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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ SCIENCE FICTION

Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction

Grace L. Dillon, editor
University of Arizona Press (Mar 1, 2012)
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Grace Dillon brings together nineteen works by indigenous writers from four countries for this anthology, the first of its kind. These six short stories and thirteen novel excerpts push the boundaries of science fiction, contributing richly imagined and various worlds, characters, and viewpoints. Sherman Alexie, Nalo Hopkinson, Stephen Graham Jones, and Leslie Marmon Silko are perhaps the most recognizable names in this book's roster.

Dillon organized this anthology into four sections. "The Native Slipstream" features stories that are on the very edge of science fiction, as they rely to varying extents on the indigenous perspective of time and space and what controls them. "Contact" is surely recognizable to science fiction readers as the subgenre which focuses on first meetings between life-forms. "Indigenous Science and Sustainability" contains perspectives on non-European ways of using and maintaining scientific knowledge and methods of working with Earth, not against it. "Native Apocalypse" is self-explanatory, and "Biskaabiiyang, Returning to Ourselves" centers on the decolonization process that indigenous peoples employ to bring balance between the influence of colonization and their own ancestral histories, traditions, and spiritual beliefs. Decolonization has been a hot topic in the science fiction field for nearly a decade, and people of color are increasingly present in the genre's academic programs, publishing, writing, and fan conventions.

From the dizzying perspective-shifting of Gerald Vizenor's "Custer on the Slipstream" to the lilting language Nalo Hopkinson uses in "Midnight Robber" to the imagined future of truly liberated Maori in Robert Sullivan's prose-poem excerpt from "Space Waka," *Walking the Clouds* is a revelation. Science fiction fans would do well to pay close attention to these writers because they may be the vanguard of the next wave of change in the genre. This anthology would make an excellent source for any academic study of indigenous peoples and for the general reader as well.

Dillon has the credentials for editing this anthology: she earned her PhD in literary studies and is associate professor in the Indigenous Nations Studies program at Portland State University in Oregon. She edited *Hive of Dreams: Contemporary Science Fiction from the Pacific Northwest*. Her use of the Anishinaabemowin language in her preface and introductions to each story or excerpt underscores her Anishinaabe heritage.□

J. G. STINSON (Summer 2012)

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