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Author

Scarberyy-García, Susan

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in its contribution to future, more specific research. One scholar's conjecture may be the guide to another's discovery.

Structurally, the work is divided into eleven chapters of quite varied length, from three to fifty pages. The preponderance of information offered is descriptive rather than interpretive. For example, factors that are associated with the decline of Indian population, which is discussed in the chapter, "Historical Demography," are simply enumerated, with no elaboration. There are introductory remarks for all chapters, usually quite brief. Some, but not all, chapters offer conclusions. I found myself having to make several forays through the volume to determine just where the book was going. Sometimes I had to backtrack to see how the previous chapters were related. This somewhat uneven organization is imposed primarily by the varied types and amounts of information offered, but it does make the larger picture more difficult to comprehend.

This essentially is a reference work. The author identifies over seventy different ethnic groups, places them geographically, and provides general cultural and behavioral data, where possible. These important features doubtless will stimulate further work. In the last chapter, Salinas appraises the status of historical reconstruction in southern Texas and northeastern Mexico, the limitations imposed by the absence of documentation, and the extinction of ethnic groups and languages. He concludes that any further correlation of native names with Spanish names will depend, quite simply, on the discovery of new documents. I hope that, when this happens, Salinas will be around to make another body of data usable and, therefore, significant.

Mary Christopher Nunley
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

The Ancient Child. N. Scott Momaday. New York: Doubleday, 1989. 314 pages. \$18.95 cloth.

The Ancient Child, N. Scott Momaday's second novel, was published two decades after *House Made of Dawn* won the Pulitzer prize for fiction. As might be expected, the new novel bears a strong family resemblance to the corpus of Momaday's work and

is embossed by the ripple marks of his watershed literary honor. Yet *The Ancient Child*, not to be overshadowed by an older sibling, ably demonstrates its own inner resources by eloquently relating a new, bittersweet story about its namesake's meandering journey home through the Kiowa grasslands.

Early in the novel, half-Kiowa protagonist Locke Setman is a successful artist living in San Francisco. Yet he is deeply unsettled and easily disturbed. Barely aware of his Kiowa heritage, Locke is summoned "home" to Oklahoma by a telegram that announces his "grandmother" Kope'mah's impending death. The trip evokes memories of Locke's troubled, orphaned childhood and thrusts him into an illness that is mitigated only by his growing curiosity about his identity.

At his grandmother's grave Locke feels out of place; it is not until the young half-Kiowa, half-Navajo medicine woman Grey gives him a powerful medicine bundle that he begins to feel a bond with his ancestors and a hint of his personal bear power to come. This classic Momaday theme of the healing powers of Bear, which appeared in four bear stories in *House Made of Dawn*, appears even more pervasively in *The Ancient Child*. By the end of book 1, Locke is flashing back to his natural father's story, from oral tradition, of the sudden appearance of a small boy in a Piegan camp. Since the strange child is said to be inarticulate and to transform into a bear, he becomes an archetypal model for Locke, who needs to define his identity, learn to feel at home in the wilderness, and be healed.

The rest of the novel (books 2-4) describes Locke's wrestling with his self-images, his women, his artistic direction, his past, his dreams, his illness (which culminates in a mad scene where he exposes the medicine bundle without proper ritual control), and his growing bear power. Locke's life conforms to the monomythic hero pattern, wherein he is thrust out into a dangerous, unfamiliar world, suffers near-death experiences, and is ritually aided by spiritual helpers who bestow ceremonial knowledge on him and help to restore him to a state of spiritual and physical health. As he begins to acknowledge the dual bear qualities of enemy and healer within him, he feels stronger and more capable of love. By the time he has gone on a longer journey through northern New Mexico, experienced the transformative slap of a bear paw on his throat, participated in a peyote ceremony, and witnessed a Navajo Yeibichai dance, Locke is ready for the epiph-

anic experience at Tsoai, where his sense of smell grows more acute as he becomes Bear.

The Ancient Child also contains other elements—such as the imagined encounter between Billy the Kid and Kiowa warrior Set-angya—that stretch the scope of the novel. When these men converse posthumously about bravery, language, and death, Momaday's serious play with historical materials shows that fiction is the narrative form where myth, history, and fantasy unpredictably intersect.

Instead of setting history in the Jemez Pueblo culture of *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday focuses on the Kiowa Plains culture of Locke Setman's people. The Navajo world is a mainstay of both novels; its sparse landscape and oral-ritualistic traditions provide inspiration for Locke, as they do for Abel in *House Made of Dawn*. But the scope of *The Ancient Child* is widened even further to reflect Momaday's global interests. Not only are there scenes in Paris and glimpses of hunting life north of the Arctic Circle, but there also are indications that Locke is, in part, Loki, the shape-shifter trickster of Old Norse mythology and that his blue Great Dane companion, Luki, is the thinly disguised Fenrir, the wolf. And while much of the novel unfolds inland on the North American continent, many of the key scenes occur along the coastline, revealing the Water People—Crab, Octopus, Shark, Whale, Salmon and Dolphin—as performers in this cosmic drama, which stretches from the Pacific to Oklahoma.

