



Debra Barker

Professor
of English &
American Indian
Studies



The Aesthetics of Justice and Redress in *The Plague of Doves*

“History works itself out in the living,” writes Louise Erdrich in her award-winning novel *The Plague of Doves* (2008), part of the justice trilogy dramatizing racialized frontier violence against Indigenous people of the upper Midwest. After dramatizing the lynching of an innocent thirteen-year-old Ojibwe boy, the novel unfurls a nexus of embedded narratives that lead readers through Erdrich’s moral universe in which social justice and cosmic reparations balance out settler colonial greed and racial hatred. The injustices of history are ultimately rendered through the destinies of the living as unwitting agents of a moral universe. Readers are asked to ponder at length the persistent legacy of economic, spiritual, and judicial oppression bequeathed through the generational politics supporting the colonial presence of immigrant settlers both in real American and in Erdrich’s Indigenous North Dakota world.