

## *Number 15 (Summer 1995)*

because as an embodiment of his people, he embodies the people's stories. He has inherited his ancestors' actions, just as whites have, though the white people in what the judge heatedly calls the "fucking court[room]" don't comprehend this.

In Alexie's vision of Spokane life, "it is always now. That's what Indian time is." Alexie writes of the past, present, and future—not a linear telling, but backwards and forwards and in the simultaneous present all at once, like remembering, a putting back together. The reader is encouraged to think about the past, owning instead of denying it. Because the history of white-Indian suffering is still festering, through Thomas's ludicrous, yet historically and temporally transforming confession, the reader (Spokane and non-Spokane) can realize and be absolved of the guilt of never-ending stories of ordinary horror, thus affording the extraordinary opportunity to heal the past, restoring to the descendants of all the sufferers the human ability too "smile [and] laugh again" and thereby make room for joy, new life, the future.

For the non-Native, this collection of short stories is a look at reservation life, a storyteller's gift to foster understanding. For American Indians, the book is a window into the life of another tribal community. For the Spokane, Alexie's vision is a reminder to everyone, even themselves, that the Spokane exist, living the reservation commonplace of tragedy and survival, but through the visionary power of the "tribal imagination."

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**Elizabeth Ammons and Annette White-Parks, eds. *Tricksterism in Turn-of-the-Century American Literature: A Multicultural Perspective*. (Hanover and London: Tufts University/University Press of New England, 1994) 201 pp.**

Opening the volume is a brief introduction by Elizabeth Ammons in which she discusses the major premise around which this book is organized—namely, that "tricksterism" is a phenomenon in turn-of-the-century literature that, through tricks in authorship and narrative intention, disrupts the "master narrative" of the dominant racist Anglo culture. The articles concern works from a range of cultural backgrounds: Chinese American, Mexican American, Native American, European American, and African American. Each article includes endnotes and a list of works cited. The volume also offers contributors' notes and an index.

Two of the articles are less successful than the others. The connections between Frank Norris's McTeague character and the Coyote trickster are unconvincing in Eric Anderson's "Manifest Dentistry, or Teaching Oral Narrative in McTeagues and Old Man Coyote." Tiffany Ana

## *Explorations in Sights and Sounds*

Lopez's "Maria Cristina Mena: Turn-of-the-Century La Malinche, and Other Tales of Cultural (Re)Construction" is a well-intentioned piece that, unfortunately, does not meet the more professional standard set by the best of the essays in the collection.

The only article by Ammons is her very short introduction. Annette White-Parks, the co-editor, does not include an introduction of her own. Besides inadequate editing apparent in some of the articles, like Lopez's, the copyediting is clumsy throughout. For instance, Paul Radin's name is spelled "Rodin" in White-Parker's article. Radin's early work on the trickster is probably the most well-known in the field. Other copyediting problems include inconsistently presented or omitted information in works cited segments.

In her introduction, Ammons cites disappointingly few works of trickster archetype/trickster discourse scholarship, as is true for the rest of the writers in the anthology. Jeanne Smith's "'A Second Tongue': The Trickster's Voice in the Works of Zitkala-Sa"—an interesting and well-written article—exemplifies the volume's limited theoretical framework. Though citing a number of primary and secondary texts on Lakota (Sioux) myth and several of the few critical works available on Zitkala-Sa (who was Dakota, not Lakota, as Smith states), as far as trickster theory, Smith mentions only two significant works—and one of these, which is cited in most of the essays in the volume, is on the African American, rather than Native American, trickster.

Even though tricksterism focuses more on trickster authorship than on the function of trickster or trickster discourse, to use the term "trickster" in any scholarly regard seems to warrant a more in-depth awareness of theory on the archetype and on trickster discourse from oral through contemporary written literature. Though the articles do not do justice to the range of available trickster scholarship, nearly all offer valuable insights into the lives and works of particular authors, some of whom have been understudied to date.

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**Alfred Arteaga ed. *An Other Tongue*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994). 291 pp.**

People who are regarded as minorities by their dominant peers are pressured to establish their identity as citizens of a nation and as individuals of a distinct culture. Their identity may be articulated differently governed by such factors as language, race, gender, political and economical status, and so on. All of the fifteen essays collected in this