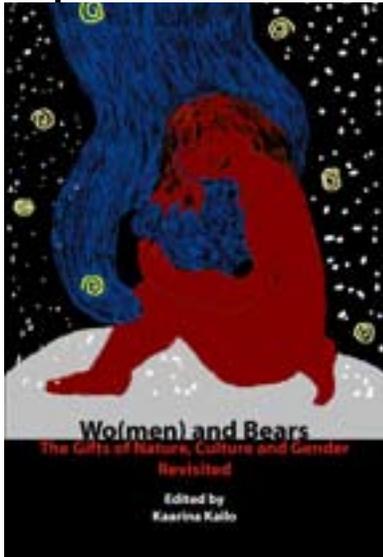


Wo(men) and Bears
 The Gifts of Nature, Gender and
 Culture Revisited

Edited by Kaarina Kailo



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Kaarina Kailo has published numerous co-edited books on topics from post-colonialism (Sami people) to feminist views on folklore, storytelling, literature, gift economy/gift imaginary, neoliberal economic philosophy, honour-related gender violence, mythology, ecofeminism, bear myths, and sauna and sweatlodge as gynocentric ritual spaces. Her current research compares Northern Indigenous women's writings on trauma and healing.

*The spirit of Bear is awakening
 The Heart Hears
 with some Strange Ear
 — Irma Heiskanen*

Wo(men) and Bears revisits classical debates in women's cultural and Native studies regarding nature and culture. As a mixed-genre anthology—academic and poetic, conversational and critical—the book consists of interdisciplinary and intercultural approaches on a widely-circulated ancient myth, story, history, and sacred law (*ayaaawux*) focused on wo(men) co-habiting with bears where women defy dualistic gender roles and interact with nature in a variety of adaptive or transgressive ways.

“The Girl Who Married the Bear” is an old tale with numerous cross-cultural variants and fragments that can be found throughout Northern and Mediterranean Europe and across the Northern hemisphere from North America to Siberia and Mongolia. The story's popularity derives from its simple core: it addresses through a series of agonizing dilemmas two of the most fundamental and decisive issues of life: marriage and death. The authors and researchers in this book imply that the reasons for the tale's remarkable persistence, elasticity, and appeal may reside in traces of powerful, suppressed worldviews where humans and animals are seen as interdependent and equal parts of the ecological chain of being. Cross-cultural fragments and stories of Bear receive discursive and conversive attention from Armenian, Finnish, Sami, Canadian, American, German, Greenland, Tsimshian and Anishnabe scholars, storytellers, poets, and artists.

This anthology is of interest not only to students and scholars but anyone interested in archaeology or anthropology, cultural and women's studies, sociology, ethnography, comparative religious studies, mythology, folklore, northern and arctic studies, Native studies, ecocriticism/ecofeminism, and feminist theory/body politics.

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