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New Voices from the Longhouse: An Anthology of Contemporary Iroquois Writing. Edited by Joseph Bruchac.

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ner's piece on Erdrich in reminding us that when a fiction writer talks about community, she or he is asking us to consider not just the whole but the system by which its parts cohere. Within such systematics can be found the generative and formative principles behind narrative. The best essays in this collection understand that principle, and in the two selections on non-majority writers we are able to see this essentially aesthetic principle studied in a way that does not allow the political and social to overly distract.

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New Voices from the Longhouse: An Anthology of Contemporary Iroquois Writing. Edited by Joseph Bruchac. Greenfield Center, NY: Greenfield Review Press, 1989. 294 pages. \$12.95 Paper.

As an extremely active writer, publisher, and anthologist, Joe Bruchac has created many fine works of literature, included among which are a number of fine anthologies. This is another one. It seems to me that every couple of years when the number of anthologies becomes overwhelming, I start to think that the anthology is a weak form of literature, too easy to create, too easy for people to ignore, and too insubstantial to allow any one writer the scope to shine. Presently, those of us interested in Native American Literature are being treated to a swell in the variety as well as the number of anthologies, but Bruchac's book is an exciting collection of new and established voices from the Iroquois people, making an important statement about what can only be seen as Iroquois Literature with all the nationalistic implications that such a concept carries.

New Voices from the Longhouse gives implicit and explicit support to the contention that an entity such as Contemporary Iroquois Literature exists with the inclusion of a wide variety of work. The volume is subtitled Contemporary Iroquois Writing, not Contemporary Iroquois Literature, because along with some fine poetry and fiction, the reader will find cultural history, the story of Iroquois iron workers, ghost stories, and articles on health, wampum, and the ceremonies. Contributing editors Maurice Kenny and Alex Jacobs have helped Bruchac compile a

stimulating mix of poets, fiction writers, and non-fiction prose writers (I assume). Well-known writers such as Kenny, Peter Blue Cloud, and Roberta Hill Whiteman have contributed, as well as other writers whose work has been reaching a wider audience in the last few years: Rokwaho, Karoniaktatie, Gail Tremblay, Beth Brant, and Salli Benedict. The volume has a truly multi-generational feel about it. It merges work by people who have been active in Iroquois life for many years with writers publishing for the first time.

The basic premise of the anthology ties in with some questions with which I've been wrestling. Geary Hobson's article in a recent issue of *the Wicazo Sa Review* 5:1 (Spring 1989) argues convincingly that not enough respect and understanding are employed in the academic attempt to subsume Native American Literature into American Literature. His point is that literature from members of a tribal group can be understood only in the context of that nation. This anthology seems to be based on that position. It would appear that everything from the selection of the contributors to the selection of the material rests on some unspoken assumptions, assumptions that are vital to improving our understanding of Native American Literature and especially Iroquois writing. I think that the lack of an introduction which addresses this issue is a flaw in the book. Certainly it could be said that the reader can draw his own conclusions as to what constitutes contemporary Iroquois writing, but here is a chance for the real experts to encourage some insight into Iroquois thought, experience, and literature.

What is the vision of the editors? What common threads connect Iroquois writing with, say, Navajo writing, or what differs? What are the special, unique strengths of contemporary Iroquois writing? How important is it that we see the work here as Iroquois, Native American, or Modern American? There are so many questions in my mind. It just seems that the striking work in the book deserves the sturdy frame of a good introduction.

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Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore, 1620–1984. By William S. Simmons. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1986. 331 pages. \$35.00 Cloth. \$15.95 Paper.