

EDITH BLICKSILVER, *THE ETHNIC AMERICAN WOMAN; Problems, Protests, Lifestyle*. Iowa: Kendal-Hunt Publishing Co., 1978, 381 pp., \$12.95

Edith Blicksilver has compiled an extensive and varied series of articles, poems and narratives of personal experiences of the different female authors, covering the life spectrum of the Ethnic American Woman. They are presented in a logical and organized fashion, which provides structure but allows for flexibility in the themes. This adds to the enjoyment of the book and facilitates its reading.

The book is divided into twelve units. Topics presented range from the reality and the concept of growing up ethnic to the critique of literary reviews. Titles of the sections are as follows: Growing Up Ethnic, The Family, The Classroom, Identity, Exploitation in Human Relationships, The Working Woman, Religion and Ritual, Ethnic Pride, the Immigrant Experience, Seeking a Better Tomorrow, and Literary Critiques.

The appendices include: a Table of Contents by Literary Form, (e.g. Non-fiction and Scholarly Critiques, Short Stories), and a Table of Contents by Ethnic Groups as represented by author's names.

Blicksilver also includes a chapter on Class Discussion and Written/Research Topics. This is, indeed, an outstanding contribution by the author. The questions are designed to stimulate retention by application and expansion of the concepts.

The Ethnic American Woman: Problems, Protests and Lifestyles will not be seen by many as a regular textbook. It can be read for the enjoyment of each individual selection but it is also possible to read it as a continuous body of information. However, it is likely that some people would miss the sociological and psychological implications of a particular section, or how it fits into the whole. The sixty-six essay questions, that are presented for Class Discussion, do a remarkable job of picking up theoretical concepts, analysis of imagery and meaning, and comparison of experiences, forcing the reader to reflect on the works and begin to relate and integrate them with his/her own experiences. Had these questions not been presented at the end, they could have served as a very thorough outline for the entire book.

In the Introduction, Blicksilver points out that women are now seeking an understanding of their present roles and lifestyles, with ethnicity playing a significant part in that process.

There are four major areas that are addressed throughout the book: (1) How ethnic women deal with the universal problems of God, life, love, fate, frustration and death; (2) Loneliness in the new world - female protest; (3) Conflicts between new

immigrants and more Americanized members of that ethnic group, and/or between two ethnic groups (value conflict between first and second generation); and (4) Dilemmas of Intergroup Relations.

The author feels that the study of literature of ethnic women is a major tool in understanding their reality. By looking at very distinctive groups, through the materials presented in this collection of women's works, it is possible to identify some of their unique qualities and also some of their similar problems. Since each essay is an entity within itself, it is left to the reader to assess any overall function of ethnicity, its benefits, pitfalls, etc. This is the process that is enhanced by the Essay Questions posed by Blicksilver at the end.

This book depicts the immigrant experience in all its facets: the planning and dreaming, what is left behind, the unknowns, the loneliness, the rejections, the ongoing learning of new patterns of behavior, the hopes for a better tomorrow. It puts people in touch with the hardships of leaving the country of origin and resettling in a new culture, but even beyond that, it makes the reader cognizant of the resilience and pride of the ethnic woman. Also, it sensitizes the public to the strains of the continuous self-evaluation and soul-searching that takes place when the individual tries to keep some equilibrium between the old and the new.

The book also acknowledges some of the factors which seem to inhibit the Ethnic American Woman from utilizing their full potential as individuals, and traces them back to the early stages of elementary school.

Edith Blicksilver brings closure to the book with a message for educators, pointing out how crucial it is to be aware of the special needs of ethnic children. They should be encouraged to write freely about how it feels to be a member of a distinct minority group and be provided with the opportunity to share their joys and vent their frustrations. Creative workshops, says Blicksilver, would be a helping tool "as they search for their unique identity and as they explore the world beyond classroom and community."

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