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## REVIEWS

**All Our Stories Are Here: Critical Perspectives on Montana Literature.** Edited by Brady Harrison. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. 296 pages. \$50.00 cloth.

Brady Harrison's edited volume of essays on Montana writing, *All Our Stories Are Here: Critical Perspectives on Montana Literature*, has three chief objectives: (1) "to open further interpretive and critical conversations" and "raise questions and foreground issues that have not been widely addressed in the study of Montana literature"; (2) to "explore the work of writers who have not received their critical due"; and (3) to "take new looks at old friends," that is, to reconsider the work of Montana's most recognized writers (ix). For fans and followers of Montana writing—and western American regionalist writing, more broadly—the twelve critical essays in this volume will mark an important contribution to an ongoing literary tradition. Richard Hugo's triumphant call for "making certain it goes on" echoes through many pieces in the collection—appropriately, they are the last words to Louis Welch's concluding historical essay about the University of Montana's creative writing program—and in many ways, this volume will sit comfortably on the shelf next to its clear predecessors: *The Last Best Place* (1988), *Ten Tough Trips* (1990), and *Writing Montana: Literature under the Big Sky* (1996). For students of Native American literature, this volume will also prove useful. Although *All Our Stories Are Here* is not immediately concerned with theorizing the place and status of Native American literature with respect to Montana and western American regionalist writing, the volume does address Native American writers and texts on all three of the principal objectives listed above.

Harrison opens his introductory essay "Toward a Postpopulist Criticism" by highlighting a blind spot: "As even a casual scholar of Montana writing will note, the production of fine writing far outstrips the critical inquiry into the state's extraordinary literary corpus" (ix). As remedy in theory, Harrison calls for a "postpopulist criticism"—in short, a turn to critical analysis over the prevailing boosterism, a healthy but entrenched "proprietary interest" Harrison observes in Montana readers, Montana book culture, and in the history of Montana literary scholarship (xiii). As remedy in practice, Harrison organizes the volume's twelve essays around five critical prompts—"Does Place Matter?," "Women Writing Montana," "Gay and Lesbian Literature under a Big Sky," "Native Revisions/The Problems of History," and "Hugoland"—to model, as well as showcase, what a Montana postpopulist literary criticism actually looks like. Here, Harrison suggests, theoretical diversity and

innovation are the names of the game, and in this way, one might think of *All Our Stories Are Here* as doing for Montana literature what Susan Kollin's *Postwestern Cultures: Literature, Theory, Space* (2007) does for western American regional literature—opening up a traditionally guarded and conservative body of texts and writers to new developments in theory and criticism. Tamas Dobozy's "Burning Montana: Richard Ford's *Wildlife* and Regional Crisis" is a case in point. For Dobozy, Ford's relation to region/regionalism is neither essentialist nor casual; rather, region provides Ford the appropriate philosophical template for working out relationships among language, place, and consciousness. Ultimately, Dobozy contends, Ford's view is that "region and regionalism are not fixed categories or determining facets of habitation; rather, they are temporary and provisional, and, most importantly, social in character and thus susceptible to manipulation" (19). By placing Dobozy's essay on "regional crisis" first in the volume, Harrison is stating clearly that in *All Our Stories Are Here*, even the core, sustaining categories of Montana literature are open to reassessment.

