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employed. As with the intruder gently warned off in the last story, "Meat and the Man," it is not a question of dominance or even aggression but of being able to construct a persuasive account of what matters.

The big difference between facing the world as it is and telling a story about it is the measure of control—who is generating the "facts": a hostile, alien culture or a writer who has mastered the ultimately fictive nature of those facts (which are themselves nothing but representations of others' attempts at control). Unmastered, the glittering world can be exclusionary and finally destructive. Incorporated into the art of storytelling, it need not be a hostile object but rather the illusion of glitter that it is, just another fabrication waiting to be tested by another fabricator's account. In *From the Glittering World* Irvin Morris takes his writing four levels deep and passes the test quite well.

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Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition. By Kimberly M. Blaeser. Norman, OK. University of Oklahoma Press, 1996. 246 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

In Gerald Vizenor's prolific career as journalist, novelist, poet, critical theorist, and social commentator, he apparently has deliberately sought a relatively small audience for the sake of the stylistic eccentricity of his theoretical writings and his uncompromising allegiance to the requirements of the post-modern novel. In placing Vizenor's work in the context of our present literary culture, therefore, suggesting at least a tentative approach to it and defining his artistic, critical, and ideological concerns, Blaeser has performed a useful service.

But readers will be disappointed if they are looking for a critical explication and judgment of Vizenor's fiction, that is, for an answer to the question we should ask of the work of any contemporary writer—whether anyone thirty or forty years from now will want to read it. Blaeser's concerns are more theoretical than critical. In fact, Vizenor's fiction cannot be understood finally without reference to his own theoretical assumptions, and Blaeser therefore concentrates on such matters as Vizenor's attempt to sustain in writing the tribal ideal of an oral culture, his experiments in haiku in relation to Ojibwa dream songs, his "trickster" fiction as a vindication of his post-

modern assumptions, his "sometimes difficult prose style" (p. 13) as an inevitable consequence of his postmodernism, and his contribution to the maintenance of tribal cultures.

Blaeser believes often enough that there are justifications for Vizenor's procedures in citations from writers who wrote without benefit of postmodern revelation. She says, for example, that Vizenor's employment in his historical writing of the methods of the postmodern novel are vindicated by a statement in *Aspects of the Novel*, where in 1927 E.M. Forster said that "Fiction is truer than history, because it goes beyond the evidence...." (p. 86). But if Forster explained nineteenth-century novels in the light of this notion, which was formulated by Aristotle in almost the same terms a very long time ago, then why are postmodern novels all that different from Forster's examples? At any rate, she has stood the quotation on its head, making it appear that Forster agrees with her that history and fiction are similar when in fact what he really said was that they are different. This example suggests that Vizenor has been wiser than Blaeser. He has ignored altogether the literary tradition that has inspired other American Indian writers—N. Scott Momaday, for example—and has looked only to the present for his inspiration. He has cited the work of some contemporary Indian authors and the writings of various scholars in the field of traditional tribal song and story, but in defining traditional tribal discourse in the light of reciprocity between speaker and audience he has found his primary justification in a raft of contemporary theorists (Barthes, Baudrillard, Derrida, Eco, Foucault, Iser, Ong, Volosinov, among others) and particularly in the focus by reception theorists and reader response critics on the reader rather than on the writer and in the assumption that a "post-modern" discourse must be a playful and anti-formal product of chance and "indeterminacy."

What Vizenor calls the "dead voices" of journalists and historians—what Blaeser, following him, calls their "simulations, claims of representation, and neocolonial historicism" (p. 72)—has led him to attempt in his own writing in various genres to produce an "inclusive" story that takes account not only of the "facts" but of social milieu, historical context, and "a subjective analysis of shame" (p. 78) and to reject the formal, "static," "linear," and "monologic" limitations of conventional fiction and historical writing.

Blaeser relates these concerns to the problems inherent in translation, which, she says, "particularly as it has been prac-

ticed in conjunction with Native American literatures [is] always in principle the privileging of one language or culture over another...." (p. 74). Vizenor seems to agree that the traditional texts of a tribe cannot be translated, but he claims that they *can* be "reimagined" and "reexpressed." It is hard to understand just how this goal is different from that of so many contemporary poets who, without knowing a word of a tribal language, have "adapted" and "worked" (the term used by Jerome Rothenberg) so much of the material they have found in supposedly inferior translations by people like Washington Matthews and Frances Densmore, in effect translating translations, and have claimed to have come nearer to what the original singers sang even though what they really mean is that, at least in their opinion, they have produced better poems. Those who are distressed by these antics might prefer to believe that translation, imperfect as it inevitably must be, is only judged honestly according to its degree of fidelity to the original and that talk about "privileging" is beside the point.

