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for a most pleasant reading, while the bibliography and informative footnotes furnish material for further research. This book is a valuable contribution to the field of Native American literature and cultural studies.

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Aniyunwiya/Real Human Beings: An Anthology of Contemporary Cherokee Prose. Edited by Joseph Bruchac. New York: Greenfield Review Press, 1995. 299 pages. \$17.95 paper.

Joseph Bruchac's (Abenaki) earlier groundbreaking anthology *Songs from this Earth on Turtle's Back* (New York: Greenfield, 1983) introduced a wide variety of native writers to a large nonnative and native audience. One member of that audience was Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene), who became inspired to write about his native experience as a result of seeing himself as a part of this writing community. With this new anthology *Aniyunwiya/Real Human Beings: An Anthology of Contemporary Cherokee Prose*, the theme of which is as broad as its title, Joseph Bruchac has followed the same essentially inclusive and egalitarian design as in *Songs*. The thirty-four prose selections by twenty-three writers are arranged alphabetically by author, with short biographies and photographs of most of the contributors.

The apparent purpose of Bruchac's collections is to recognize, promote, validate, inspire, and encourage a variety of native voices and to leave a written record of contemporary native thought and achievement for the next generations. Such is Joseph Bruchac's work as president of the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers, which produces a series of workshops and a mentoring program staffed by published native writers to assist beginning and emerging writers. Bruchac's anthologies stand as tributes to the number, variety, and talent of current native writers. In *Aniyunwiya*, the human experience of Cherokee writers offers something for almost any reader interested in a current expression of native intellectual, creative, historical, and social experience.

Aniyunwiya differs from *Songs*, however, not only in form—prose instead of poetry—but in tribal specificity. Although tribal heritage of individual writers is clearly identified in the earlier

work, the focus of *Aniyunwiya* on Cherokee writers provides an important text for literary critics who are involved in the exploration of tribal aesthetics as evidenced in specific cultures. Almost devoid of editorial comment, the text, which focuses on what it means to be a human in the twentieth century from a Cherokee point of view, becomes a valuable resource of primary material open to ongoing interpretation.

Resistant to imposing exclusively Euro-American genres of linguistic and cultural philosophy on native texts, native writers and literary critics such as Kimberly Blaeser (Anishinabe), Craig Womack (Muscogee/Cherokee), and a growing number of others are examining the critical imperative of interpreting native literatures through specific cultural perceptions. Their inquiry inevitably leads to an examination of distinctive tribal cultures, languages, and experiences. A collection like *Aniyunwiya*, although it could not possibly represent all contemporary Cherokee thought and experience, supports a critical trend in the production of tribal collections of native writings that will afford an opportunity to develop a serious forum for the discussion of tribal aesthetics. Not to say that collections of works by members of a tribe have never been produced, but critical attention to, awareness of, and interest in native writers assure that new texts, such as *Aniyunwiya*, will not be viewed as representations of local color or regionalism.

Furthermore, the arbitrary arrangement of the prose and the diversity of sources in *Aniyunwiya* challenge any reductive or essentialist explication of these Cherokee texts. Neither would the collection easily accommodate anthropological paradigms. In fact, it is far easier to catalog the differences represented here than the similarities. The voices of the Cherokee writers included in the anthology represent backgrounds and styles that are urban, rural, historical, legendary, scholarly, biographical, fictional, epistolary, poetic, and confessional. These voices are at times proud, angry, sad, amused, ironic, disgusted, or yearning. They derive from young, old, established, and emerging professionals from the East Coast, the West Coast, the Southwest, the Midwest, and the deep South.

However, the prose of *Aniyunwiya* echoes themes of Cherokee heritage and connection, even if the writers have never been to the places or known first-hand the times of the stories that they have been told. In Cynthia Kasee's essay "Homecoming," for example, she concludes, "[T]o be a descendant of a removed tribe is to be

homesick for a place you've never been" (p. 201). Oklahoma towns and place names also become a central motif that embodies the conflicting strains of exile and community, dispossession and family, oil and agriculture, alcohol and survival. For example, in Glenn Twist's story "The Dispossession," the narrator comments paradoxically, "We were foreigners, alone and unwelcome, in our own homeland" (p. 276). Historical names such as Ross, Ridge, Christi, and Rogers that run through various essays and stories epitomize the controversies, rebellions, and sly humor that are part of a living political and social tradition. Finally, Cherokee language represents Cherokee culture, ancient and modern, alive in its words. In such an anthology the themes do not have to be consistent, because the individuals and their particular stories are welcome as parts of a larger, dispersed literary nation of "real human beings."

In this collection, stories about members of other tribes are also welcome, such as the tale about a waitress from Isleta Pueblo in Robert Gish's "First Horses," or the characters of uncertain native heritage referred to as "Indian." I once heard a Lakota writer who grew up in an Ojibwa community explain to someone who found her situation odd that "[w]e have cars now." Indeed, the Cherokee have long since slipped the narrow boundaries set out for them by removal, reservations, and allotment. However, the boundaries for those whose stories or whose "playing Indian" are not welcome are explicitly defined by such writers as Rayna Green in her scholarly essay "The Tribe Called Wannabee." Particularly odious to her are those "part Cherokee" nonnatives whose claim is "one that creates interest in them as an individual . . . with an admirable heritage" while simultaneously negating the cultural and literal existence of all tribal peoples (pp. 144-45).

Nevertheless, if not all "part Cherokees" are authentic, *Aniyunwiya/Real Human Beings* is. Ordinary readers, teachers, scholars, and writers can be thankful for a work that brings together recognized artists such as Betty Bell and Robert Conley with talented beginners such as Eddie Webb, and for a work that also brings out the artist and storyteller in a political leader such as Wilma Mankiller.

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