

Anne Brewster, Angeline O'Neill, and Rosemary van den Berg, eds.
Those Who Remain Will Always Remember: An Anthology of Aboriginal Writing. Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2000. Pp. 334. \$19.95.

The relationship between indigenous literatures and publishing is an international problem, albeit one which is played out nationally. The very value of indigenous culture, both to indigenous peoples and to others, is dependent on it being, regardless of how nebulous this phrase might seem, "true to itself." The issue is not just "theft" of the culture or even "appropriation of the indigenous voice" but rather that enormous question which has driven philosophy throughout the ages: what makes a thing what it is? What ensures all of its integrity, that it includes nothing extraneous but includes everything essential? And who decides?

As one of the editors of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* I am well aware of these concerns. I am a non-indigenous academic and I know that it was only the presence of my co-editor, Daniel David Moses, a Delaware poet and playwright, that made the process of creating the anthology viable. At least one of our contributors decided to treat me as an absence and in correspondence acted as though there was only one editor, Dan. In the introduction to the anthology we discuss our desire to evade canonization, to avoid the imprimatur which says, "Everything in this book is the true Native literature, and anything that is not here does not count." We did not want people believing we were establishing what should comprise NATIVE LITERATURE. Yet I realize this is no more than a faint feint. If an anthology succeeds, it canonizes.

Questions of identity and anthology are the same in Australia but recently the controversies have become even stronger. If asked to list Canada's most significant Native writers, most readers would likely first name Thomas King, and then various others, probably Moses, Tomson Highway, Lee Maracle, Maria Campbell, Jeannette Armstrong, Drew Hayden Taylor and Eden Robinson. But while there have been various discussions of the cultural background of these authors, most particularly of King's American roots, no one has questioned whether they are indigenous writers. This contrasts with Australia, where Mudrooroo, arguably even more important in Australia than King is in Canada, and Roberta Sykes, who might be claimed to combine the stature of Campbell, Armstrong and Maracle, have been "outed" as at least largely African-American in racial heritage and possibly having no Aboriginal blood at all. As the minutiae of their racial mixtures have been sleuthed, most have given little consideration to the obvious fact that both Mudrooroo and Sykes grew up being discriminated against as "black Australians" and both have been involved in Aboriginal activism for more than thirty years.

Neither of these authors appears in *Those Who Remain*, nor is even mentioned. But in my opinion they hover around it, particularly Mudrooroo. Like the authors in this collection, Mudrooroo is from Western Australia. The trajectory of his own development as an author follows exactly that typical of indigenous literature throughout the world. His first novel, *Wild Cat Falling*, was apparently autobiographical, of a young black street punk fighting racism. In his later works, he examined various aspects of ethnography and moved on to a developing sense of history, visible most successfully in *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World* and *The Song Circle of Jacky*, both of which use flamboyant metatexts to dissect the problems of Australian society as seen through Aboriginal eyes. Mudrooroo's method combines Aboriginal oral tradition and an able exploration of the techniques of postmodernism.

Besides the many published questionings of Mudrooroo's race, there have been comments on the literariness of his texts. Two Aboriginal authors included in *Those Who Remain*, Tom Little and Lorna Little, wrote an article in which they asserted that Mudrooroo's writing lacks "the empirical and experiential detail" (Little 7) usually associated with Aboriginal writing. In other words, Mudrooroo's disruption of the forms of documentary realism and move beyond autobiography and ethnography show, even more than his family tree, that he lacks indigeneity.

I have discussed this premise elsewhere and rejected it (Goldie), but it is an inevitable part of my evaluation of the present collection. Obviously my subject position, as a non-indigenous Canadian, is not the best stance from which to assess indigenous writing from Australia. But since I am the reviewer, I offer my opinion that *Those Who Remain* will be of limited interest to the casual reader. The best of the book is that documentary realism — accounts of personal experience, often of childhood disrupted by white authority or relatives left psychologically destroyed by the system and its attributes such as poverty and alcoholism. Past examples throughout much of the world have shown these to be the usual topics in the beginnings of indigenous literatures. In this anthology there is almost none of the verbal sophistication and textual innovation which makes texts by Mudrooroo and Thomas King such great sources of pleasure.

