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dians, which he eventually chaired and which became a voice for educated Indians. But it failed to become a congress of tribal delegates as he had hoped.

Ironically, Eastman ended up working for the Indian agency he so much condemned. He became an inspector during which time he reported on agency conditions and settled disputes, particularly amazing since he had constantly been at odds with the Indian agents himself. Eastman continued his lecture engagements and writing until his death in 1939 at the age of 80, an age in which new understandings of the perils of allotment had been recognized and the Indian Reorganization period of the Collier administration had begun. It is interesting to note that Eastman pursued careers in the Indian service in every capacity other than that for which he had been trained.

Eastman's life spanned the period in which Indian people lived a traditional lifestyle in the treaty period to the period of enlightenment in Indian policy, and his life serves as a guide through this eventful period of attitudinal change.

Wilson's delicate treatment of this fascinating individual is balanced and fair in that he does not ignore criticisms of Eastman, but always places them in their appropriate historical context. He always provides both sides to the many conflicts which plagued Eastman's career, allowing the reader to understand both Eastman's view and that of the administration under which he served. The entire book serves as a tribute to a great man who was truly a pioneer in the field of Indian rights advocacy and self-determination. That Wilson has provided both the scholarly community and the lay public with such an insightful treatment of an important historical person is a tribute to him as well.

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What Happened When the Hopi Hit New York. By Wendy Rose. New York: Strawberry Press, 1983.

As I noted in *American Book Review* (March/April, 1983), women hold an extremely important position within the context of contemporary Native American poetry. This no doubt immediately seems to be as it should be—a perception which is entirely

correct—but, in a generically literary sense, it is quite an unusual circumstance. The practice or profession of literature as it is conventionally known has historically evidenced a pronounced masculine domination. The tradition which produced Homer, Shakespeare, Byron and Emerson has rigidly denied anything approaching equal access to those of the feminine gender, a situation which cannot be said to have truly lapsed as of this writing.

The fact of the importance of the female voice and perspective within modern Indian writing, especially poetry, cannot therefore be explained through the customary vehicles of literary or aesthetic analysis. Both literature and aesthetics are, after all, definitional terms deriving from the European tradition. What is at issue in matters of American Indian poetry is the bringing to bear upon the world of letters an entirely different, and vibrantly ongoing, cultural heritage: that of Native America itself.

Although the various cultures indigenous to this hemisphere have always differed widely in matters of both verbal and visible expression, there are a number of factors of fundamental importance that might be viewed as the common denominators of what has been described by Vine Deloria, Jr., as "an Indian Worldview." Central to these are conceptions of the balance existing between the ultimate unity of all the elements of any given situation, whether this situation be the forging of the ingredients composing day-to-day community life, or the reaching of an understanding of the interactive nature of the universe.

A certain homage has been paid of late, by non-Indians, to this intrinsic Indian sense of balance and unity. In the main, this recognition of value and utility has been accorded within the realm of ecology and, to a much lesser extent, physics. While this acknowledgement within the area of the physical sciences is germane, and long overdue, it does little enough to address the totality of the Indian concept or the resultant actualization of balance and unity pervading traditional Indian life.

Within the latter consideration lies the nexus determining the "why" of the scope and magnitude of Indian women's participation in poetic endeavor. It is reflective simply of the core notion that sexual differentiation, like everything else within the Native worldview, must be balanced, unified and rendered harmonious. The subordination of one sex to the other—such as is represented in Europe's male domination of arts and letters—

indicates an imbalance that is utterly untenable and unacceptable to anyone even marginally sharing in the traditional Indian perspective.

To the Indian, a male dominated form of social organization, a form in which the female vision is stifled, not only makes no sense, it must be considered as unhealthy, repugnant and as ultimately unworkable as the notion of a human dominated universe (i.e., the European model). In fact, one is quickly led to argue that a society which bases its organization upon a permanent—or perhaps even a temporary—subordination of one sex to the other must in the end prove itself incapable of achieving a balanced relationship with the remainder of its environment.

Those who would sift out a portion of the Indian worldview for conceptual application to a "hard science" such as ecology, while retaining the outlooks and attitudes of imbalance within their political and social lives, are thus consigning themselves to failure before they begin. The Indian worldview, of which a balance of masculine and feminine elements is but an integral part, is itself a unity; it cannot be effectively broken down into component parts for purposes of piecemeal application.

