

These poems are not intended, however, to make political statements. They are intended to allow us to share the feelings of this particular Italian American woman at this particular time. Read in this way, they contain much that is valid, even moving. They provide memorable descriptions of immigrant men—Green's father and grandfather singing in the midst of hardship. They give sensitive portrayals of the dreams of immigrant women. They describe the poet's mother, her Jewish friend, her son on his college commencement—"Now work in greener fields near mountaintops, my son" (31). They show the author's pride in ethnic background, in America, and in personal achievement. Not all the poems are equally good, but the many that describe personal and very human experiences are the strength of the book. They will ring true to readers of all ethnic groups.

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**Signe Hammer. *Daughters and Mothers: Mothers and Daughters*. (New York: New American Library, 1976) 173 pp., \$1.75.**

Poet, actress, and author (*Women: Body and Culture*), Signe Hammer here attempts an exploration of the complex bonds and strains between women, their daughters, and their mothers. While it is written for a popular audience, the book's credibility is strengthened by the inclusion of scholarly chapter notes following the final chapter.

In interviews of seventy-five mothers, daughters, and grandmothers, Ms. Hammer explores the complex contradictions inherent in the issues of separation and dependency. While some socioeconomic variation is apparent in the lives of the women quoted, the subjects of the book are predominantly middle class and white. Rarely do issues of ethnic identity extend her analysis to other segments of the population.

Although Ms. Hammer accepts the psychological premise that both physical and emotional independence are crucial to development, there is little evidence in her subject's lives of experiences leading to that autonomy. Rather, ". . . the feminine role has had no real room for a strong sense of personal and sexual identity that can be passed on to, and supported in, a daughter" (134). Not only have women traditionally had a poor sense of boundary between self and other, but those most closely adhering to the feminine ideal have truly experienced an absence of self.

The generation now in their late 20s to early 40s is the pivot. For the

first time in history, they have been able to choose whether to become mothers. This freedom, together with the contemporary transitions in women's understanding of their role in the world of work, creates great potential for redefining womanhood.

In response to that potential, many of Hammer's subjects are trying to construct a new style of mothering, one in which their own needs are recognized and their daughter's identities are valued as well. In the separation of their own power as mothers from their power as persons, they are overcoming the need earlier female achievers had to be male identified.

Competition and confrontation dominate the chapter discussing adolescence, but the promise of a reconciliation is clear: "... all I can do is to set an example and be my own person, and then she must choose whatever she wants to be" (160). While less intense and personal than the more recent *My Mother, My Self* (Nancy Friday) and *Of Women Born* (Adriene Rich), this examination of mother-daughter bonding is an important contribution to knowledge in this historically neglected area. The major remaining weakness in the literature is the absence of multicultural materials pertaining to the subject.

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**Wan Hashim. *Race Relations in Malaysia*. Asian Studies Series. (Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 1983) xviii, 127 pp., \$4.95.**

Wan Hashim is presently a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia. He obtained his master's degree in Social Anthropology from Monash University, Australia, and Ph.D. from the University of Manchester.

The book encompasses more than race relations as it is concerned with the historical development and interrelationship between race relations and the formation of the nation of Malaysia. By viewing political activity in Malaysia from an historical perspective, the author brings into sharper focus the cleavage between Malays and non-Malays caused by the manipulation of politics, economics, and ethnicity by the colonial power, Britain, during the seventy-year period between the early 1900s