

porting in the 1860s. The study amounts to a veritable primer on the development of the press in the American West. And while he makes no claim for statistical representativeness of media outlets, his sources reflect an impressive breadth of primary news sources.

Significantly, the text charts the advent of the press's normative tendency for inaccuracy. While he assiduously eschews the application of postmodernist theory and jargon, Coward strives to demonstrate that the collecting and presentation of ostensibly objective "facts" in reality echoed racist and/or ethnocentric ideologies. He concludes that the conventionalizing "was less the product of intentional racial prejudice than of an informal ethnocentric belief system that operated on and through the press, creating and reinforcing racial differences and limiting the formation of fully rounded, alternative Indian identities" (p. 62).

That said, Coward also underscores that prevalent categorizations were on occasion contested. Yet, here again, he resists the temptation to sketch the accepted classifications as binary opposites, once more supporting the idea that the stereotypes were neither monolithic nor inflexible. The result is not to diminish the power of prejudice but, rather, to illustrate its formidable ability to resist rationality. Flexibility offers the rigid formulas strength.

This excellent study might have provided more pictorial evidence, which might then have been integrated into the text, not set apart from it. The prose is balanced and dispassionate. Coward resists moralizing.

This book will naturally appeal to journalism scholars and students but should become required reading for those with an interest in the American West and the history of Native peoples in North America.

Renee Hulan (editor). *Native North American: Critical and Cultural Perspectives*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1999.

Review by Molly Blyth, Trent University

"Much has been said about Aborigines in Canadian literature; much

more remains to be said," writes Agnes Grant in her contribution to Renee Hulan's important new collection of essays on Native North American literary and cultural criticism. While certainly fulfilling Grant's call for more work in the field, what is exciting about this anthology of thirteen essays is its primary focus on an analysis of the cultural production of Indigenous North Americans rather than, as has been too often the case in Canadian literary criticism, a focus on the representation of the Native in the writing of non-Natives. Its cross-border approach to the field and subsequent repudiation of the colonist concept of the nation-state, in which Indigenous writing is assimilated into either a Canadian or American cultural context, is also a most welcome innovation as is its interdisciplinary reading of Native American "literature" through the lens of history, media studies and the law.

While the thirteen contributors to this volume both Native and non-Native, respect the diversity of Native North American cultural practices, they celebrate here an imagined community of Indigenous peoples—a community grounded in the shared experiences of resistance and survival. Indeed, for Patricia Monture Angus, these two characteristics thematically organize Native American writing in English; however, Henry Lutz in his essay on German perspectives on First Nations literature, notes that "survival" is not to be understood according to an "Atwoodian stereotype . . . luxuriously wallowing in feelings of victimhood." Instead, Lutz, as well other contributors, argue that "resistance" and "survival" are necessarily predicated on "agency"—on actively choosing, as in Monture Angus' case, for example, to speak and write in the enemy's language:

What is overlooked is what my people have done with language! We have taken a language that does not speak for us and given it new life. Perhaps we break all of the structural, stylistic and grammatical rules. But we learned to use a language that was forced upon us to create powerful messages that convey to you our experience. I do not call this a problem—call it creativity. It is time my people give themselves credit for the great things we have accomplished against

great adversity, rather than continuing to accept and embrace our exclusion. I am proud of my people.

Jo-Ann Thom's excellent ideological readings of *The Almanac of the Dead* advances this thesis further in its argument that, "Like many contemporary Indigenous writers, Leslie Marmon Silko subverts the rhetorical practices of European colonizers in order to advance Indigenous attitudes and ideas." So, too, does Mariannette-Jaimes-Guerrero's essay, even though its focus is on a critique of the image of Native women in mainstream media and is, therefore, a recycling of earlier "images of Native" criticism. Despite this drawback, the last two sections introduce readers to the exciting liberatory work of Native women media artists, writers and producers who work to disrupt and undermine, with humour and panache, mainstream racist and sexist stereotypes.

All contributors to this collection hold academic positions in Canadian or American universities; however, the accessibility of their essays for the general reader works to destabilize the boundaries between the academy and outside world. As such, this collection radically questions contemporary literary theory's reputation as just another elitist academic discourse lacking the potential for political transformation. When Gerald Vizenor's writings, perhaps some of the most notoriously difficult in the field, can be read intelligently and his ideas made meaningful to a wide spectrum of North American readers—as they can here in "Native American Indian Literatures: Narratives of Survivance"—then the problematic concept of 'the Native' as the exotic object of anthropological or sociological knowledge will, as he hopes, begin to lose its charm and place of curricular prominence in our educational institutions.

If "art is a more effective vehicle to bring about social change on behalf of Indigenous peoples than political confrontations like that employed by the American Indian Movement," a point made by Leslie Marmon Silko and cited by Jo-Ann Thom's essay and if, as Jaimes-Guerrero claims in her essay, working for change means, at one level, confronting the ideological power of our institutions and "indigenizing education in schools and colleges . . . to challenge those who would



maintain the racist and sexist status quo," then Renee Hulan's new anthology, *Native North America*, is a most welcome and necessary tool of this liberatory practice and should be a required text on university English courses in this country, in the United States and abroad.

Karl Kroeber. *Artistry in Native American Myths*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Review by Laura Murray, English Department, Queen's University

Karl Kroeber has produced an odd book. On the one hand, this is an anthology, in which thematic groupings of Native stories are followed by critical essays—one might, then, suppose that it would be appropriate for a general readership or classroom use. After all, Native stories are not transparent in meaning, and there would be a place for a collection that, unlike Erdoes and Ortiz's widely known *American Indian Myths and Legends*, offered clarification and cultural context for the material it presents. Kroeber has selected some fine stories: tellers range from the laconic Jack of Murek to the literary James Welch, and transcriptions represent both 19th-century and "state-of-the-art" approaches (Canadian content is the Beaver story "The Girl and her Younger Brother," told by Antoine Hunter and translated by Robin Ridington). Kroeber clusters complementary tellings of bear stories, trickster stories, Yurok blood money stories, Blackfoot Feather Woman stories and Lakota Stone Boy stories. However, Kroeber's commentaries are mostly preoccupied with larger critical concerns of his own, and he only eventually directly engages with the stories themselves: as the title suggests, this is really a monograph, with stories included for handy reference. The most extreme case is the first section, in which the Iroquois story of Tekanawita and the cannibal is followed by a critique of Tristram P. Coffin's 1961 *Indian Tales of North America*, an examination of the anthropology exhibits at the 1893 Chicago Exposition, and a defence of American, as opposed to French, anthropology. Kroeber's parents were, of course, illustrious Boasian anthropologists, and he seems here more con-