Glenyse Ward is one of the better known authors included in *Those Who Remain*, although represented here only through an interview. She recalls that in her first venture into publication she was incensed when her editor suggested changes. Only later did she realize that revision is part of writing. But this of course is one of the primary problems with indigenous writing. Most authors and publishers believe that the input of an editor is central to a successful product. But if this disrupts indigeneity, then editing must be prevented. But what

literary culture produces the best works without editing? This collection shows periodic sparks but they could use a lot of fanning by an involved editor. When I was struck by one line in a piece by Alf Taylor, "I found a friend in the pencil whenever I went bush," I realized I had been starved for something akin to a metaphor.

I know that this apparent lack of an involved editor working with the submissions is intentional. I have no doubt the editors would be more than able to do the job. I have an extensive familiarity with the work of only one of the editors, Anne Brewster, but she is exemplary of the intelligent, engaged and informed scholar of indigenous literatures. She is as good as they get. And perhaps I am just wrongheaded in looking for paradox and ambiguity instead of the truth of indigenous observation, But the introduction itself suggests the necessity of something beyond simple reflection. It refers to a story by Ambrose Chalarimeri which asserts the importance of the author's flash of recognition of his own indigeneity:

This realisation represents a complex nexus. It is at this point that the false consciousness of the colonised disperses and the recognition that (post/neo)colonial power can be challenged is born; it also constitutes a moment of mourning; the point at which an awareness of loss is intensified. (13)

The rhetoric here is theory-laden, the tone so often used in post-colonial studies to demonstrate a sophistication in criticism which is not immediately apparent in the writing being examined.

If Mudrooroo and Roberta Sykes are not Aboriginal then it is ridiculous to include them in anthologies of Aboriginal literature. But when they, and others whose Aboriginality has not been questioned, have established something that has been called "Aboriginal literature," which is full of the textual dexterity most readers in the twenty-first century expect from "literature," it is difficult to accept the step back represented in *Those Who Remain*. If Aboriginal writing is only realist depiction of under-class experience, it seems a very restrictive category. I hope I don't seem like a rebirth of Cleanth Brooks or William Empson if I say that the polysemic levels of literature can no longer be dismissed as a "European" imposition but are part of professional writing in all cultures today.

As so many have noted in the contexts of indigenous painting and indigenous music, the time is past for the "Native informant" system, in which an academic enshrines primitive documentation as indigenous art, primarily as ethnography. Instead, indigenous art is ART. And I just happen to have a good example to hand. *Those Who Remain* has a striking cover based on Sandra Hill's *Water Dreaming*, which combines traditional serpent imagery with feathers, songlines, and sepia ethnographic photographs. If only some of the writing between the covers had anywhere near the power of Hill's painting.

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TERRY GOLDIE

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Andrew Leak and George Paizis, eds. *The Holocaust and the Text: Speaking the Unspeakable*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000. Pp. ix, 196. \$39.95.

For the most part, the eleven essays gathered in this collection address the Holocaust from the vantage point of European scholars analysing the works of European writers. Both editors teach French at the University of London, and their trans-Channel perspectives shed light on *l'univers concentrationnaire*. Quoting in their "Introduction" Geoffrey Hartmann's statement that "knowledge has not become understanding," (3) the editors search for a phenomenology to bridge the half-century gap between Holocaust and post-Holocaust worlds. Their discussion focuses on history and representation: Levinas refuses representation, Appelfeld chooses an oblique view because one does not look directly into the sun, and other writers resort to methods of defamiliarization, polyphony, and psychoanalysis.

Berel Lang's "Holocaust Genres and the Turn to History" is the only American contribution to this volume. Lang argues that the unspeakable *must* be spoken, and examines such genres as diary, memoir, and novel with their grounding in history.

Robert Gordon surveys 55 works of Italian writing from 1945-47 with Primo Levi's *If This is a Man* as the main text, Deportation, resistance, modes of neo-realism, genres, gender, and Dante's *Inferno* fall under his scrutiny.

Anna Hardman examines women's testimony beginning with *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (1993) which deals with such writers as Charlotte Delbo and Ida Fink. Despite attempts to bond into friendship, family, or community, feminine values within the camps remain ambiguous. Just as women present a unique perspective on the Holocaust, so too do children in Andrea Reiter's essay. Ironically Jewish children identified with the Nazis: "Children were more likely to be impressed by the smart uniforms of the SS. They were captivated by the position of power their torturers represented" (85).