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**Review of *Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations* Edited by Gretchen M. Bataille**

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations*. Edited by Gretchen M. Bataille. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. x + 266 pp. \$80.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

“The misrepresentation, commodification, and distortion of indigenous identities have existed from the moment of first contact” between Native peoples and Europeans, editor Gretchen Bataille observes in the introduction to *Native American Representations*. The problems are familiar to literary scholars: power relations produced by colonization determine who has the authority to represent Native peoples in the broader culture, and these representations in turn tend to reinforce European dominance and to obfuscate the violence, and even the fact, of colonization. The questions of how Native peoples have been represented throughout the centuries of colonialism, by whom, and for what purposes comprise the focus of this anthology. Most of its contributors analyze the problems raised by historical and contemporary representations in a series of essays that examine a range of interdisciplinary materials including postcolonial theory, WPA papers of the 1930s, popular films, and the production of collaborative personal narratives. Other contributors examine the ways in which Native thinkers and scholars engage and contest conventional representations, defining their societies and cultures on their own terms and providing critical perspectives on European colonization in such forms as fiction, oral histories, films, and traditional stories. The contributors are newer as well as established scholars in Native American stud-

ies, including Native writers Katherine Shanley and Louis Owens. Together, they aim both to provide critical perspectives on conventional representations and, in some cases, to offer challenging alternatives more consistent with the concerns of Native communities.

The essays cover a wide range of subjects that focus for the most part on the twentieth century, and they include a number of topics that have already received scholarly attention as well as more original and innovative studies. Because one of the goals of *Native American Representations* is to examine critically who has the authority to represent Native peoples, a subject that has also been the focus of recent debates in the field, the collection would have been strengthened by more contributions by Native scholars and a greater emphasis on Native perspectives. In addition, the collection as a whole (with a couple of notable exceptions) is remarkably inattentive to images and voices of Native women, even though the silencing and marginalization of Native women is one consequence of the colonial processes that the volume seeks to criticize. Overall, however, *Native American Representations* provides a valuable addition to the growing body of scholarship in the field on the complicated relationships among race, colonialism, and representation.

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