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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Sing with the Heart of a Bear: Fusions of Native and American Poetry, 1890-1999. By Kenneth Lincoln.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1hn0d3m0>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 25(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

2001-06-01

DOI

10.17953

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appropriate decisions regarding the natural world; decisions that will benefit all peoples, including those Native peoples who still depend on nature to maintain their cultural identity.

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Sing with the Heart of a Bear: Fusions of Native and American Poetry, 1890–1999. By Kenneth Lincoln. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000. 435 pages. \$50.00 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

In *Sing with the Heart of a Bear*, Kenneth Lincoln offers a comparative study of Native and American poetry, showing that similarities outweigh differences. As the subtitle suggests, the book celebrates interchange over separatism and emphasizes the positive crossing of cultural borders. By including twenty-eight Native poets (one poem for each of them) and a thorough analysis of several of the most representative American modernists, Lincoln expands the Lakota concept of kinship (*Mitakuye oyasin*, all my relatives) and evinces America's need for "a fusional model of mutual interest" where it is possible "to share understanding, value, power, and grace" (p. 71). Lincoln introduces the concept of a "hybrid poetics," in which ethnic differences matter less than basic elements common to all human beings. He embraces Mary Austin's idea of the "native savage" as "the new Adamic American" (p. 280) to illustrate how modernist and postmodernist poets came to see Native American cultures as the genuine primitive still in contact with nature and closely related to local landscape. Since race and culture are social constructs, Lincoln explains, America is simply a mixture of different cultures, all contributing to its identity. The truly hybrid poetics becomes possible, therefore, only if conflicts of ethnicity and gender are successfully resolved through the peaceful acceptance of differences.

The strength of this book is that while it celebrates a cultural and literary fusion of various experiences, it also underlines the importance of "a reciprocal alterity" (p. 314) in which the Other is not feared or silenced, but recognized and respected. Ethnic differences were valued by twentieth-century American poets, who became interested in Native American culture to recover the primitive, the "natural self" that had been corrupted by civilization (p. 312). At the same time, though, Lincoln identifies the Other with the feminine that had been ignored and disempowered in patriarchal societies because of the potential threat it represented to the established male power. Women write "fusionally" (p. 323), reminding us how Native American poets express their traditional philosophies of life using the literary tools of Western culture. Lincoln celebrates Emily Dickinson's "bear-hearted" weird originality (p. 144), Marianne Moore's high respect for the natural world, Mary Austin's appreciation for the rhythms of Native storytelling, Sylvia Plath's exclusive insistence on "her own writing" (p. 165), Linda Gregg's "microcosmos," where "each woman is an islanded refuge to herself" (p. 326–327), and Sharon Olds's cynical and parodic revelation of the lies that hide the bitter truth of life. Most

of these writers show a sincere and deep concern for nature that is also shared by male modernist and postmodernist poets.

Lincoln also analyzes poems by Ezra Pound, John Berryman, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, and Theodore Roethke to emphasize the modernists' longing for "a native Eden, indigenously envisioned" (p. 194). Criticizing the destructive attitude of Western society toward nature and human life, the modernists realized that balance was in becoming "nature, ourselves, natively born to the land" (p. 314). Lincoln follows the example of Michael Castro, who in *Interpreting the Indian* (1983) praises the works of American poets like Gary Snyder who emphasize the fundamental importance of nature in human life.

Crossing ethnic borders implies acknowledging the rightful place of Native American poets in mainstream America. The fusional poetics is evident in the way Native writers such as N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, and Sherman Alexie employ the tools of Western literature to express their oral traditions in written form. However, in doing so, they "use, reinvent and at times trash white culture and English, turning the language back on itself in ironic subversion" (p. 78). While their mainstream works realize the postmodernists' longing to create a new American aesthetics closer to local landscape and nature, Native American poets manipulate the language of the dominant culture creatively and originally until it becomes a valuable instrument compatible with Native traditions.

