

The policies themselves seem to be commendable at the outset but the reader will find that, upon closer scrutiny, they do not really support women. The procedures for registration virtually preclude the participation of women entrepreneurs simply because the women do not fit the criteria specified in the regulations. Further, the impression is given that, by and large, government policies are aimed at the educated, established small-scale entrepreneurs in the formal sector who have a certain level of capital, while the vast majority of women who desperately need help are the illiterate, micro-entrepreneurs in the informal sector who have no capital nor the means to obtain it. Indeed, one of the weaknesses of the book is that Vinze also seems to overlook the masses of women in the informal sector.

Women Entrepreneurs in India makes a worthwhile contribution insofar as it addresses problems faced by Indian women in small-scale enterprises and identifies government policies, programmes, and agencies. It does not deal with the total picture of women entrepreneurs, *i.e.*, both in the formal and informal sector in India. It does, however, identify two major concerns: (1) lack of government outreach programmes for women in the economy; and (2) detrimental social attitudes. It is a welcome piece of work as it opens a vast area of research on how existing government services should be made available to women and how to find ways of overcoming dominant social attitudes.

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Beyond the Public Domestic Dichotomy: Contemporary Perspectives on Women's Public Lives. Janet Sharistanian (ed.) *Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987, Pp. 197.*

The relationship between the "public" and the "private" sphere has been the subject of much theoretical debate and empirical investigation in feminist work over the past twenty years. In this context, links between feminists working in a diverse set of disciplines and researching a variety of empirical issues have been formed. One of the outcomes of this mode of interaction and exchange has been the recognition of the need for a forum in which such a dialogue can be made available to larger numbers of researchers who share common interests and concerns. The papers in *Beyond the Public Domestic Dichotomy* are the end products of a collectivity of feminist researchers who met at the University of Kansas Research Institute on Women's Public Lives, in the summer of 1980. It is a com-

panion volume to *Gender, Ideology and Action: Historical Perspectives on Women's Public Lives*, also edited by Sharistanian. While such an enterprise is laudable in its intent, in this particular instance the outcome is disappointing.

The context for the work is provided in the opening essay by Sharistanian. Herein she outlines the theoretical terrain which has provided the frame for contemporary debate on the "public and the private" and the relationships between the two. The concepts of "public" and "private," she argues, can be explicated by returning to the influential work of Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974), where Rosaldo forwarded her position that sexual asymmetry could be understood through an exploration of the tension and opposition between the world of men's (public) and the world of women's (private) activities. Bearing the dominant responsibility for child birth and child care the world over, Rosaldo argued that women were excluded in both formal and informal ways, from the sphere where influential decisions were made and carried out. As Sharistanian herself indicates, the "debunking" of this position has been formidable in recent years. Claims of essentialism, ahistorical analysis, biological reductionism, ethnocentricity and unwarranted assumption of homogeneity have come from a variety of feminist anthropologists, historians, economists and sociologists. Indeed Rosaldo herself has relatively recently tipped her hat to these critiques.¹ Supporting the more recent concerns and positions of socialist feminists, Rosaldo would content that a historical materialist method, sensitive to both material and ideological expressions of women's subordination, provide an important corrective to earlier work.

Given this important recognition, and given the promise of this collection's title—*Beyond the Public Domestic Dichotomy*—one would expect that the papers included would seriously grapple with the limitations and reformulations of a model which is premised upon the notion of "separate but interrelated" spheres. We are reminded of the "dual systems" approach which characterized earlier work on the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy.² Instead, the collection *begins* from the position that "the domestic/public paradigm continues to be of value when it is given precise definition and tested by a specific context."³ The largely uncritical acceptance of this approach short-circuits the possibility of theoretical debate and of reformulation. While this collection provides some interesting empirical observations and data, it is its lack of theoretical uniformity and innovation which limits its contemporary usefulness. This is especially the

case in the presence of other edited works which manage to overcome similar limitations.⁴

The opening essay, "Women, Organizations and Power," for example, makes the case that as more and more women enter positions of power in work organizations, these settings "provide a fertile setting for investigation of women and power."⁵ While this is likely quite rightfully the case, the essay makes no attempt to related theoretically or investigate empirically, the *relationship* between the worlds of "paid work" and "unpaid work" in terms of the concept of power. Thus one fails to see how the concepts public and domestic inform the essay in any meaningful way.

