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conversation with Vine on this very topic in which he said, roughly, "There was a lot of good information in the old ethnography; the problem is, the people who gathered it do not understand what they are reading!" Hopefully, this unique collection of ethnography by a Native writer and leader will spark greater dialogue, respect, and appreciation for the authenticity of the spiritual worldview expressed in these writings.

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The Year the Sun Died. By Kenneth Lincoln. Baltimore: PublishAmerica, 2006. 271 pages. $21.95 paper.

"You've got to listen real hard to know these people, all kinds of Skins and breeds. And the way they tell it *is* the story, my friend. They all cross and connect kind of strange like, or they don't. That's an unspoken story, no talk across the railroad tracks, you know, Indian Town, and up-town" (25). That is, this book is written in "Indian structure"—things connect or they don't, and that's supposed to give us a complete picture. The book has a huge number of characters, and each one gets his or her moment on stage, often interrupting other characters. If Lincoln thinks that the character has something to offer, he shows up and tells his story; it doesn't matter if this follows directly or not. In this way, Lincoln gets the best of the Indian world.

The book is the story of a town—Alliance, Nebraska—and, especially, Ed Striker, Emma Flambeaux, Rosie Red Star, and Josef Lone Dog. The story takes place in 1969, the year of so much foment, so much progress. That's the year of Alcatraz, the formation of the American Indian Movement (AIM), and the successes of the black civil rights movement. But these things are hardly heard of in Nebraska. They do not impinge on the action. The action is all its own; it plays out without benefit or menace of the wider world.

The book is also the story of the culture—Winnie Lone Dog and Mamie Warrick, the grandmothers; Will Knott, the draft-dodging college kid; Easter Montgomery, the black garbage man; Louie Kazin, the Jew who has no synagogue to go to; the Reverend Thomas "Dutch" Frieman and his wife, Tillie; the police chief, Patrick Irish, and his deputy, Gideon Jones; Charlie Weed and his sidekick, Delbert Jenkins, the city road-maintenance squad; Slim Red Star, Josef's stepfather, and his wife, Sophie Kisicki, a Polish immigrant; Sol Harden, the black owner of the Pick-a-Rib brothel; H. A. Tottle, the newspaper owner; and their wives, children, uncles, aunts, grandfathers, and grandmothers . . . especially the grandmothers and grandfathers. And add Buffalo Bill, George Armstrong Custer, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Buffalo Calf Woman, Billy Red Star, Martin Luther King, and Tunkáshila.

It is not a pretty picture. "When we came here after the war, they [Indians, Negroes] lived in canvas army tents and burned winter coal oil along Potash Avenue. We would hardly ever see one of them. They'd have military passes to come up town and then a curfew after dark" (31). In this milieu, Sol Harden

operates his Pick-a-Rib brothel. The narrative jerks along, picking up images as it goes. Josef Lone Dog is present at the raid on the Pick-a-Rib, when Emma shoves him out a window. Three pages later, we get to "Run, Joey, run."

We have to tarry to hear the sound of the culvert; get the backstory on Josef's mother, Sophie Kisicki, and her attachment to Josef Conrad; learn about Josef's attempt to read *Heart of Darkness* in high school; and hear grandmother Winnie's explanation of *iyeska* and how it differs from half a dozen other words—*iéska, iéslota, iésni, iéwicaka, iéyásna, iyésnica*—and how it hooks to Heyoka. Add the way he's dressed in J. C. Penney jeans, Red Wing shoes, and hand-me-downs from the city rummage, all are indicative of Joey's confusion as to what he is—"half-Indian but raised a Lone Dog, . . . at home south of the tracks, but the Bloods gave him a hard time about being a newcomer" (93).

This attempt to get everything in, to make everything relevant, is what I mean by Indian structure. There is no individual motivation or personal quest, but everything is in there at once. It is confusing. The confusion spills over but gives us a disjointed picture of Josef Lone Dog. The delay is a bit much, but I suppose it appeals to the Indian mind. It gets the completeness, the complexity, and the Indian-ness the Indian wants. "They all cross and connect kind of strange like, or they don't" (25). This is the strength of this book; I know of no other book like it.