Valuing Native American cultures also means recognizing that 92 percent of them were matrifocal. Since women played a powerful role in their traditional societies, recovering the feminine is necessary for a complete and truthful interpretation of Native American poetry. Therefore, Lincoln offers a remarkable study of some of the most important Native American women poets, such as Linda Hogan, Joy Harjo, Roberta Hill Whiteman (now publishing as Roberta Hill), Mary Randle Tallmountain, and Luci Tapahonso. He stresses how each expresses her powerful femininity and feminism in a personal way that is both traditional and revolutionary. Tapahonso, for instance, takes pride in the typically female activity of making bread and sees her writing as a way of celebrating "not her story but a people's" (p. 312); yet, through this, her matriarchal power is not diminished but enhanced. Mixed-blood Hogan focuses on environmental issues. Seeing male violence as the primary cause of the gratuitous exploitation of natural resources, she "mourns the raping of the land and animals . . . , mindless killing . . . , and men abusing even themselves . . ." (p. 357). Although fusional like Hogan's, Harjo's poems show "a desperate womanism," which relies on "old myths of women sufficient unto themselves" (p. 361). She emphasizes that both men and women have strength as well as grace; thus, healing is possible only through "the transforming vision of love," which allows all living creatures to live in harmony and equality (p. 369).

In addition to its critical offerings, *Sing with the Heart of a Bear* makes a valuable contribution through its collection of poems. With his alphabetical selection of twenty-eight poems by Native American poets, Lincoln traces back to *The American Indian Speaks*, edited by John Milton and published by the University of South Dakota in 1969. This anthology was the first to

acknowledge Native American writers as an integral part of American culture and therefore worthy to speak their minds without white mediators. Later publications recognized Indians' rights to compose non-Indian poems. In his introduction to *The Remembered Earth* (1979), Geary Hobson explains that "our literature would be the poorer" if Native American writers were not allowed to express "their heritage in their individual ways as do writers of all cultures" (p. 9–10). Indeed, contemporary Native authors use whatever literary tools contemporary reality offers them. Lincoln explains that "mainstream tenets of verbal concision, image precision, musical phrasing, and symbolist indirection [are] tools compatible with a native storyteller's elliptical plain style" (p. 247).

Sing with the Heart of a Bear is a hybrid text that presents both a selective analysis of Native American poems and an originally inclusive reading of modernist and postmodernist poets that gives credit to all the native sources of American poetry. In this, Lincoln embraces Duane Niatum's view in the preface to *Harper's Anthology of Twentieth Century Native American Poetry* (1988): "[Native poets] are part of the American culture-at-large, and should be heard and celebrated by that larger culture" (p. xi).

Although he amply acknowledges the fusalional nature of American poetry, Lincoln simultaneously clarifies its diversity. A hybrid poetics is possible only when differences are respected and valued. By interacting with each other, poets enrich the new multicultural American aesthetics. Lincoln favors a concept of pluralism in which unity is reinforced through difference: "Native poets," he explains, "[are] distinct within an American tradition of poetry" in the same way "Native American women . . . voice their tribal integrities and differences, too, from mainstream feminists" (p. 405).

As a whole, *Sing with the Heart of a Bear* is a tribute to all the different voices in American poetry. It belongs with critical texts such as Castro's *Interpreting the Indian*, Robin Riley Fast's *The Heart as a Drum* (1999), and Norma Wilson's *The Nature of Native American Poetry* (2001).

Although the subtitle clearly indicates that modernist and postmodernist poetry from 1890 to 1999 is the focus of the book, Lincoln analyzes Dickinson's poetry and briefly mentions Walt Whitman. It would be interesting for Lincoln to develop in detail a study of the parallel between the American Transcendentalists and Native American poets. Another intriguing parallel that could be discussed in depth is the one between the English Romantics and Native American poets. In the introductory chapter to her book *The Nature of Native American Poetry*, Wilson underlines both topics, showing not only that intercultural exchange occurred extensively before the modernists, but also that Western continental cultures sometimes produced "literary precedents of contemporary indigenous poetry, [such as] the English Romantics' celebration of nature [and their] emphasis on spirituality" (p. 3). Lincoln could have offered a more comprehensive and representative collection of Native American poems that includes more than one selection from each poet and more than twenty-eight writers. This would have enabled average readers to have a more complete understanding of Native American poetry.