

be a little close to home for some of us. For example, it may be argued that one way in which professional middle class women are able to circumlocute this issue is by orienting themselves to Day Care rather than confronting the dilemmas of the domestic labour dyad. But since Day Care workers are only slightly better paid, the general issue of the devaluation of women's work is not fundamentally altered. Or even more importantly, do I avoid hiring a Black domestic over a White one because of the socio-political implications of seeing myself in such a stereotyped dyad? There is clearly a rich area of field research here.

While the book does not profess to be an analytical or theoretical treatise on the issue (the study is 127 pages and most of this is devoted to the 10 case studies) a framework is nevertheless pervasive. And that framework is clearly racism. Silvera is quite literal when she says her study is about *Black* working-class women. But the truth of the matter is that the domestic labour problem is first and foremost a feminist issue, i.e. it is about sexism. Without becoming overly committed to a chicken/egg argument suffice it to say that when the two areas sexism and racism mesh historically, as we have here, it provides a political hotbed.

Silvera also indicates that nothing short of a socialist government will fundamentally alter the problem. Quoting Charlotte Perkins Gilman who noted at the turn of the century the necessity for "teams of trained and well-paid workers, moving from dwelling to dwelling" she appears to be supportive of contemporary Molly Maid services, but Silvera would add the necessity of a social welfare state which makes such services and childrearing areas available to everyone (p. 124). Yet, I cannot help but find this a romantic notion and one which leaves us in a status quo situation. As Silvera herself suggests, the history of domestic labour has shown that progressively

each group has fled domestic labour when possible, regardless of pay and working conditions, thus demonstrating the depth of the devaluation of women's work. And as has become clear, until recently as the feminist movement has done little to reorient our biases, but rather has contributed at times to the notion that housework is shit-work. Neither the proper regulation nor enforcement of domestic labour laws can eradicate the deep underlying stigma associated with the problem - namely that women's work is insignificant. In short, the problem is very deep - perhaps far deeper than capitalism. The notion of devaluation of women's work goes back at least as far as primitive hunting and gathering societies in which women may have been more central to subsistence yet symbolically were usually not acknowledged as such.

Makeda Silvera is a gifted "listener" and writer who seems to sneak in her sociology almost effortlessly. Although I may not agree totally with her perspective, it is an important one which raises a variety of controversial feminist issues surrounding the domestic labour controversy. Reminiscent of Matthew's *Voices From the Shadows*, another recently published Canadian paperback, which relates the personal experiences of disabled women, *Silenced* contributes to an understanding of women who have minority status within their own gender milieu. *Silenced* should become a standard women's studies text in Canadian courses coast to coast.

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Slaves of Slaves. The Challenge of Latin American Women. Latin American and Caribbean Women's Collective. Translated by Michael Palilis. London, England: Zed Press, 1980. Pp. 186;

Comparative Perspectives of Third World Women. The Impact of Race, Sex, and Class. Edited by Beverley Lindsay. *New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983. Pp. ix + 319;*

Sandino's Daughters. Testimonies of Nicaraguan Women in Struggle. Margaret Randall. *Vancouver/Toronto: New Star Books, 1981. Pp. ix + 220;*

The Women of Rural Asia. Robert Orr Whyte and Pauline Whyte. *Westview Special Studies on Women in Contemporary Society. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982. Pp. xv + 262.*

The rich diversity of literature on women in the Third World is illustrated in these four selections. In the first three books, women speak for themselves. The first two are written by Third World women; the third presents the words of women as recorded in accounts of their life histories. The fourth volume is a more traditional compendium and synthesis of studies on rural Asian women; however, the topics included, e.g., birth control and family planning, strategies for the provision of household help and child care for working women, are hardly traditional fare.

Women of Africa, Asia and the Americas are represented here. Randall's collection of life histories of Nicaraguan women reminds us that women can be actors who change society in radical ways. However, the sharp depictions of circumstances under which most Latin American women live, as presented by the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Collective, suggest that more commonly women struggle against uneven odds in deriving only subsistence for themselves and their dependents. Lindsay's book attempts to bridge the gap between the concerns of the Third World women in developing and developed nations by arguing that the structural bases of inequality in the two contexts are much the same. In contrast, Whyte and Whyte suggest that the cultural diversity in rural Asia undermines attempts at generalizations regarding wo-

men's positions. All four books describe the dire circumstances under which so many women live.

Beverly Lindsay's edited volume argues that the Third World is found in both developing and developed nations, for it is not a place as much as a structural relation of political and socioeconomic exploitation. In developing nations, exploitative relations based on colonialism and neocolonialism profit the Western developed nations. In developed nations, minority groups are dependent on and dominated by an essentially white majority. In both situations, Third World women suffer sexism along with the racism and class exploitation experienced by their men.

Articles on women in developing countries include three on African women, one on Chinese women, one on women in Northern India and one each on Caribbean, Cuban and Latin American women. Minority women in the United States are represented in articles on Native American, Hispanic, Black and Vietnamese immigrant women. Particularly welcome are the articles on women about whom we have heard very little—the Vietnamese immigrants, the factory workers in Northern India, and the professional women in Kenya.

The articles provide a good mix of qualitative and quantitative material. In Joseph's article on Caribbean women, for example, the composite portraits of women in different classes vividly reminds us of the lives behind the faceless statistics on income, housing, health and education. Lindsay's introductory and closing sections, as well as frequent references in other articles to other contributions in the volume, help create a unity often lacking in such volumes. The book would be a useful addition in courses on the cross-cultural study of women, modernization and development, and social inequality.

