

Anzia Yeziarska. *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*. (New York: Persea Books, Inc., 1981) 226 pp., \$5.95 paper.

The republication of Anzia Yeziarska's *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*, with an afterword by her daughter, Louise Henriksen, is an important event in two respects: first, it represents another step in the rediscovery of a significant writer whose work deals with the experience of immigrant Jewish women at the turn of the twentieth century. Second, it is a valuable document for information on that period of mass migration. Scholars concerned with ethnic literature, as well as those previously unfamiliar with Yeziarska's works, will find here interesting insights into the problems and pressures of the immigrants.

New readers will be fascinated with the narrator's tale of her meteoric rise to fame and riches when her book of short stories is sold to a Hollywood studio and made into a movie. The years of struggle in Czarist Russia, the poverty on the lower East Side, the humiliations in school when she could not speak English, the years in the sweatshops, the unceasing efforts to get an education and become a writer—all these are vividly contrasted to the comfort of her Hollywood existence. Yet finally, the threat to her integrity was too high a price to pay and she returned to New York.

Yeziarska continued writing the novels the novels and stories of the immigrant years that are the basis for her reputation, but the Depression and the loss of publishing interest in her subject plunged her back into poverty. In a moving section, she describes her work during this time with the WPA Federal Writers Project and the authors she met there, particularly Richard Wright who was then on the brink of his first great success. Essentially autobiographical, the structure of this book also emphasizes the values of economic security, acceptance by others and the need for community. At the end, the author conveys to readers a sense of someone who is able to face the future strengthened by the understanding she has gained through all of her disillusionments.

Both general readers and scholars can only be cheered the reissue of *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*. It makes available one of Yeziarska's best works, one of the few studies of the immigrant woman's experience told by a woman herself. Without reprints such as this, our efforts to learn about a neglected part of American culture are severely hampered, our research is limited to those with access to major libraries and our audience to those who are lucky enough to find original copies.

—Carol Schoen
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