



Feminist Readings of Native American Literature: Coming to Voice

Kathleen M. Donovan

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Who in a society can speak, and under what circumstances? These questions are at the heart of both Native American literature and feminist literary and cultural theory. Despite the recent explosion of publication in each of these fields, almost nothing has been written to date that explores the links between the two. With *Feminist Readings of Native American Literature*, Kathleen Donovan takes an important first step in examining how studies in these two fields inform and influence one another. Focusing on the works of N. Scott Momaday, Joy Harjo, Paula Gunn Allen, and others, Donovan analyzes the texts of these well-known writers, weaving a supporting web of feminist criticism throughout. With careful and gracefully offered insights, the book explores the reciprocally illuminating nature of culture and gender issues.

The author demonstrates how Canadian women of mixed-blood ancestry achieve a voice through autobiographies and autobiographical novels. Using a framework of feminist reader response theory, she considers an underlying misogyny in the writings of N. Scott Momaday. And in examining commonalities between specific cultures, she discusses how two women of color, Paula Gunn Allen and Toni Morrison, explore representations of femaleness in their respective cultures. By synthesizing a broad spectrum of critical writing that overlaps women's voices and Native American literature, Donovan expands on the frame of dialogue within feminist literary and cultural theory. Drawing on the related fields of ethnography, ethnopoetics, ecofeminism, and post-colonialism, *Feminist Readings of Native American Literature* offers the first systematic study of the intersection between two dynamic arenas in literary studies today.

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