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The Monkey Wrench Gang: The Impact of the Views of Native Americans on Abbey's Stance on Ecosabotage

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THE MONKEY WRENCH GANG:
THE IMPACT OF THE VIEWS OF
NATIVE AMERICANS ON
ABBEY'S STANCE ON
ECOSABOTAGE

BY: ANNA WURZER

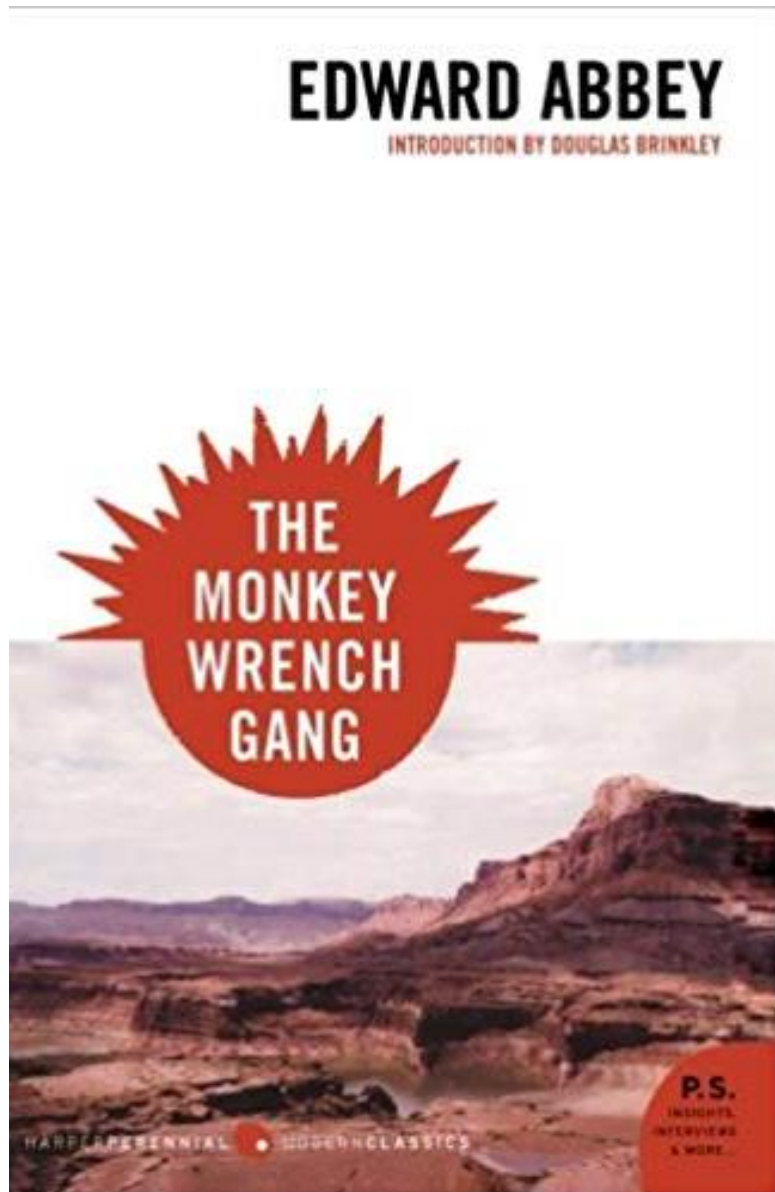
EDWARD ABBEY

- WHO IS HE?
- WHY WOULD HE WRITE THE CHARACTERS AS RACIST WHEN HE DOES NOT SHARE THOSE BELIEFS?



"Documented without picture in the text
Edward Abbey 1927-1989"





- By analyzing:
 - Various views of Native Americans by Abbey and the Monkey Wrench Gang
 - How the Native Americans in the novel were a victim of learned helplessness
 - The effect this has on what Abbey's novel says about ecosabotage
- Abbey argued through *The Monkey Wrench Gang* that collaboration with the opposing forces was the most beneficial way to effectively bring about positive environmental change.

THE CHARACTERS ARE RACIST...