But Lincoln isn't writing for Indians. Or shouldn't be. The Indians already know what the situation is. He should write in Anglo terms if he is going to be effective to an Anglo audience. He's preaching to the choir. This makes the book choppy. We hardly finish anything before new things show up. It just doesn't stack up. I had to read the book twice to catch the drift—as well as figure out which character a particular event pertains to. You can move sections around. The main narrative is pretty much sequential, true, but so many other things come in that aren't. I think the fact that you can move things, so that what is fifth, or thirteenth, can be first if you want it to be, is a fault.

Ed Striker hangs himself with a bicycle inner tube. Eight pages later—after Rusty plays a game of snooker in Bud's pool hall, Louie's passage on "he don't get it," Emma's pregnancy and child, two pages of Easter Montgomery's narration of how he makes duck decoys of cottonwood roots, Winnie's thanking Easter, Easter's cautioning the Pippin boy to sit still while he goes and checks, and, finally, Easter's telling what happened—we learn that Easter Montgomery happens to be snooping around, finds Ed Striker, cuts him down, and revives him. This is told in an "Oh, gosh, I didn't do anything anyone else wouldn't have done" tone. The attempt to commit suicide is rendered with great detail, straightforward and honest. To follow continuous narrative with circumlocution is not what we want. This is all part of the Indian structure that gives the book its personality. But if there's a necessary order, it's not here. Or I didn't see it.

Sections about the major characters are narrated by some of the minor characters. This is part of the business about being whole, inclusive, and real. If a book is to be taken seriously, we need to see the main characters wrestling with their own fates. Dealing with their own choices is where the meaning lies; grappling with the consequences of those choices, opportunities, and

possibilities in those opportunities are the significant experiences. The meanings grow out of the main characters' struggles, not the things said about them by minor characters.

The story has a frame around it. Joesy Striker, the son of Ed Striker and Emma Flambeaux, comes home after some years playing basketball for Stanford and quizzes Will Knott, a white Indian, about Ed Striker, Emma Flambeaux, and his background. The opening chapter and the final chapter are devoted to these issues. The story, with all its ins and outs, is supposed to clarify things for this young man. The fact that it doesn't is a fault.

The ending is a bit miraculous. After showing us the impossibility of anything like humanity, the group of Indians gets together one day and decides that it will have meals on wheels for drunks and anyone else who hopes to join; an alcoholics anonymous, based not on God, but on Tunkáshila; a weekly run to the hospital for the indigent; a quilting-bee group; and so forth. This miracle of love and cooperation simply does not follow from the two-hundred-plus pages of preparation, nor is there a convincing transition.

The theme of the story is that "this medicine is for all the people, all colors, blood-born or took-in . . . Grandma Winnie taught us that. Beneath the skin, we're all one color, folks, the color to flesh, bones, and blood. That's the real alliance" (104). That is the real message. Anglo prejudice and lack of understanding have kept us from achieving this medicine, this harmony. When Ed Striker finally succeeds in committing suicide, Rusty, who cuts him down, tries to make sense of the situation with Louie.

> "Why would a Indian kid, hell, a young man, . . . go and do a damn fool thing like that now?"
>
> "A hundred reasons," Louie said with sand in his voice. "One for every year the whites have been here. . . . The invasion, man."
>
> "The what? For chrissake, what invasion?"
>
> "Whites rolled in and kicked their butts, remember?" Louie said. "Squashed them like Hitler rode over the Poles. Came here with guns and sabers, plows and barbed wire, and just plumb took it all."
>
> "Hell, we won it," Rusty said with a belch, "won it fair and square."
>
> "Against arrows and ponies?" Louie asked. "You call that a fair win?"
>
> "It was a war, goddamnit, no fair to it. Like John Wayne says in the *Playboy* interview, terrorist bastards was in the way and fool enough to fight back. They didn't need all them buffalo chips or pigweeds. Our people did."
>
> "Our people?"
>
> "The English," Rusty said stiffly. "The English and . . . the Irish" (223).
>
> Rusty exploded. "Who the hell owned the goddam wilderness?"
>
> "Not us," Louie said. "Before us, there were six million natives and sixty million buffalo. We, our people, Rusty, slaughtered them and stole their land, big time."
>
> Louie shook his head. "You just don't get it" (224).

Rusty's ignorance, failure to understand or sympathize, admit the genocide, and get past the John Wayne mentality, are what Lincoln does best, for *we* get it. I suppose that kind of success outweighs many faults.

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