

Explorations in Sights and Sounds, No. 13 (1993)

Although the compilers of this 202-page volume have attempted to be as comprehensive as possible, omissions are inevitably going to occur. For example, in the Native American section, Literature: History and Criticism, noted scholars—such as Gretchen Bataille, A. Lavonne Ruoff, Greg Sarris, and Kay Sands, to only name a few—are not listed. Also, in an effort to supplement their available material, the compilers included older listings from small presses and non-profit organizations and agencies. In addition, the nonprint materials, films, videotapes, audiotapes, and slide sets are annotated according to reviews, filmographies, and distributors' catalogs, thereby providing a summary rather than an analytical assessment of the material. Still, the volume is a good starting place for many undergraduate students in women's studies courses who need fundamental sources on ethnic women in a variety of professions.

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Sherley Anne Williams. *Working Cotton*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992) 26 pp., \$14.95 cloth.

Working Cotton is based on poems from Williams's *The Peacock Poems*, a National Book Award nominee. Based on her childhood experience in the cotton fields of Fresno, this poignant story tells of a migrant family's day from the point of view of a child, Shelan, who is "a big girl now. Not big enough to have my own sack, just only to help pile cotton in the middle of the row for Mamma to put in hers." From dawn until dusk, the family works the field.

Written in a dialect that is lyrical, and that at times resonates with the cadence of a spiritual, the story evokes a wide range of emotion, from Shelan's pride in how fast her daddy can pick cotton, to her longing to play with other children her age ("But you hardly ever see the same kids twice, 'specially after we moves to a new field,") to the uncertainty of being a child faced with responsibility too soon. The drawings by Byard depict the moments of toil, struggle, kinship, and natural beauty of the people and the landscape in a panoramic style that is poignant and beautiful. The final two images, a late-blooming cotton flower and the family walking toward the sunset, we want to hope, suggest some promise in this hard life.

Perhaps one of the best aspects of this beautifully written and illustrated book is the fact that it would cause a child to ask more questions. The life of migrant workers, as told through the eyes of a child, brings up many issues about race, socioeconomic conditions, and how families struggle to stay together and survive. When Sherley

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Anne Williams, best known for her widely acclaimed novel *Dessa Rose*, and Carole Byard, whose illustrations for children's books have twice won the Coretta Scott King award, team together to produce a children's book, the result has to be magical and evocative. It is.

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Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, ed. *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) vii, 352 pp., \$38.00 cloth, \$19.90 paper.

Immigration Reconsidered presents the latest paradigm of immigration studies from some of the leading scholars in three disciplines. Contributors include historians Samuel Baily, Sucheng Chan, Philip Curtin, Kerby Miller, and Virginia Yans-McLaughlin; sociologists Suzanne Model, Alejandro Portes, Ewa Morawska, and Charles Tilly; and political scientists Lawrence Fuchs and Aristide Zolberg. Several individuals have degrees or interests in more than one field. This book is the outcome of a conference held to celebrate the Statue of Liberty's Centenary. The papers are carefully chosen, of high individual quality, and integrated more than most collections of essays by scholars' responses to each other and the editor's analytical overview.

The authors place American immigration history in a broad comparative framework ranging in time from the slave trade to recent migration flows from Asia and Latin America. The book makes the point that national boundaries are artificial. Immigrants move across them like clouds over the earth in response to an international labor market. Throughout much of the last four hundred years, the United States has been on the periphery of world capitalism. It is neither unique in terms of its immigrant experience nor a "melting pot." Not everyone wants to come to America; not everyone stays (between 25 to 60% of all immigrants have returned to their countries of origin). Repatriation and immigration elsewhere are common alternatives. This book is valuable because it seeks to avoid an ethnocentric or parochial perspective and to place American immigration in a wider context. It also compares the labor market experiences of African Americans with those of European and Asian immigrants and documents the complex relationships between these groups. Most work on American immigration does not.

Specifically, what is being reconsidered here? The editor and other authors, especially Morawska, criticize an older immigration model (still very much alive in popular discourse) which emphasizes