“The Indians also watch and wait... The men and women drink Tokay, the swarms of children Pepsi-Cola, all munching on mayonnaise and Kleenex sandwiches of Wonder, Rainbo and Holsum Bread. Our noble red brethren...” Page 4

“The cowboys, Indians, Mormon missionaries, Government officials and other undesirables lounging about the terminal stared with hungry eyes.” Page 54

“They’re even trying to make Christians out of the Indians. As if the Indians weren’t bad enough already.” Page 162

Doc: “We’ll blame it on the Indians.” Page 177

Hayduke: “We’re getting out of this overdeveloped hypercivilized goddamn fucking Indian country.” Page 271

In a review of *Custer Died for your Sins* by Deloria, Abbey said:

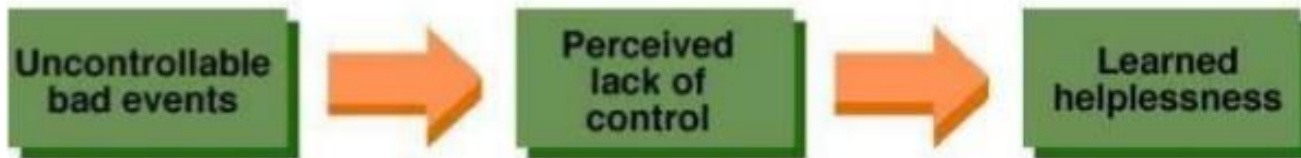
- “White Americans” have “pathetic inability to feel and understand the true nature of the situation they are living in”
- Speaks of “sense of injustice and frustration which he and most Indians must surely feel...without the deep bitterness we might respect”

In an article by Paul T. Bryant where he speaks of *Abbey's Fire on the Mountain* Bryant writes:

- The land the main character had stolen “had come to him through a long line of theft and chicanery back to the time it was taken from the Indians”

BUT ABBEY ISN'T!

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS



Learned helplessness:

The passive resignation produced by repeated exposure to negative events that are perceived to be unavoidable.

AMONG
MINORITIES AND
NATIVE
AMERICANS

THE CULTURE OF
NATIVE AMERICANS
PRIOR TO
COLONIZATION



DESTRUCTION

Bataille's review of Mary Crow Dog's autobiography

- “Mary Crow Dog’s autobiography, *Lakota Woman*, is the story of one woman; however, it tells the tale of many Indian women who have faced ... the brutality of governmental control and benign neglect, but who have emerged strong and whole in spite of their moods.”

Literature review of two works by Native Americans that revolve around the differences between the treatment of the land by white people and by Native Americans by Beidler

- “Many white men have worked hard and heartlessly to destroy the environment”
- “Connecting the destroyed environment with the madness of the Indians whose environment is destroyed”



TREATMENT OF LAND



NATIVE AMERICAN VS. GOVERNMENT TREATMENT

Biedler's "The Earth Itself Was Sobbing: Madness and the Environment in Novels"

- "Connecting the destroyed environment with the madness of the Indians whose environment is destroyed"
- "Many white men have worked hard and heartlessly to destroy the environment"

In *A Journey Home* where Lucinda Franks wrote in a review that:

- "He (the main character) makes the observation that heavy logging might well cause a flood of muck to pour down the canyons, annihilating the primitive Tarahumara Indians. 'Well, it's not my problem,' he says. 'Mustn't get involved'"

Bob Sipchen's tribute to Abbey after his death that states:

- "All [his works] reflect his preference for the natural over the man-made world and a strong-headed individualism in combat against technocracy"

DESTRUCTION OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE





DEFEATING THE
TOP DOG:
WORKING
WITHIN THE
SYSTEM

Abbey's review of
*The Names: A
Memoir*

- “Scott Momaday’s book suggests the possibility, even the hope, that through some alliance of the best in the Indians’ culture and the best of the white man’s civilization, we might yet find a way ... to repeal its apparent conquest.”

“Edward Abbey: A
Turbulent
Environmentalist”
– article in *The
Times*

- “The Monkey Wrench Gang is ... an incitement to environmentalists to take the law into their own hands.” *misunderstandings
- “He [Abbey] remained unhappily aware of the price paid by those who pursue the truth too relentlessly.”

COLLABORATION



**DON'T
REPEAT THE
PAST**

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