The paper begins with a literature review of organizational models from Weber to Taylor to Mayo and the human relations school, and then settles into a discussion of the structural barriers to women in management. The literature, the author argues, rests upon a distinction between **internal** and **external** factors. As we might expect, internal factors focus on matters individual and ignores or marginalizes the structural features of certain work place organizations, as exemplified in the work of Moss Kanter.⁶ As a corrective to these two divergent explanations, it **appears** that the author is attempting to support the case for a third approach which focusses on the relationship between internal and external factors or the **interactive approach**. To its credit, this approach incorporates the crucial and, one would assume from the literature review provided, largely ignored dimensions of *meaning and context* in working toward an adequate exploration of the barriers to women in management and their differential experience of work place organizations. Unfortunately, this "argument" is not made explicit by the author, and the readers are, in some sense, left to draw their own conclusions from the paper. Despite the fact that in the concluding essay, the editor refers to this paper as a "study" of women, organizations and power, no empirical data is provided. Rather, we are presented with a loose literature review which makes tentative suggestions regarding the study of women, power and organizations.

The articles which are more useful in the collection are clearly those which are based on empirical research. Chai's article, "Adaptive strategies of Korean immigrant women in Hawaii," is a welcome addition to the collection for its methodological approach. Providing for the readers, the subjects' voices, is an all-too-uncommon occurrence in sociological research and Chai's article elucidates the complexities of confronting an alternative and alien culture. A recurring theme in the women's voices is the contra-

dictory and ironic nature of their experiences in "adapting" to life outside of Korea. As one woman in Chai's research stated:

The hardest thing to take is that we have immigrated for the sake of our children's education, but there are so many shocking things about American youth culture that I am afraid to even let our children go outside.⁷

In particular, the article addresses the impact of economic exigencies on inter-household and extra-household activities and labour practices. Again the contradictory nature of their experiences is evident. Take, for example, the wage earning status of Korean women and the absence of extended kin networks. Presence in the paid work force affords Korean immigrant women a degree of power in household decision-making that might have eluded them in Korea. This change, Chai argues, facilitates a conscious reformulation of the lines between men and women and causes women to "doubt their husbands' right to dominate them."⁸ However, the impact of these realizations can be curtailed by the lack of local extended kin networks who might otherwise alleviate some of the pressure from working mothers. Immigration is, for Korean women, a double-edged sword.

While this essay is one of the strongest in the collection, it too suffers from a lack of clarity and precision in argument. The paper addresses a multiplicity of issues which are loosely incorporated under the rubric of "adaptive strategies." What is lacking is any *meaningful* attempt to situate these strategies and their success or failure in the wider context of a political economy which is structured along gender, class, ethnic and generational lines. This kind of analysis would necessarily contribute to a more sophisticated theoretical position on the applicability of maintaining the "public/domestic" conceptualization.

Neath's article "Women's social and sexual devaluation of women" also provides some interesting raw material which could usefully be included in introductory level courses in sociology, anthropology or women's studies. In attempting to explore social devaluation, the author administered a twenty-nine page questionnaire to 183 female students in an introductory level psychology course. The questionnaire presented, among other things, a series of situations in which women were asked to both recall their own past actions and discuss the actions they would likely take in imaginary circumstances. The imaginary circumstances placed women in a situation where they would have to make some kind of choice between

their relationships and commitments to women friends and the possibility of a "date" with a man. The retrospective questions asked women to recall their conversations with men and women at a recent party. They were then asked a series of questions about the length of the conversations, the interest level, attention level etc. The results of the study are not surprising and neither are the quoted responses included in the article. In general, women spent more time talking to men at parties and they enjoyed the time they spent talking to men more than the time they spent talking to women.⁹ The imaginary situations generated a variety of possible solutions to the dilemma of female versus male interaction, including the attempt to negotiate some kind of "middle ground" approach rather than the either/or alternative. This is certainly not startling data but the situations and the statistics are useful points of discussion and debate for students who have not thought seriously or critically about such issues in their own lives. However, the article is essentially weak in terms of explanatory or analytical weight and there are some very real leaps of (conceptual) faith.

