

Although Makeba has been exiled from Africa for most of her four-decade career, she reminds the reader that she and South Africa are one and the same, that the political situation is slowly improving, and that the plight of her people has not gone unnoticed. Her words are made more poignant when one remembers that Makeba published her book only three years before Nelson Mandela was released from prison.

Makeba's book, which includes sixteen pages of photographs, is a very readable combination of history, anthropology, political science, and religious studies. This text is appropriate for Black Studies, Women's Studies, Cultural Studies, and general Humanities courses.

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**Trinh T. Minh-ha. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) viii, 173 pp., \$39.95; \$14.95 paper.**

*In Woman, Native, Other*, Trinh T. Minh-ha has taken on an ambitious task, which is to explain something of the problems confronting non-Western women writers who publish and are subjected to critiques within the established paradigms of Western scholarly discourses. Must she and her fellows position themselves as “writer of color,” “woman writer,” or “woman of color,” she asks, as she proceeds to display the boundaries others place upon their freedom to create their own realities and establish their distinctive voices. Whereas other women theorists of postcolonialism and feminism have challenged Western conventions largely within the linguistic and stylistic conventions of the West, Trinh T. Minh-ha eschews neat generalizations to offer the flavor of the fragmentations, odd juxtapositions and dissonances which she perceives as inherent in her writers' efforts to explain themselves and their female worlds. This does not make for an easy read. It does, however, prick the bubble of Western—above all, male Western—complacency about their capacity to appropriate the forms for interpreting the lives of women of color, in terms which will hopefully elicit a salutary self-consciousness, mixed with shame in those who seriously address her densely-textured text.

The tensions for women of color writing today, Trinh argues, have their origins in multifaceted forces of power and dominance. To begin with, how do they face the sad fact that to be literate, and have access to publishing, of itself marks them out as privileged beings, while at the same time they may receive from their own kin scant respect for their apparently odd predilection for writing, so at odds with local models of appropriate womanly behavior. This conflict is all the keener because male traditions of writing invite women writers to adopt the powerful position of “author,” a position of authority,

asserting truth claims and knowledge claims with arrogant confidence. In this process women of color are inevitably invited into a “conversation of ‘us’ with ‘us’ about ‘them,’” in which “‘them’ is silenced,” for the act of defining the lives of “others” automatically and ironically marginalizes the very people who are the object of scholars’ analyses. Anthropologists in particular come under Trinh’s stringent gaze, as she deconstructs their appropriation of difference to their own agendas of explaining themselves as much as their self-chosen protégés. But Western feminists, too, will wince at the chapter “Difference: ‘A Special Third World Women Issue,’” as Trinh critiques feminist practices towards outstanding women of color as an effort to appear liberal in each others’ eyes. “It is as if everywhere we go, we become someone’s private zoo,” she complains.

Yet Trinh does not leave her readers with no solutions. In her last chapter, “Grandma’s story,” she affirms the value of story-telling as a means of expressing the values and experiences of women of color in non-oppressive ways. She discounts rigid distinctions between truth and fiction—whose truth do we seek? she asks. Women’s own narratives offer women the chance to affirm their identity within a continuum of past and future, open to complexities and sensitive to the particular and idiosyncratic. One would hope that scholars within the academe everywhere may read and reflect upon the lessons offered in this significant text.

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**Joyce Moss and George Wilson. *Peoples of the World: North Americans—The Culture, Geographical Setting and Historical Background of 37 North American Peoples*. (Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1991) xvi, 441 pp., \$39.95.**

This is a disappointing book. It might even be a dangerous book. Disappointing because although it looks like a reference book, it turns out to have too many errors to be of much use in that fashion. Dangerous because if it finds its way into school libraries, then many of those errors will invariably find their way into student papers and student minds. Almost to add insult to injury, in what I assume is an attempt to provide a simple, readable text to a wide (and perhaps school-aged) population, the writers have adopted a remarkably awkward style. Some examples should suffice to make the problems clear.

With regard to errors, the chapter on Creoles asserts that people who were “1/8th, or 1/4th black occupied the same category, called octoroon” (individuals of 1/4th African ancestry were more typically known as quadroons), repeatedly refers to “gombo” as a popular Creole dish (this should be “gumbo”), and suggests that bouillabaisse is a classic Creole specialty (it is not). The chapter