

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

on Micmacs places this group in the wrong geographic region (they are east, not west, of the St. Lawrence gulf), suggests that they divided their territory into seven districts (this was a late introduction of the French colonials in the area), and claims that they were a class society (they were not) and that they forbade marriage between clan members (they never had a clan system)! Among other corrections that would need to be made to this chapter are the fact that Nova Scotia was named in the 1620s rather than the 1700s and that the Union of Nova Scotia Indians is an all-Micmac organization, not a Pan-Indian one. The chapter on English Americans suggests that fried chicken originated in the English south, without acknowledging the fact that frying was (and is) an African, rather than an English, method of cooking (roasting and boiling were more typical English styles of food preparation). The chapter on African Americans proposes that field hands “rushed” to the fields after breakfast and that slave children “led carefree lives” and spent their time “raiding watermelon patches”!

As for the general awkwardness of style, one reads, for example, that “potato plantations sprang up around the Micmac reserve,” or that Cajuns “were peasants, so they built farms, away from New Orleans,” or that the members of the Know-Nothing Party “preached against immigrants and Catholics, then died with the coming of the Civil War.” In one truly remarkable sentence we learn that, “Planned by engineers, New Orleans grew from a square to a rectangle with three arteries to hold all the settlers.”

Surely this book could have profited from some careful editing. It could also have taken advantage of current scholarship on each of the groups it summarizes. As it is, this book is not worth recommending at any level.

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**William Oandasan. *Moving Inland: A Cycle of Lyrics*. (York Station, CA: 1983) 24 pp., \$2.50 paper.**

William Oandasan, a member of the Uki tribe, demonstrates the tension between the new and the old, attempting to reconcile a traditional closeness to the land and to the past with apparently incongruent modern phenomena.

Oandasan’s poetry at its best contains strikingly original, evocative images. The quality of Oandasan’s work is uneven, however. Although he affirms in a prefatory note that his poetry is an attempt “to raise the common to the extraordinary” and that it is not merely a “journal in verse,” such a claim is difficult to substantiate for the collection as a whole. Oandasan’s art occasionally lacks an empathetic persona with a convincing and original voice. In a poem called “Starlight,” for example, the sleepless persona, mesmerized by visions in the dark, concludes by saying,