While the author asserts that she is examining social devaluation of women by women, she slips into the assertion that sexual devaluation (which she defines as "a behavioural and attitudinal preference for relating sexually to men over women") is "one form of social devaluation."¹⁰ One of her hypotheses is that there is a relationship between social and sexual devaluation and that "women who sexually devalue women more will show more of other forms of social devaluation as well."¹¹ There are some problems here.

At the very least one wonders at the utility of thinking about and talking about sexuality in such normative terms. Part of the project of the past fifteen to twenty years of feminist research has been an attempt to move away from the functionalist model with its normative underpinnings. Speaking about sexuality in these terms runs the risk of moving backwards rather than forwards. Labeling women's heterosexuality, sexual devaluation (or social devaluation) of women by other women, is in some ways pointless and, more importantly, politically dangerous. This is not to deny the importance of sexuality to social theory. Certainly one of the central points of feminist theory has been the need to understand sexuality and sexual relations in social, cultural, historical and political terms. But accompanying this position has been the call for an ethic of mutual understanding and appreciation for sexual expressions in a variety of forms. Statements like, "Even many feminist identified women fail to see their exclusively heterosexual lifestyle as devaluing of women,"¹²

serve only to drive wedges between women and to encumber the potential for political alliances among women. We need to understand the processes by which heterosexuality has become hegemonic, and the processes by which it has maintained its hegemony and been resisted over time. The fulfillment of this project will not be delivered in the context of either normative language or logic. While Neath does attempt to situate her "study" in the larger social context, this is done in a tentative and theoretically undeveloped manner:

The question of why this culture processes and so strongly enforces an institution of heterosexuality is more difficult to answer. It *seems* that heterosexuality must be an important supporting institution of patriarchy. Having every woman tied to and dependent on a man *seems* a very effective way of keeping women from each other and from power...heterosexual monogamy is a good way for men to maintain a male line of inheritance and for the male to gain a place of importance as the father of a particular child or children.¹³

Also included in the collection are two articles which deal specifically with "re-entry" women: "Understanding re-entry women: a developmental approach," and "The re-entry graduate woman: interactive perspectives on her transition into public life." Both of these papers explore and attempt to expand on mainstream psychological literature and its inherent male bias, à la Gilligan.¹⁴ Both of the articles make the case for a re-orientation of the psychology literature and they do this through the presentation of some interesting empirical data. In a similar vein, Miller's article, "Early employment experiences of Chicago area women: initial patterns of labour-force entry and exit," emphasizes the inadequacy of mainstream literature in studies of work, for an exploration of women's work experiences. In particular, Miller's research attempts to examine the relationships and interconnections between the male-centered "job model" and the female-centered "gender model" of work.¹⁵ Miller does this through the use of reconstructed longitudinal data gathered through a life-history interview approach. The themes explored in the interviews were organized around (1) educational history; (2) employment history; (3) marital history; and (4) mothering history. In doing so, Miller's work emphasized the need for a holistic approach to the study of women's work and for the need to grapple with the conceptual inadequacies of much literature on work. Her general approach in the study was also innovative for its subject-directed stance. In other words, Miller argued that by allowing women as subjects "to identify the factors that

shape their own work experiences,"¹⁶ one could move beyond the limitations inherent in an "either/or" model and could move toward a more holistic framework.

These last three articles do make some interesting and important points about the nature of work and work experience as it varies by gender. However, their publication in 1987 seems somewhat dated in the context of much contemporary work.¹⁷ Their strength lies in their empirical contributions and, as with much of the other work, their weakness lies in their failure to utilize the empirical findings in such a way as to refine or reconceptualize the problematic dichotomy of the "public" and the "domestic."

