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This classification is of course arbitrary, since many weapons can have multiple functions (weapons that cut can also pierce, and many weapons that cut, pierce, strike, or defend can also have a symbolic value). However, it needs to be recognized that such a division in categories is necessary to make order out of the magnitude of material being treated.

In each of the chapters, Taylor carefully traces the historical evolution of particular weapons, describes how each weapon was used (even providing drawings for the different methods of arrow release), and analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of its design with precise attention to technical details. Furthermore, Taylor sometimes explains how the weapons were made and pays much attention to the impact of broader historical issues—such as the introduction of the gun and the horse as well as the increasing trade between American Indians and Euro-Americans—on the development of weapons employed by Native peoples. Particularly interesting are Taylor’s comments on the European influence on weapon design and on the creative adaptations employed by Indian peoples to weapons introduced by the colonists.

Although *Native American Weapons* attempts to cover the entire range of weapons utilized in North America, a clear bias in favor of the weapons used by Plains Indians emerges. Most of the material, in fact, is drawn from this region. The author justifies this by admitting that the available collections and data from the Plains region are far richer than from any other part of North America. For this reason, the bias seems almost inevitable.

Without a doubt, *Native American Weapons* will provide much titillation to those who hold a romantic fascination for the warrior lore of American Indian cultures. However, it would be a mistake to dismiss this title as a commercial product designed only for the popular market. In fact, Taylor’s work is commendable for its depth and careful research drawing from so many excellent sources. For this reason, *Native American Weapons* provides a good sourcebook on this particular aspect of American Indian culture to serious scholars as well.

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The Nature of Native American Poetry. By Norma C. Wilson. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000. 176 pages. \$34.95 cloth; \$17.95 paper.

Imagine being immersed in the poetry of the great indigenous poets that shaped the genre as it emerged and inspired others to express themselves similarly in poetry. This opportunity is offered in Norma C. Wilson’s new analytical work, *The Nature of Native American Poetry*. Wilson focuses on leading poets Carter Revard, N. Scott Momaday, Simon J. Ortiz, Lance Henson, Roberta Hill, Linda Hogan, Wendy Rose, and Joy Harjo, illustrating how these authors’ innovative work established the genre of Native American poetry.

The book is divided into ten chapters, which include an introductory chapter, a chapter for each of the eight poets, and a chapter for “The New

Generation” of poets. Chapter one introduces the novice reader to the genre and explains “that poetry in the European mode was a new literary form for America’s indigenous people” (p. 2). However, the introduction is an imposing chapter because in Wilson’s quest to enlighten the reader, she overwhelms the reader with the history of Native American poetry, British and traditional American poetic influences, and political commentary on the treatment of indigenous people. In her enthusiasm, Wilson acknowledges numerous critics and poets, overloading the introduction with information. Readers new to Native American literature may feel overwhelmed. Yet Wilson redeems herself later as the remainder of the book is much more accessible and readers will begin to gain a greater understanding of Native American poetry through her concise explanations.

Also within the introductory chapter, Wilson demonstrates the connections between Native American poetry and British and traditional American poetry. She refers to the “English Romantics’ celebration of nature, their recognition of particular birds as symbols of freedom and spirit, and their emphasis on spirituality” (p. 3), as well as American authors that “claimed an original, spiritual relationship to nature” (p. 3). Of the traditional American authors, Wilson specifically focuses on Walt Whitman, comparing his poetry to Native chants and songs, as well as discussing Whitman’s influence on contemporary poets, such as Simon J. Ortiz, noting that Ortiz “both honored and rejected Whitman” (p. 5). Wilson returns to Whitman throughout the book, though she also makes references to other well-known traditional poets, including T. S. Eliot, Edgar Allen Poe, and William Butler Yeats. These references allow the reader to appreciate the interrelationships between past and present and traditional and Native poetry.

In the eight subsequent chapters, Wilson offers readers a quick overview of each author’s life and writing. By dedicating a chapter to each poet, Wilson effectively conveys the influence each has had and continues to have on the genre. This also allows her to pay homage to each author. Wilson is obviously a great fan as she is enthusiastic in her explanation of the authors and their poetry.

The four male poets are the first to be discussed—Carter Revard, N. Scott Momaday, Simon J. Ortiz, and Lance Henson. Wilson respectfully notes that “Revard’s poetry presents Osage and Ponca traditions living within the context of a modern world that is anything but ideal” (p. 25), and that N. Scott Momaday “has been cited as an inspiration by more contemporary Native writers than any other author” (p. 31). Her tone is one of admiration, and her observations are centered on the spiritual, natural, and historical themes reflected by these poets. Wilson states that “Henson’s poems create through heightened images the impressions and moods of historical places, people, and events” (pp. 66–67). Wilson also believes Ortiz “exerts a voice for the purpose of healing not only the indigenous peoples but all of America” (p. 46). Wilson’s tone remains sensitive and reverent in these chapters.

The women poets are the next to be discussed in *The Nature of Native American Poetry*—Roberta Hill, Linda Hogan, Wendy Rose, and Joy Harjo. Wilson continues her pattern of analysis, detailing the life and work of each

author. It is interesting to note that the tone changes in these chapters, reflecting the change in the poets' gender. Now the reader feels an edge in Wilson's reference to "Hogan's confrontation with nuclear power" (p. 92) in her book, *Daughters, I Love You*, and Wendy Rose's "angry, ironic, and pan-Indian voice in *Academic Squaw*," which was a "direct result of [Rose's] study of anthropology" (p. 102). Wilson's commentary also becomes more definitive, which can be seen when she claims, "Harjo's use of anaphora, balanced phrasing, and inclusive language, and the woman's appreciation of the natural word echo the style of traditional oral songs" (p. 113). Wilson is much more specific and confident in these chapters.

Wilson concludes her analysis with a quick view of "The New Generation" of indigenous poets. She briefly offers insight to poets such as Elizabeth Woody, Sherman Alexie, and Tiffany Midge, among others. Wilson ends strongly with the statement that "Native poets are sounding a powerful voice, one that will be heard long into the new millennium" (p. 134).

Norma C. Wilson has succeeded in introducing readers to Native American poetry, specifically to those poets who have made a lasting impact on the literary world. Though at times Wilson overwhelms the reader with information, she takes time to clarify her points, establishing a trust with the novice reader. This is clearly an introduction to Native American poetry and not meant to be a detailed analysis. Previously, Wilson had coedited the book, *One Room Country School: South Dakota Stories* with Charles L. Woodard. *The Nature of Native American Poetry* is a deviation from that format, yet Wilson succeeds in her new venture.

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The People of Denendeh: Ethnohistory of the Indians of Canada's Northwest Territories. By June Helm with contributions by Teresa S. Carterette and Nancy O. Lurie. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000. 412 pages. \$39.95 cloth.

The First Nations peoples known as the Dene, or the People, are Athapaskan speakers living in the Mackenzie River drainage region in the western sub-arctic of present-day Canada. Historically, the Dene have been referred to by the assigned group names of Chipewyan, Slavey, Dogrib, Mountain, Bearlake, Hare, and Kutchin. *Denendeh* means "Land of the Dene" and June Helm, an anthropologist, carried out field research at various locations between 1951 and 1979. Her "self-appointed task here is to offer what my research can speak to in the Dene experience from the time of earliest contact with the white world to the last quarter of the twentieth century" (p. xii).

Helm does not aspire to comprehensive coverage; the omission of "an" or "the" before *ethnohistory* in the subtitle is intentional. Not a collection of independent papers, the volume is uniquely constructed as a pastiche of writings with the majority taken from works by Helm (some coauthored), composed