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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/

Canadian, 1861–1913), and Mourning Dove (Colville, 1888–1936) that illustrate the beautiful complexity of Native literature. Ramsey and Burlingame's collection as a whole seeks to address critical and theoretical questions from Native scholars and for those seeking an introduction to the vast field of Native literature and tradition. Ramsey and Burlingame also note that they are careful when presenting English translations of works originally in Native languages while seeking to retain the rhythm, meaning, and essence of the original; this is a significant and vital endeavor for the accurate and authentic representation of Native works.

Prior to the collection of pieces presented in part 1, "Native American Oral Traditional Literature," Ramsey and Burlingame take the time to explain how to approach Native stories properly by illustrating their thematic, structural, and complex differences from Western literary traditions. Their explanations regarding how to approach Native literature are a refreshing reminder for scholars in the field but serve more as an introductory guide for beginners who are unfamiliar with the subject at hand. Within this section, Ramsey and Burlingame present creation myths, origin myths, trickster stories, Orpheus stories, stories for learning how to live in this world, traditional Indian songs and ceremonies, and a section on transitions. For creation myths, Ramsey and Burlingame discuss these myths' relationship to Western writings such as the Bible's Book of Genesis and present stories such as "The Woman Who Fell from the Sky" (Seneca). In the latter story, it is the chief's daughter's body that is thrown from the heavenly skies into a world of endless sea. When she is given a place to rest by the animals, they create land. Although creation myths discuss the creation of the world, the section on origin myths includes stories that explain the origins of fire, rituals, customs, and landscapes. For example, in "How the Papago Got Corn," the Papago people must learn not only that it is a woman that has more to teach them but also that through the power of song the corn will grow. The themes within these stories, and others not listed, are vital as an introduction to Native literature because many of these narratives and/or their structures tend to reappear in contemporary works in one way or another.

Other sections within the first part of the collection also present narratives from various peoples while consistently defining the roots, purpose, and implications of every subgroup. The section on trickster stories begins by explaining the characteristics and purpose of the trickster figures, which are most often the Coyote and Raven. For example, Ramsey and Burlingame explain that the trickster in Native traditions embodies a godlike figure who is creator, transformer, and, more importantly, a mediator for things that stand in opposition such as culture and nature (42). They then present various stories such as "Old Man Coyote's Visit to the Crow Indians" (Crow) in which Old Man Coyote teaches the Crow people how to dress themselves and paint their horses in preparation for counting coup, or "Coyote and the First Pregnancy" (Wishram Chinook) in which Coyote even teaches a young couple to conceive their first child after they mistake a swollen finger as a pregnancy; the finger actually has a sliver encased in puss. Other sections like "Transitions" are also particularly interesting in their discussion of the ways in which Native peoples have absorbed and adapted stories from other groups

of people who they have encountered, such as the English, French, and African. For example, Ramsey and Burlingame present retellings of African stories such as that of “Tar Baby.” This section illustrates the process by which cultures encased in stories can educate one another.

Part 2 of the collection, “Early Modern Native American Literature,” brings together what the editors refer to as the “less commonly taught or referred” works by writers such as Betsey Guppy Chamberlain (Algonkian, probably Abenaki, 1797–1886), Francis La Flesche (Omaha, 1857–1932), and Alexander Lawrence Posey (Creek, 1873–1908). In their introduction, Ramsey and Burlingame explain that the works in this second section paved the way for contemporary writers such as those found in Vizenor’s *Native American Literature*. The works in this section deal with the most turbulent time period for Native Americans as the encroachment of settlers increased, children were forced into boarding schools, land was stolen, the number of buffalo rapidly declined, and high numbers of people lost their lives to contagious diseases brought in by the settlers (170). They also note, however, that the “problematic issues with early modern Native American writing is that it sometimes adopts more stereotypical approaches” (173). Despite their potentially problematic material and/or description brought in by the encroachment of Euro-Americans into Native territory and by the boarding schools’ reeducation programs, these works fill in a space that transition from the traditional oral stories to the contemporary literature of today.

The short works presented in the second part of this collection, as such, explore the painful conceptualization of identity for children forced to abandon their families and customs in the place of white boarding school education. For example, the excerpts from Charles Eastman’s *Indian Boyhood* (1902), which include “An Indian’s Boy’s Training” and “First Impressions of Civilization,” discuss his early education in traditional ways with his uncle and the abrupt shift to Western education and living when his father takes him off the reservation. The section on Zitkala-Ša includes a short story, “The School Days of an Indian Girl,” in which she describes the disillusion she felt as a child being separated from her mother en route to a boarding school. This is followed by the painful realization that a return to exclusively traditional Native ways is made nearly impossible because of the relentless imposition of Western ideologies. Eastman’s and Zitkala-Ša’s firsthand accounts of their experiences living traditionally and then being forced to be reeducated are vital to our understanding of the path of Native literature. Not only do contemporary writers have multitudes of traditional stories to tie them to the land, but also they have stories that illustrate the shift and reasoning that complicates Native identity.

Overall, Ramsey and Burlingame’s *In Beauty I Walk* is a vital resource for students trying to familiarize themselves with and understand the roots of Native American literature. Used in conjunction with other anthologies of short stories and poems, and even novels, *In Beauty I Walk* will certainly help facilitate the transition from Western literary traditions to Native American literature.