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NOTES

1. Rosaldo, "The use and abuse of anthropology: reflections on feminism and cross-cultural understanding," *Signs*, 5, no. 3 (Spring, 1980).
2. For an elaboration of early work in this vein, see Sargeant (ed.), *Women and Revolution*, Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1981, and Eisenstein (ed.), *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979. Important debates along this line are also addressed by Barrett, *Women's Oppression Today*, London: Verso, 1980. For an example of a more contemporary statement, see Phillips, *Divided Loyalties: Dilemmas of Sex and Class*, London: Virago, 1987.
3. Sharistanian (ed.), *Beyond the Public/Domestic Dichotomy: Contemporary Perspectives on Women's Public Lives*, p. 7.
4. In particular, see Fishburne Collier and Junko Yanagasako, *Gender and Kinship: Toward a Unified Analysis*, and deRoche, Connie and John deRoche, *A Rock in a Stream: Living with the Political Economy of Underdevelopment in Cape Breton*, St. John's: Institute for Social and Economic Research Press, 1988.
5. Sharistanian (ed.), p. 12.
6. The work cited by Cann in this paper is Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, New York: Basic Books, 1977.
7. Sharistanian (ed.), p. 81.
8. *Ibid*, p. 83.
9. *Ibid*, p. 166.
10. *Ibid*, p. 158.
11. *Ibid*, p. 162.
12. *Ibid*, p. 159.
13. *Ibid*, p. 195.
14. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.
15. Miller cites Feldberg and Glenn, "Males and females: job versus gender models in the sociology of work," *Social Problems* 26 (June, 1979).
16. Sharistanian (ed.), p.39.
17. An excellent contemporary discussion of households and work can be found in Paul, *Divisions of Labour*, London: Basil Blackwell Limited, 1984. See also, Redclift and Mingione (eds.), *Beyond Employment: Household, Gender and Subsistence*, London: Basil Blackwell Limited, 1985. Both of these works situate an analysis of work and households in the context of changing capitalist relations at the global, national and local levels. In addition, they draw upon and contribute to current feminist reconceptualizations of work, the economy and social reproduction.

Home Economics and Feminism: The Hestian Synthesis. Patricia J. Thompson. *University of Prince Edward Island: Home Economics Publishing Collective, 1988.*

The aim of Patricia J. Thompson's ambitious, short book is to open the dialogue between feminists, home economists, and others in the academy. She offers a new/old way to understand women in Home Economics and what they do, and while the book may not attempt to resolve the philosophical complexities of dualism or the baffling difficulties of strategies for change in a male-privileging social hierarchy, *The Hestian Synthesis* may very well be the beginning of a whole new area of research and thinking. She is on to something—and she makes you curious about it.

The book is based on—and for the main part is—the proceedings of a three-day workshop held at Belcourt Centre, South Rustico, Prince Edward Island, just prior to the 1986 Canadian Home Economics Association Convention in Charlottetown. The twenty participants in the workshop stayed together for the three days in order to come to terms with what they all clearly see as a crucial issue for Home Economics. Patricia Thompson explained the Hestian/Hermean metaphor for them and then answered questions and posed problems; at the end of the workshop/book, she says, "when you came to this conference you were talking as a home economist, and I hope you're leaving today as a Hestian feminist" (p. 95).

In reading the book we must keep in mind its origin and its intended audience. It is a beginning; it is designed for those who may not have thought of themselves as feminists before; it is reassuring and persuasive. In the introduction, Patricia Thompson sets the tone for the whole when she laughs good-naturedly at her own audacity: "So I've undertaken something no less ambitious than to attack the whole edifice of patriarchal culture!" (p. 6).

Of course, she is only half joking. Borrowing from the French *Annales*, from European mythologists, and from recent feminist theorists, she explains her metaphor of the two domains, Hestian and Hermean, private and public. She argues—very loosely—that she is not talking about gender divisions or even simple role divisions, but fundamental attitudes to natural law, to stability, continuity, and energy. In our times, she says, the Hermean domain of control has so thoroughly overshadowed and silenced the Hestian domain of connection that the Hestian is often thought to be irrelevant, trivial, inferior. The discipline of Home Economics values, embodies, preserves, and investigates the Hestian domain.