

Book Reviews

Leonard's article on Confucianism exemplifies some of the book's philosophical inconsistencies. While he complains in his preface that most books on APA culture offer "arguments" rather than information (xvi), he presents in this long chapter his own arguments for Confucianism and against Christianity. He extols Asian American families as the site of an important synthesis of East and West (42), but he is unwilling to look at important questions about the attraction to Christianity of so many Asian Americans (most notably Koreans). Indeed rather than looking at how Asian Americans are synthesizing Confucian and Christian values, he prefers to believe that Christian values threaten Confucian ones and that deep beneath Asian American Christians are suppressed Confucians (44). Thus rather than "information" we get an "argument" that is prejudiced, superficial, and contrary to the aims of the book.

Thankfully there are numerous informative articles in the volume which make it a useful (though far from perfect) resource for the multicultural classroom.

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Bunny McBride. *Women of the Dawn*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999). 152 pp., \$22.00 cloth.

McBride's book explores the disastrous effects of colonization on four courageous and idiosyncratic American Indian women of the Wabanaki tribes of the North Atlantic coast that include Abenaki, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot. The women considered are unrelated except by place, circumstance, and first name—all are named Molly. Their brief biographies span four centuries.

The stories of the four Mollies recount the devastating effects of European encroachment upon Native American culture as well as upon the personal lives of the protagonists. McBride describes the impact of European contact as seen

through the eyes of these women; these unique perspectives are one of the book's primary strengths.

Women of the Dawn is part of a virtual explosion of scholarship concerning Indian women whose lives and accomplishments were consistently ignored by those who compiled early Indian history. Missionaries, explorers, government agents, traders, and others who recorded the events of the time apparently believed that little about Indian women was worth recording. McBride's book is a welcome addition to a growing body of literature that attempts to discover and articulate significant aspects of Indian life that early historians neglected.

Bunny McBride is clearly a gifted writer. Her inclusion of cultural description and historical detail breathes life into the stories of these four women. McBride accomplishes this in part by the use of an "unusual structure" (126) in which she presents all four profiles as if they were written by Molly Dellis, the twentieth century Wabanaki woman whose life story concludes the book. This device is at once successful and problematical.

First, it is somewhat difficult to follow the narrative thread of McBride's "creative nonfiction" (138) as it evolves in the use of Molly Dellis voice. The author's explanations concerning Molly Dellis' motivation to write are unconvincing as are those concerning Dellis' "decision" to include her own life story (written in the third person) "as though it were someone else's life" (97). A useful addition would have been a more forthright introduction to the author's identity and how she happens to be writing these life stories. It is also likely that a different approach altogether might have been more successful. Fortunately the "portages" between the sections (which connect the four pieces) are nicely crafted and assist the reader in making transitions across time and space.

Secondly, although we learn a little of McBride's techniques and methods in her last chapter (which the reader should probably read first), her inclusion of which details of the story are documented and which are not is vague. For example McBride (in the voice of Molly Dellis) provides intricate descriptions of her characters, but we are not told whether these descriptions are compiled from photographs or interviews or are a part of the author's "creative" nonfiction. McBride assures her readers that most of the scenes and

quotes are recounted from reliable historical sources (139); these references are included but are not footnoted. A careful reading of pages 139-52 does provide an overview of which sections are reconstruction and which are conjecture. Nonetheless this reader still is plagued with questions about the authenticity and sources of particular quotes, descriptions, events, and details.

Whatever its flaws this compelling book details the complexity of four individual Wabanaki women living in very different historical contexts: a peacemaker (Molly Mathilde, ca. 1665-1717), a healer (Molly Ockett, ca. 1740-1816), a bitter witchwoman (Molly Molasses, ca. 1775-1867), and a celebrated dancer (Molly Dellis, ca. 1903-1977).

McBride has written an engaging book that brings history to life. It draws readers into the worlds of these women and powerfully depicts their experiences, sufferings, and joys. I came away from reading *Women of the Dawn* with lasting impressions of four strong female personages of the Wabanaki nation.

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George Anthony Pepper. *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration Before Exclusion*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999. xv, 167 pp., appendix, notes, bibliography, index, \$35 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

If They Don't Bring Their Women Here by George Pepper is another significant addition to the skimpy repertory of books on the history of Chinese American women, which includes Judy Yung's *Chinese Women of America* (1986) and *Unbounded Feet* (1995), Benson Tong's *Unsubmissive Women* (1994), and Huping Ling's *Surviving on the Gold Mountain* (1999). Unlike the other volumes, Pepper's book focuses on the debarment of Chinese women from immigration to the United States before