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American histories for the surrounding Mall (and nation): “If amnesia is the state religion, then the act of remembering turns you into a heretic, a revolutionary, a troublemaker” (90). The NMAI is not a space for establishing or ratifying Native authenticity as much as it is a space for conflict and argument within and outside “the master narrative,” an Indian world “full of argument and brilliance and foolish mistakes” (162). But Smith also understands the museum as a site for exhibitions, intentional and other: “The Indian floor staff members have become objects, and it’s safe to assume all of them knew this would happen when they signed on. . . . [through] placing ourselves over and over again in the same rooms with those things museums call artifacts, asking others to notice, to see, as we perform a work titled *Not Dead Yet*” (100). Here, as throughout this collection, his voice shifts between irony and brutal honesty (all the while pointing out that the differences between the two are illusory at best).

In his closing essay, Smith quotes from a 1993 lecture: “Today, the cutting edge of the political Indian world in North America revolves around questions of gaming, tobacco, of representation, of mascots and burial sites” (182). If the 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of new Indian “legal and extralegal methods” for asserting Indian self-representational power, the 1990s witnessed the rise of other powerful public self-representation in the growth of Indian gaming and Native museum practice (the establishment or expansion of Native-owned and -operated museums, as well as mainstream museum responses to shifting Native public presence and political power). Although Smith identifies the NMAI as a “contested and unresolved space, somewhere in between a disreputable past and a glittering future,” one that grows out of good intentions and failures, he goes on to state that “Good intentions aren’t enough; our circumstances require more critical thinking and less passion, guilt, and victimization” (184, 187). Smith also asserts, “What the Indian world in the United States has failed to produce on a significant scale and in sufficient quality and quantity is a cadre of public intellectuals” (161). *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong* presents another important step in this direction.

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Humor in Contemporary Native North American Literature: Reimagining Nativeness. By Eva Gruber. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008. 274 pages. \$70.00 cloth.

Eva Gruber’s *Humor in Contemporary Native North American Literature: Reimagining Nativeness* is a welcome addition to indigenous humor studies. Gruber’s major focus is on how literature, including drama, emancipates (or mentally “decolonizes”) readers from externally imposed definitions and ideas of “Nativeness.” As others have, she critiques the earlier key Native humor study, Kenneth Lincoln’s *Indi’n Humor: Bicultural Play in Native America* (1993), as taking a largely Western approach (in Lincoln’s case, through Northrup Frye’s ideas on comedy), a perspective she seeks to avoid in her book and

largely succeeds in doing. Like Lincoln, however, Gruber is concerned with “bicultural” influence. She is interested in how humor in Native North American texts can change nonindigenous (specifically, white) readers “into listeners even accomplices,” into invested cocreators of the texts, issues, and subversive ideas (88).

Gruber sees humor as “performative,” serving to deconstruct and reimagine “alterNative” *re*-presentations of “Nativeness.” Native humor dismantles non-Native stereotypes of indigenous peoples, undermines long-standing Christian patriarchal and anthropocentric claims of superiority, and rejects the casual appropriation by Europeans and Euro-Americans of Native cultural and intellectual property. Gruber is also concerned with how indigenous literature asserts culture-specific concepts through humor and performs intracultural humor, undermining the delimiting tactics of colonizing whites by doing so. Though Gruber emphasizes that the causal effects of humor benefit indigenous and nonindigenous readers, and North American shared society generally, she does not interrogate whether particular indigenous texts or authors are read widely outside academic circles.

