

best of both worlds" (p. 265). Mandan, Hidatsa, or Arikara historians would certainly view their past differently, but Professor Meyer has provided "us outsiders" with a useful historical survey.

Jane B. Katz (editor). *I Am the Fire of Time: The Voices of Native American Women*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977, 201 pp., \$6.95.

i am the fire of time.
 the endless pillar
 that has withstood death.
 the support of an invincible nation.
 i am the stars that have guided
 lost men.
 i am the mother of ten thousand
 dying children.
 i am the fire of time.
 i am an indian woman!

--Niki Paulzine

Speaking at the Annual Conference on Ethnic and Minority Studies in April, Bea Medicine admonished the audience that rather than lament the work which has not yet been done by or about Native American women, we must recognize the significance and breadth of what has already been written. *I Am the Fire of Time* shows just that. The selections come from nineteenth century transcripts as well as from contemporary women poets and activists. Over and over the reader is reminded that the Native American woman was not and is not the drudge or burden bearer portrayed in American fiction and by Hollywood producers, but rather, as participant in various roles, she has been and continues to be important in tribal life.

Jane B. Katz has collected the "voices" of American Indian women--voices which come from the past through translators and voices which have been published only recently. And the message, although sometimes political, focuses primarily on the role of women in cultures of which women have always perceived themselves to be an integral part.

The first poem of the collection appropriately focuses on the beginning of life. The Zuni prayer introduces concepts which appear throughout the rest of the book. Birth is linked to the natural cycle of the earth and the sun. The role of the grandmother, the female relative, is seen as integral and important in the culture. The symbiotic relationship between the people, the gods, and the natural world is represented by the offering of meal and the presentation of the child. Ultimately the desired response

is requested--"May you help us all to finish our roads." The reader senses it is a plea which will be heeded.

These themes continue through the book; the celebration of birth, of woman's life, of new beginnings weaves through the recollections of Helen Sekaquaptewa, the fiction of Leslie Silko, and the poetry of Jeannie Alike Atya. Katz has traced women's lives in several ways and on different planes. Chronology provides one method: the book begins with older materials and ends with contemporary writers. The chapter titles reflect a different progression, from birth to the maturity of disillusionment to rebirth in the second section, where new voices pick up the strands of thought which appeared in early materials.

These selections present a variety of responses to being an Indian woman--there are Christian and traditional women, those with formal educations and those without, young and old, full bloods and half breeds. Yet there are common elements in what each voice says, concepts which appear and reappear in the book--the fear that native languages and old ways may be lost, a respect for age, the importance of women as socializers of the children, the pride involved in being an Indian woman, and the recognition of the strength that is within. Janet McCloud articulates the message of the Indian women represented in the volume: "If the spirit grows within us, we'll survive. We will survive. . . ."

There is only one problem with this kind of book: many of the pieces are excerpts from longer works. It is important that readers of this collection go on to read the books from which these selections were taken. By using this book as a resource, readers can begin to fully appreciate the materials to which *Bea Medicine* alluded.

-- Gretchen Bataille
Iowa State University, Ames

Barbara Bryant Solomon. *Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976, 438 pp., \$15.00.

At long last an issue of great importance to the Black community in the social work arena has been addressed. The commencement of social service programs in the 1960's brought about an even greater need for a deeper understanding of the effects of social ills on minorities, especially Blacks. While some individuals had good intentions of bringing about this understanding, they lacked the necessary familiarity with the Black community and its conditions. *Black Empowerment* addresses itself to this concern by describing