these works of fiction bring the world of the American Indian to life.

The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse:

For more than a half century, Father Damien Modeste has served his beloved people, the Ojibwe, on the remote reservation of Little No Horse. Now, nearing the end of his life, Father Damien dreads the discovery of his physical identity, for he is a woman who has lived as a man. To complicate his fears, his quiet life changes when a troubled colleague comes to the reservation to investigate the life of the perplexing, difficult, possibly false saint Sister Leopolda. Father Damien alone knows the strange truth of Sister Leopolda's piety and is faced with the most difficult decision of his life: Should he reveal all he knows and risk everything? Or should he manufacture a protective history though he believes Leopolda's wonder-working is motivated by evil?

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, Dee Brown,

Using council records, autobiographies, and firsthand descriptions, Brown allows great chiefs and warriors of the Dakota, Ute, Sioux, Cheyenne, and other tribes to tell us in their own words of the series of battles, massacres, and broken treaties that finally left them and their people demoralized and decimated. A unique and disturbing narrative told with force and clarity, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* changed forever our vision of how the West was won, and lost. It tells a story that should not be forgotten, and so must be retold from time to time.

Nicaragua

The Jaguar Smile, Salmon Rushdie, 1987.

Salman Rushdie heads to Nicaragua in 1986 at the invitation of the Sandinista Association of Cultural Workers for the seventh anniversary of the triumph of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN)*. He travelled around the countryside, meeting and greeting with personalities such as then-President Daniel Ortega (who has been re-elected this year), Sergio Ramirez, Luis Carrion, Ernesto Cardenal, and the unlikely president-to-be Violeta Chamorro. During Rushdie's adventures, he meets with all kinds of different people, talks about war, the hope of peace, and the Sandinistas, and gains an understanding and respect for the people of Nicaragua and their situation.

1491, New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus, Charles Mann, 2005.

Mann has written a landmark of a book that drops ingrained images of colonial America into the dustbin one after the other, such as that of the Pilgrims finding a pristine world of woodlands and guileless natives. Hundreds of European ships had visited the crowded New England coast by the time the Pilgrims arrived, and the indigenous Massachusetts had long been trading with the visitors. Mann brings empathy, drama, and a well-calibrated sense of humor to his descriptions of their first, fumbling contacts. (Excerpt from the review by Roger Atwood, *Boston Globe*, downloaded from http://www.boston.com/ae/books/articles/2005/08/28/a_whole_new_world/ on 12/04/2009.)

Meet Me in Managua, Wendy Zoba, 2005.

An interesting book about the history of the Rainbow Connection, a non-profit Non-governmental organization founded by Keith Jaspers and based in Springfield, Missouri. It focuses on a brief history of the country and then provides vignettes from people in the communities where the Rainbow Connection is active.

Recommended Movies:

Kandahar

Nafas is a reporter who was born in Afghanistan, but fled with her family to Canada when she was a child. However, her sister wasn't so lucky; she lost her legs to a land mine while young, and when Nafas and her family left the country, her sister was accidentally left behind. Nafas receives a letter from her sister announcing that she's decided to commit suicide during the final eclipse before the dawn of the 21st century; desperate to spare her sister's life, Nafas makes haste to Afghanistan, where she joins a caravan of refugees who, for a variety of reasons, are returning to the war-torn nation. As Nafas searches for her sister, she soon gets a clear and disturbing portrait of the toll the Taliban regime has taken upon its people.

The Milagro Beanfield War

In Milagro, a small town in the American Southwest, Ladd Devine plans to build a major new resort development. While activist Ruby Archuleta and lawyer/newspaper editor Charlie Bloom realize that this will result in the eventual displacement of the local Hispanic farmers, they cannot arouse much opposition because of the short term opportunities offered by construction jobs. But when Joe Mondragon illegally diverts water to irrigate his bean field, the local people support him because of their resentment of water use laws that favor the rich like Devine. When the Governor sends in ruthless troubleshooter Kyril Montana to settle things quickly before the lucrative development is cancelled, a small war threatens to erupt.

The Gods Must Be Crazy

A Sho in the Kalahari Desert encounters technology for the first time--in the shape of a Coke bottle. He takes it back to his people, and they use it for many tasks. The people start to fight over it, so he decides to return it to the God--where he thinks it came from. Meanwhile, we are introduced to a school teacher assigned to a small village, a despotic revolutionary, and a clumsy biologist.

The Last Kind of Scotland:

Director Kevin MacDonald teams with screenwriter Jeremy Brock to adapt Giles Foden's novel detailing the brutal reign of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin as seen through the eyes of his personal physician. James McAvoy stars as the doctor who slowly realizes that he is trapped in an inescapable nightmare, and Forest Whitaker assumes the role of the notorious despot.

Chiefs

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/chiefs/index.html>

Wind River Indian Reservation (where the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone were confined by the U.S. government on 3,500 square miles of central Wyoming) is hardly an environment conducive to success. Poverty, alcoholism, racism and youth suicide are just a few of the challenges the cultures face. But despite all of this - or perhaps because of it - basketball is played on the rez and played very well.

Incident at Oglala:

On June 26, 1975, during a period of high tensions on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, two FBI agents were killed in a shootout with a group of Indians. Although several men were charged with killing the agents, only one, Leonard Peltier, was found guilty. This film describes the events surrounding the shootout and suggests that Peltier was unjustly convicted.

Wounded Heart: Pine Ridge and the Sioux:

American Indians and government officials discuss poverty, racism, domestic violence, child abuse, inadequate health care, and drug and alcohol problems that besiege the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in SW South Dakota. Pine Ridge is home to the Lakota Tribe of the Sioux. The Sioux produced some of the greatest North American Indian leaders the world has known including Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud and Russell Means.

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee:

HBO presents an epic movie event with executive producers Dick Wolf and Tom Thayer, based on Dee Brown's bestseller, BURY MY HEART AT WOUNDED KNEE powerfully explores the tragic impact that the United States' westward expansion had on American Indian culture, and the economic, political and social pressures that motivated it.

500 Nations:

500 Nations is an eight part documentary which explores the history of the indigenous peoples of North and Central America, from pre-Colombian times, through the period of European contact and colonization, to the end of the 19th century and the subjugation of the Plains Indians of North America. 500 Nations relies on historical texts, eyewitness accounts, pictorial sources and computer graphic reconstructions to explore the magnificent civilizations which flourished prior to contact with Western civilization, and to tell the dramatic and tragic story of the Native American nations' desperate attempts to retain their way of life against overwhelming odds.