Gruber focuses most of her analysis on Thomas King’s and Sherman Alexie’s work and is also particularly interested in the creative and critical texts of Gerald Vizenor and Louis Owens, as well as the drama and commentary of Drew Hayden Taylor. Her additional analysis includes many other authors, among them Carter Revard and Leslie Marmon Silko. She also analyzes, at some length, Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris’s *Crown of Columbus* (1999). Surprisingly, she does not address Erdrich’s other work, which Native and non-Native readers, as well as scholars, have appreciated as comic and as doing the sort of decolonizing work on which Gruber is focused. Erdrich’s rearticulation of the Anishinaabe trickster is as extensive as Vizenor’s use of the same principle/figure, and Erdrich’s work is far more successful as literature. In addition, similar to how Coyote informs King’s work, the Anishinaabe trickster appears throughout Erdrich’s linked novels. Nevertheless, Gruber does not tell us why she has chosen to discuss only one of Erdrich’s texts. Gruber’s analysis of *Crown of Columbus* is helpful, however, in offering insights about this text (one of the least well-received of Erdrich’s many novels), thereby affording readers a greater appreciation of the strength of its decolonizing humor.

Overall, Gruber provides clear definitions and examples, and employs what ultimately turns out to be a rather balanced use of indigenous and nonindigenous humor studies sources, though beginning the book and first chapter with epigraphs by white humor critics could lead one initially to believe that the book was not coming from an indigenous studies focus. Key terms that are not fully interrogated, however, include the highly significant concept of the “trickster.”

Gruber’s relatively uncritical assignation of the term *trickster* to humor discourse tactics and to writers is common in indigenous studies and ethnic studies generally and is a somewhat mixed blessing in this text. For example, she states that “Native writers here emerge as shrewd tricksters” (111). Although culture bearers are certainly influenced by and intellectually embody and thus articulate mythic principles, such as those related to the

wide range of “trickster figures” and discourse patterns among Native nations, writers are not mythic or folkloric. Though the trickster concept—or, more precisely, the complex web of principles and practices associated with each indigenous culture’s (or ethnically mixed culture’s) trickster trope(s)—gives an extremely significant window into Native communities, critics must be cautious with their use of the term *trickster*. The term is, after all, an Anglo sociopolitical and, later, an anthropological construct. Using this delimiting academic categorization of a dynamic set of principles leads literary critics far too frequently to generalize about Native history and culture, especially when particular trickster studies, like Paul Radin’s *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology* (1956), are applied indiscriminately across cultures, as has often been the case. Gruber does overuse the term, but her astute extended analysis of certain texts—like Thomas King’s “postmodern” *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993)—for their very obvious rearticulations of trickster figures and concepts does reveal how humor in Native North American literature shifts “accustomed patterns of interpretation” and thereby forges new identifications and representations of Native America (227).

Gruber’s apt, accessible analysis will be of interest to students and to literary and cultural critics.

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In Beauty I Walk: The Literary Roots of Native American Writing. Edited by Jarold Ramsey and Lori Burlingame. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008. 416 pages. \$27.95 paper.

Although the roots of Native American writing run deep within the very soul of the land, the stories and the retelling of stories continue to breathe life into the souls, histories, and soils upon which we stand. Native peoples’ collections of stories are vital not simply for scholars but also, more importantly, for the stories’ and peoples’ survivance through their continued retellings. Collections such as Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz’s *American Indian Myths and Legends* (1984) or their collection *American Indian Trickster Tales* (1998) are certainly significant works that bring dozens of traditional oral stories together. On another but similar spectrum, Gerald Vizenor’s *Native American Literature: A Brief Introduction and Anthology* (1995) blends more contemporary stories and essays from well-known authors such as Wendy Rose, Louis Owens, Joy Harjo, Linda Hogan, and Sherman Alexie, among many others.

More recently, Jarold Ramsey and Lori Burlingame’s two-part collection *In Beauty I Walk: The Literary Roots of Native American Writing* blends Native American oral traditional literature with early modern Native American literature. As such, the collection blends not only the traditional and well-known stories, such as trickster stories and creation myths, but also presents early modern stories by writers such as Luther Standing Bear (Sioux, 1868–1939), Charles Eastman (Santee Sioux, 1858–1939), E. Pauline Johnson (Mohawk/