Blaeser is on safer ground dealing with Vizenor's experiments in haiku and his employment in his fiction of the American Indian conception of the trickster. Early in this century the Imagist poets believed they could find validation of their poetic theories in the similarities they saw between haiku and Ojibwa song. Whether Blaeser is right in her argument that Vizenor's own haiku creates "open" texts that break down "the boundaries of print" and require the reader's response for their completion (pp. 113-114), there can be no question that his poems are important in any understanding of present-day cross-cultural concerns.

Vizenor defines the trickster as a metaphor for the mixed blood, whose role, he believes, is the subversion of artificial social distinctions, and he has created a variety of trickster characters to celebrate and create new identities beyond those of the usual doomed mixed-blood characters in some novels by Indian authors. Blaeser sees Vizenor's fiction as a successful subversion of "Western ideals of literary aesthetics" and a justification of "his playful and sometimes convoluted use of language...." (pp. 138, 147); her argument in her chapter on Vizenor's "revolutionary style" is premised on the assumption that his stylistic mannerisms are designed, as in the oral tradition to which he pays homage, to engage the reader in the process of the work's creation. He refrains from "pinning meaning down" and thus "engenders active reader participa-

tion," says Blaeser, and his "deliberately ambiguous style [creates] a sense of indeterminacy that requires the audience to eke out meaning" (pp. 165-166).

This seems dangerously near to saying that if Vizenor doesn't write clearly it's the reader's fault. But however his work is eventually judged, we can understand his present significance in the light of two considerations. One of these must be understood in relation to his powerful assertion of a belief, fully explained in Blaeser's second chapter, that the destiny of the American Indian is in language, that American Indian literature, both traditional and belletristic, will survive or vanish through the merits of language, which is the only true first step toward liberation. Whether or not Vizenor is right in his assumption that a postmodern fiction is the most appropriate means of achieving a written approximation of traditional orality, there can be no doubt that, judging from work produced to date by American Indian writers, a vital relationship to a tribal oral tradition is one of its distinguishing marks.

Another reason why Vizenor's achievement is worth our attention is that, alone among the most important figures in the present field of American Indian literature, he has argued that Indians must dissociate themselves from "Indianness," which is itself a result of language gone wrong. That false "Indianness" derives from various sources—from the language of bureaucrats and social workers, from the "terminal creeds" of those who substitute clichés for truth (including those who choose to "play Indian" rather than live the living words of a tribal tradition), from the American habit of substituting the "noble savage" for real people, and from the apparent acceptance of the role of noble savage by many Indian leaders, for example those of the American Indian Movement who, in their search for appropriate costumes for the occupation of Wounded Knee, found what they were looking for in the photographs of Edward Curtis.

Vizenor has argued throughout his long career that a vital American Indian culture can only survive if allegiance to tribal traditions is combined with the discovery of keys to survival in humor and a vital use of language. His own fiction, whatever difficulties it may pose for many, is essentially comic in its intentions and evidence of his refusal to perpetuate the cliché of the "vanishing American" as he believes it is perpetuated in novels about victimized Indians.

Blaeser is more concerned with Vizenor's theories than with

his fiction, which for her, apparently, is primarily justified by those theories. Indeed this strategy is inevitable when a key premise of the theories is that the explication and thus the judgment of a Vizenor text is after all the responsibility of its reader. Until his fiction—if it makes sense in his case to distinguish it from the rest of his writing—is examined *as* fiction, a full-length critical study of Vizenor as a creative artist will remain to be written. But whoever takes on that task will find Blaeser's book a basic text.

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"Historic Zuni Architecture and Society: An Archaeological Application of Space Syntax." by T.J. Ferguson. *Anthropological Papers of the University of Arizona*, Number 60. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996. 176 pages. \$14.95 paper.

This thoughtful and provocative volume by T.J. Ferguson, longtime archeologist for the Zuni Archaeology Program represents publication of a doctoral dissertation completed at the University of New Mexico in 1993.

The history and architecture of the Zuni Indian tribe of western New Mexico were analyzed using an archeological application of the theory of space syntax. The focus was to provide a link between historic Zuni society and the structure of their architectural forms and how they changed over time. The theory and method of space syntax analysis are taken from architecture and planning. The analysis uses ethnographic and historical data to build a structural model that focuses on the planning and organization of settlements through time, not, as the author clearly states, on mentalistic-cultural constructs of the structuralism developed by Claude Levi-Strauss and other European anthropologists.

This approach, utilizing the theories of space syntax fused with a modified structuralism, was applied to a series of Zuni villages occupied during the historic period. The villages include three from the early seventeenth century; Dowa Yalane, a settlement occupied during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 to 1692; Zuni pueblo in 1881, 1915, and 1972; four seasonal farming villages of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and four seasonal farming villages documented in 1885 and 1979. For the large Zuni pueblo, the analysis included the sub-