That women in developing nations often live in circumstances quite *unlike* those of minority women in North America is eloquently expressed in the life histories of Nicaraguan women who participated in the overthrow of the Somoza regime. Randall introduces us to a range of women, differing in their pre-revolution background and in the roles they consequently played in the revolution. Whether unschooled or well-educated, runner of messages or field commander, these women shared the effects of their mobilization. Some experienced torture and deprivation. Nearly all experienced prolonged separation from children, parents, and spouses. The "testimonies" are moving vignettes of triumph, bravery, and sacrifice.

The life histories were recorded in the flush of victory. The women were optimistic about Nicaragua's future and their place in it. It is difficult to imagine these women returning to the traditional roles and gender relationships experienced prior to their political involvement. Combining the women's own words with photographs of them, Randall makes us care about the women and wonder what has been their fate in the continuing turmoil of Nicaragua.

The optimism of Randall's book is in sharp contrast to the predominate tone of *Slave of Slaves: The Challenge of Latin American Women*. In the contexts described, many millions of women experience illiteracy, grinding poverty, malnutrition, and disease. These women, like their men and children, are exploited by powers both external and internal to their nations and cannot seek redress through their politically repressive governments. As an added burden, women suffer the consequences of indigenous machismo and the traditional ideology of the Roman Catholic Church. There seems little hope that the circumstances of most of these women and their families will be improved in their lifetimes.

Especially useful are chapters on "The Particular Character of Latin American Women's Movements" and "Columbia: Family Law and Legal Reform." Several articles discuss the politics of reproduction (e.g., in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Ecuador) and women's health (e.g., in Venezuela). Although some chapters provide more lengthy discussions, most are only sketches. Nonetheless, they may provide the impetus to generate more substantial studies.

In contrast, the volume by Whyte and Whyte provides lengthy syntheses of findings regarding various aspects of women's lives in rural Asia. Included are discussions of the division of labour and decision-making, women as a source of family income, control of the family purse, and modernization and female employment. However, these authors stress that the position of women in rural Asia has been largely determined by indigenous ecological adaptation (p. 204). Because of the cultural complexity of the area, they eschew further attempts at generalization.

For those advocating dependency theory in understanding the forces which shape the lives of Third World women (as found implicitly or explicitly in the three books already discussed), the conceptual orientation of this book may be disappointing. However, the discussion of constraints on marriage choices, widowhood and divorce, post-marital residence, and the quality of marital ties convincingly demonstrates how women's lives are strongly influenced by traditional culture. Descent systems, land tenure patterns, and religion, including the existence of caste or purdah restrictions, are particularly important.

Whyte and Whyte recognize the problems associated in compiling information on topics over so vast a culture region and from a wide array of sources (p. 133). Nonetheless, some of the statements regarding cultural patterns are unconvincing, for example the statement that

“Marriages in Laos were invariably uxori-local” (p. 110, as quoted from Levy, 1963). It seems unlikely that some variation across ethnic or tribal diversity of Laos did not exist. Even if the norm were uniformly uxori-local, it is unlikely that some discrepancy in practice did not exist.

Furthermore, the contextual significance of particular customs is obscured by the topical organization of the volume. In considering the choice of marriage partners among the Limbu of Nepal, for example, the authors indicate that “There are often love marriages, based on acquaintance at the institutionalized courtship dances” (p. 70, as quoted from Jones and Jones, 1976). However, love marriages often constitute second attempts at marriage and the survival of marriages is influenced by a range of factors (e.g., the successful completion of bridewealth payments, the birth of children, particularly a son, and the bride’s relationship with her mother-in-law (Jones and Jones, 1976). The latter information has been omitted by Whyte and Whyte, presumably as it does not “fit” under the topic of responsibility and criteria for choice of marriage partners. However, its omission makes Limbu selection of *life-long* marriage partners something other than what it is. Whyte and Whyte cannot and should not duplicate the details readily available in the original sources. However, the reader must exercise caution in the use of at least some of their material in the absence of a contextual discussion.

Nonetheless, the book is an excellent source of bibliography and implicit questions on women’s status in rural Asia and elsewhere. The wealth of descriptive information can be used by those of different conceptual orientations. In that sense, the Whyte and Whyte volume may have more long term value than the other three books, though its theoretical framework and style of presentation will not be as immediately popular.

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The Eaton Drive. The Campaign to Organize Canada’s Largest Department Store 1948 to 1952. Eileen Sufrin. *Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1982, Pp. 240.*

As union membership mushroomed in the period following World War II, the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) turned its sights to the unorganized retail and wholesale sector, and in 1946 decided to pierce the white-collar field with a campaign to unionize the Toronto Eaton’s store. A team of organizers was put together headed by Eileen Sufrin, a member of the B.C. Steelworkers’ staff.

The Eaton Drive is Sufrin’s personal account of the five year struggle to bring the union to Eatons and why it failed. It is a day by day detailed look at one of this country’s notable union drives which pitted the CCL against what was at the time Canada’s third largest employer, the T. Eaton Company. It is also a union organizing manual which draws out the lessons of the campaign in terms of general strategies and techniques for union building.

Sufrin begins with a brief history of the post-war labour movement and explains the reasons behind the decision to organize Eaton’s. There are two very interesting chapters on department stores as employers and more specifically on Eaton’s and the Eaton family. Except for a short epilogue, the rest of the book’s nineteen chapters describe the campaign from its inception to its demise, with background information on labour laws and the general situation in the labour movement in Canada, as well as the U.S.