The world here appears larger and more complicated than in Momaday's earlier fiction. Indeed, *The Ancient Child* apparently contains "more of everything" than did Momaday's first novel. The recent volume encompasses more humor, more characters (especially historical figures and women), more dialogue, more dreaming, more overt sexuality, more cruelty, more violence, more horses, more storms. This multiplicity of images and actions underscores the episodic nature of the narrative and makes the novel seem dense and entwined at times, even though each scene is drawn with startling clarity.

Momaday balances the international breadth of the novel with a close, yet panoramic view of events at home. *The Ancient Child* is even more autobiographical (i.e., Locke is a Kiowa painter, as is Momaday) than *House Made of Dawn*. Because we can recognize strong strains of Momaday's personal history and identity (i.e., having a Kiowa grandmother, experiencing growing bear

power) in *The Ancient Child*, the novel seems closely tied to its kin: *The Way to Rainy Mountain* and *The Names: A Memoir*, and even *The Gourd Dancer*, a volume of poetry in which Set-angya, the Piegan story, and the bear have previously appeared. *The Ancient Child* retells a familiar story, although from different, refracted angles. The narrator comments about Set's perception of myth and the arts:

Yes, he believed, there is only one story, after all, and it is about the pursuit of man by God, and it is about a man who ventures out to the edge of the world, and it is about his holy quest, and it is about his faithful or unfaithful wife, and it is about the hunting of a great beast (p. 216).

The author makes us aware that culture-specific details of this worldwide monomythic hero pattern are found in Kiowa oral traditions and that a fictionalized character such as Locke Setman, whose life follows the pattern, may lead us to the ultimate sources of value and meaning contained in the myth—that great overarching story about maintaining relationships necessary for life.

The list of characters preceding the prologue prepares the reader for a drama of mythic proportions. Set-angya is even referred to as "Lear-like." The author maintains the tension of this dramatic narrative by repeating the words *the bear is coming*. In *The Ancient Child*, the bear material is brought to the surface, coloring the dominant symbols, structures, and themes of the novel darkly. Both the Kiowa bear boy story and the Piegan bear boy story thread through the contemporary narrative, and Locke Setman also becomes encircled by Jicarilla Apache bear knowledge during the climactic scene at Stone Lake. But complicating this anachronistic assortment of dramatis personae is the fact that Setman's guide and ours—Grey—may be Changing Woman (a Navajo holy person), as Paula Gunn Allen has observed. And since Changing Woman, like all Navajo holy people, may manifest multiple selves, even simultaneously, we may not always be certain into which dimension of time or space this aged, youthful woman is leading us.

Momaday's novel occasionally reads like a formal inquiry into the art of composition. By varying the size and shape of the type-

faces in the book at least half a dozen different ways, Momaday orchestrates a "sense-surround" experience whereby the stories appear to be coming at the reader from all directions, in a variety of carefully modulated voices. Secondary characters such as Lola, Alais, and the unsavory Dwight Dicks thus are able to slip away through these transitional passages. The very structure of the novel into sections entitled "Planes," "Lines," "Shapes," and "Shadows" indicates that Momaday is preoccupied with aesthetic concerns, with the quality and dynamics of his craft. Now and then, however, the narrative labors under an obvious or forced image or comment—for example, when the terrifying Perfecto Atole charges on a black mare named Swastika or when the narrator comments that "In [Set's] paintings others might have seen confusion and chaos, but Set saw the pure elements of the story . . ." (p. 216). Are we to read Set here as Momaday's mouthpiece, commenting on some of Momaday's critics?

"Art is affirmation," states Cole Blessing, a maverick art instructor in the novel (p. 55). Indeed this novel, which is firmly "grounded in myth," according to Momaday, is "a composed unity of fragments which is a whole" (p. 132). Through its broad scope and ambitious characterizations, *The Ancient Child* has admirably pulled together, without flinching, several of the late twentieth century's most pressing concerns. By affirming the value of social/tribal relations, in a landscape permeated by local knowledge and great beauty, the novel contributes towards what Barry Lopez calls a "literature of hope" that offsets illness, alienation, and the disabling effects of urbanization. And it is Momaday's revitalization of the myths undergirding American literature that offer us the possibility of personal transformation and collective healing. *The Ancient Child* is a "story that must be told" and retold, because it has the power to carry Bear's potential for rebirth and renewal straight from the wilderness into the hearts of its readers (p. 248).

Susan Scarberry-García
Fort Lewis College
Durango, Colorado