The Native American practice of equilibrium and harmony between the sexes has been concretized in myriad ways. Among the better known are: the decisive political role exercised by women within the so-called Iroquois Confederacy, regarding property relations among the Lakota, concerning kinship structure and lineage among the Cheyenne and Anishinabe, and with reference to spiritual matters in the Crow and Cherokee nations. The list could be extended to great length citing lesser known examples. Indians have never had need for the rhetoric of "affirmative action" in actualizing this social condition. A traditional saying is that "the strength of a people rests with its women;" worldview precludes mere lip-service to this principal.

What women have to say is thus of exceeding importance among traditional peoples, no less so than the words of men. The words and wisdom of one sex is necessarily without the complement of the words and wisdom of the other. Nowhere is this unity of balance more dramatically evidenced than within the context of poetry, the literary world's closest approximation of the oral forms deployed since time immemorial by Native America. There are a number of fine poets among Indian men

today, but the point here is that for every Maurice Kenny there is a Joy Harjo, for every Peter Blue Cloud there is a Paula Gunn Allen, for every Simon Ortiz there is a Roberta Hill Whiteman, for every Barney Bush there is a Linda Hogan or Mary Tall Mountain. Again, the list could be continued at length. Balance is thus quite tangibly achieved, preserved in the face of an arrogant and overbearing European tradition—which insists that thought and articulation are “man’s domain.”

In the foremost rank of Native American poets, whether male or female, is Wendy Rose. A Hopi, she is currently director of American Indian Studies at the University of California at Berkeley and is editor of *The American Indian Quarterly*. She has also been a very active poetic voice for well over a decade, beginning publication of booklength collections in 1973 with *Hopi Roadrunner Dancing*. There followed other books: *Long Division: A Tribal History* (1976; reprinted in 1981); *Academic Squaw* (1977); *Builder Kachina: A Home Going Cycle* (1979); and a collected works volume, *Lost Copper* (1980).

Over the years, she has achieved a poetic stature and maturity which is virtually unassailable for being based in romantic non-Indian preoccupations with ethnic tokenism. Hers is a powerful voice in any language. And it is perhaps best evidenced in her latest effort, *What Happened When the Hopi Hit New York*. With the publication of this collection, Rose displays—in some ways for the first time—the depth of her ability to depict the range and subtlety of the contemporary North American Indian experience . . . and the extent of the intercultural conflict which both marks and shapes it.

In poems such as “Stopover in Denver,” “Indian in Iowa City,” “Searching for Indians in New Orleans,” “My Red Antennae Receiving: Vermont,” and “Ghosts: Brooklyn,” Wendy Rose may be said to have reached her full stride as a poet. The sensitivity and gentleness with which she approaches her topics, as well as the skill, and toughness with which she defends her identity, critiques the encroaching dominant culture and combines to make this the most memorable of her several books.

The release of *What Happened When the Hopi Hit New York* is an event that gives cause for a certain rejoicing in all quarters of Indian Country. More than any writer in recent memory Wendy Rose has reasserted the proposition that not only the strength, but the insight and stamina of a people lie with its women. This

is a collection of verse which must be read, her's is a voice that must be heard, for through the book and the voice we can all gain a fresh view of the way in which we must continue . . . for the sake of ourselves, and for the sake of future generations. To Wendy Rose: "Sister, thank you."

Ward Churchill
University of Colorado

Reading the Fire: Essays in the Traditional Indian Literatures of the Far West. By Jarold Ramsey. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983. 250 pp. \$16.95 Cloth.

"Understanding the form and pressure of, to use the dangerous word one more time, natives' inner lives is more like grasping a proverb, catching an allusion, seeing a joke—or, as I have suggested, reading a poem—than it is like achieving communion."

—Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (1983)

Proverbs, allusions, jokes, poems—daily literary texts, rather than religious epiphanies: what one admires in Jarold Ramsey's readings is how readable the scholarship can be, how human, how insightful. His work is academically grounded and yet open to reflection. "For myself, I was first drawn to the Western mythologies as a poet looking for new ways to imagine the American land, and what I found was the oldest way, whereby the Paiutes and the Blackfeet and the Tillamooks storied their lands as *home*" (xv). Here is a poet's professor with common sense, for once, in a field of exotic possibilities often going wrong. His premise is simple but hard to prove—the "native-traditional imagination can speak to Anglo-modern imagination after all." From Columbus and Cortez to Lawrence, Williams, Penn Warren, and Snyder, Americans have been asking over four centuries whether Native Americans can reciprocate a "native" consciousness, whether all of us can in any way share cultures. Ramsey's eleven chapters "interpret" the oral texts of a "native" American literary context. Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare stand on the horizon.

It is not easy to read the tribal fires. Promethean, indeed Lévi-Strausseau deadfalls fuel the flames between "our" culture and