
Geary Hobson, ed. *The Remembered Earth: An Anthology of Contemporary Native American Literature*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003. 417p.

ROSAMARIA CHACON
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

First published in 1979 (Red Earth Press), the seventh reprinting of *The Remembered Earth* by UNM press speaks to its contemporary value and currency. Part of the value of this anthology is based on the diversity of authors, topics, and approaches. In alignment with its emphasis on the land and the significance of land in Native American culture, it is divided, regionally, into four sections—Northeast, South-east, Southwest and Northwest—and includes authors and artists from 42 tribes, and 16 states (and Quebec). This diversity is matched by the genres that the editor chose to incorporate: poetry, drama, short stories, essays, drawings, photographs, and pieces that defy genre.

In addition to Geary Hobson's coherent delineation of Native American identity in his introduction and Paula Gunn Allen's portrayal of the primary cultural characteristics in Native American literature, this anthology can be an asset in a number of different fields. It would, for example, make an excellent companion piece in a history course; Luci Tapahonso in "The Snakeman" and Russell Bates in "Rite of Encounter" address the grim issues of boarding school and smallpox in a way that demands attention and critical consideration. Simon J. Ortiz' personal narrative of marching on Gallup, New Mexico in 1973 in support of the Oglala Sioux struggle at Wounded Knee is both exuberant and somber. Providing political and historical context from an American Indian perspective, this piece also examines the generation of modern Indian social activism and agency. "The story of a People," according to Ortiz, "is the history of what they are doing" (297).

The thematic diversity of this anthology makes it especially suitable for the study of early contemporary Native American literature. The authors and artists address the destruction of the earth, the significance of language and the value of the stories and songs, ruptures of home and self, and the corollary urgency to fill these massive gaps, urban places and spaces, and returns and renewals. Community and continuance are truthfully depicted in Gladys Cardiff's poem "Combing." She declares, "Preparing hair. Something / Women do for each other, / Plaiting the generations" (lines 27-29). Cardiff's declaration is part of the cultural work of this anthology—part of the work that moves away from the concept of the Invented Indian described by Louis Owens in *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*. Confounding history and seriously strenuous efforts, the American

Indian has not vanished; nor does he or she match the other characteristics of the Invented Indian.

The entire text, in fact, definitively positions itself in opposition to this myth and other malignant historical, social, and cultural myths that surround American Indians. Claiming their literary, intellectual, and cultural property, several pieces focus on the pseudo shaman. The authors in this work also provide a solid context for more contemporary work, thereby adding to its value in the literature classroom. Almost seeming to anticipate, for example, Gerald Vizenor's *The Trickster of Liberty: Native Heirs to a Wild Baronage* and Gordon Henry's *The Light People*, Gogisgi / Carroll Arnett satirizes anthropologists in "Powwow" while Carol Lee Sanchez presents a razor-sharp critique of Native American museum displays in "(Conversations #1)"—"SEE THE INDIANS AT THE PUEBLO," she taunts. The diverse range of pieces that depict anthropocentrically (in Western terms) rocks chanting and heat dancing foreshadow the work of Thomas King—his hilarious novel *Green Grass, Running Water* and his introduction to the anthology *All My Relations*, in which he explains the crucial principle "all my relations."

The most stimulating piece in this anthology is N. Scott Momaday's essay "The Man Made of Words." Like many of the works in this text, he extends beyond literature to provide a critical lens for the study of Native American work: literature, art, culture, and history. He provides a very specific framework for serious consideration and analysis. Some scholars may erroneously contextualize his ideas in a postmodern mode. They are, however, expressly particular to his Kiowa life experience. He writes, "We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves. Our best destiny is to imagine, at least, completely, who and what, and that we are. The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined" (167). One might suggest that the authors and artists in *The Remembered Earth* have defied a history of destruction and attempted eradication, and imagined themselves well. In enjoying their pieces, one needs to attend to the style. The humor and irony when the speaker suggests in "Buffalo Poem #1"—for example, that the "SMALL HERD OF BUFFALO / ... 'RUNNING WILD' / AT THE ALBUQUERQUE AIRPORT ... - - - roam on, brothers..."—are excellent. The only difficulty in using this text is the lack of titles in the Table of Contents.

In alignment with the cultural reclamation of this text, it is necessary to note that this review is written from the perspective of an outsider, someone who has studied Native American literature but is not Native American. ✱