

make sense of their tangled world.

Finally, Michael Dorris gives us the utterly charming part-black, part-Indian Raymond, thirteen-year-old narrator of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, whose encounter with lonely pedophilic Father Tom holds out a promise of wonderful adventures to come. Remember, you heard it here first (in case the title passed you by): Raymond will be to the eighties what Holden Caulfield was to the fifties: the necessary reincarnation of Huckleberry Finn, that quintessential mirror for our national folly.

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Edward D. Beechert. *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985) ix, 401 pp., \$30.00.

For those interested in ethnic experience, the history of Hawaii offers unique insight. Initially a Polynesian island group, with a population related culturally to inhabitants of islands as far afield as Easter Island, New Zealand and Tahiti, Hawaii from the late eighteenth century onwards became the home of Americans, Europeans, Portuguese, Filipinos, Chinese and Japanese, all drawn there for differing reasons. When to this ethnic and racial variation, the complex permutations of class and gender are added, observers of Hawaii's past are witness to a rich range of inter-cultural encounters. In *Working in Hawaii*, Edward Beechert's particular focus is the experience of ordinary workers, whom he claims have appeared in the histories of Hawaii "as exotic figures known primarily by racial labels and stereotypes, while it has been the political leadership of the country, and broad political change, which have previously received predominant attention."

"Work" is a very broad category, and Beechert's study concentrates largely on one central area. He addresses primarily the labor conditions of what became the basic economic enterprise in Hawaii, the sugar plantations: how the plantation economy emerged from the earlier indigenous subsistence economy, the political conditions which shaped its growth, the working lives of the plantation laborers drawn from many nationalities, and the development in the twentieth century of the union movement which improved the lot of workers to a considerable degree, both within agriculture land and in the related urban industrial and service industries. Beechert covers his large brief in a manner which is scholarly, detailed and impressive. An unashamed advocate for the workers in their century-long battle for a dignified livelihood, he offers at the same time a comprehensive overview of the relationships of the unusually varied workforce itself. The workers' grievously disadvantaged

position is fully explored, yet they do not emerge merely as victims of their situation within capitalist productive relations, but as agents, too, who took steps when opportunity offered to resist oppressive circumstances and grasp for more control of their employment conditions.

Beechert traces the first transformation of the workforce in the replacement of indigenous Hawaiians by Asian laborers. Polynesian Hawaiians preferred subsistence agriculture to low wages, grueling plantation work, introduced by American entrepreneurs, and their numbers were steadily dwindling. Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese and Filipino indentured laborers were in turn exploited by planters, who turned the divided nature of the workforce to their advantage, preventing concerted opposition to the exploitative conditions. Civil rights for workers improved with the American acquisition of Hawaii as a territory at the turn of the century, but sporadic worker demonstrations and strikes were organized on ethnic lines, while the small local American Federation of Labor addressed the needs of white, skilled workers. Fresh initiatives in union ideas and leadership, emerging during the New Deal and the immediate post-war period, ushered in a new era for workers as divisions on racial lines were vigorously opposed. By the year 1959, when Hawaii was admitted to statehood, slow but certain advances were underway.

This study leaves unexplored large areas of work in Hawaii, not least the bulk of women's work. It elucidates the relationship of ethnicity and class, however, with perception. Other historians will build on Beechert's insights to broaden our knowledge and understanding of gender relations and of the social relations of productive labor dealt with at a less general level. As it stands, the book will serve as a basic text for many years to come.

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David M. Brownstone, Irene M. Franck, and Douglass L. Brownstone. *Island of Hope, Island of Tears*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1986) xii, 307 pp., \$9.95 paper.

The most compelling aspect of this dramatic history of immigration to the United States via Ellis Island is its vivid documentation of actual human experiences. Personal testimonies from dozens of immigrants form a living tissue that connects the detailed, fully-researched historical data on immigration history. These oral descriptions recreate the journey for us, illustrate the conditions in the homeland being left behind, and give us an insider's view of the bureaucratic tribulations