The work of lesser-known Montana authors is discussed in nearly every essay in *All Our Stories Are Here*. This list includes writers like Mark Gibbons, David Thomas, Thomas Savage, and Peter Bowen, to mention only a random sample. Harrison's introductory essay and Lois Welch's "Semicolonial Moments: The History and Influence of the University of Montana Creative Writing Program" are good sources for other names. Although neither is deliberately geared toward lengthening the roster of Montana writers, both detail histories of Montana literature and, in so doing, cover a wide range of writers, some more popular, some more obscure. Another useful essay on this score is Nancy Cook's "Home on the Range: Montana Romances and Geographies of Hope." In the process of charting the ideological complexities that enable regional romance novels to perform "important cultural work for looking at the codes of the West from a gendered perspective," Cook opens up to literary-critical inquiry an entire popular genre of Montana literature that normally flies below the radar of scholarship (55). Essays in *All Our Stories Are Here* also discuss lesser-known Native American texts and writers. In "All My Stories Are Here: Four Montana Poets," Roger Dunsmore discusses the poetry of Vic Charlo (Salish). Particularly valuable in this piece are the many previously unpublished Charlo poems that Dunsmore analyzes, some of which are presented in full. In "West of Desire: Queer Ambivalence in Montana Literature," Karl Olson references Stephen Graham Jones's (Blackfeet) novel *The Fast Red Road: A Plainsong* (2000). Of likely interest as well, are Hugo's "Indian Poems," which Steve Davenport breaks down in "Richard Hugo's Montana Poems: Blue Collars, Indians, and Tough Style."

*All Our Stories Are Here* also updates recognized, canonical Montana works and writers. Not surprising to see are the full-length essay treatments of Ford and Hugo or William Bevis's reconsideration of feminism and postmodernism in the writing of Mary Blew and Judy Blunt. These writers are among those carrying the tradition that *All Our Stories Are Here* is working to foster and enrich. The Native American authors Harrison places in this select group are D'Arcy McNickle and James Welch. In "He Never Wanted to Forget

It': Contesting the Idea of History in D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*," Jim Rains argues that McNickle's project in *The Surrounded* (1978) is "to shatter the mythic, romantic historical narrative of the West" by showing how Native American peoples "as distinct cultures perceive and practice history differently from Euro-Americans" (141, 143). Given the recent flowering in Montana of tribally produced history projects—excellent examples of which include *The Salish and the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (2005), the Blackfeet tribal history DVD *Days of the Blackfeet* (2008), *The History of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Montana, 1800–2000* (2008), and *We, the Northern Cheyenne People: Our Land, Our History, Our Culture* (2008)—Rains's essay is not only timely but also useful in the way it enables a vital continuity to be drawn linking McNickle's earlier novelistic endeavors to the sovereigntist struggles of today's tribal culture workers in Montana. In "A Haunted Nation: Cultural Narratives and the Persistence of the Indigenous Subject in James Welch's *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*," Andrea Opitz blends the work of contemporary cultural theorists like Lisa Lowe and Stuart Hall with historical studies on the colonial image and status of the Native American in order to explore how Welch's final novel works through the overlapping issues of nation, subjectivity, citizenship, and oppositional discourse.

In all, *All Our Stories Are Here* delivers on its promise to update (and, at times, revise) and expand Montana's already rich and storied literary tradition. Its specific game plan is to infuse a good measure of literary-critical sophistication (and healthy skepticism), let some new voices speak, and issue reminders that Montana's tried-and-true literary heroes still have something important to say. Interestingly, although some effort in *All Our Stories Are Here* is spent theorizing Montana's "semicolonial" status, namely, exploitative East Coast metropolitan interests, less is said about Montana's tribal nations and their status relative to colonial centers. Do Missoula and Helena count as such centers? If so, how? If not, why not? These are lingering questions—and important ones for those concerned about regionalism and tribal cultural sovereignty as competing literary nationalisms. For now, at least—as *All Our Stories Are Here* demonstrates—Montana literature's ongoing vitality is determined in no small way by the ongoing vitality of Native American writers and tribal literary traditions in Montana. Hopefully, the publication of this volume makes certain that such updates will go on.

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**American Indian History: A Documentary Reader.** Edited by Camilla Townsend. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. 264 pages. \$84.95 cloth; \$31.95 paper.

Camilla Townsend offers a bold and concise edited collection of documents on American Indian history, stretching from the pre-1492 era to the early twenty-first century. Intended for undergraduate classrooms, this primary