

might have been lost in actually experiencing the job was compensated for by a lot greater freedom to talk and move around from department to department. Also she deliberately did not interview women outside of the factory - i.e., in their homes or socially in pubs. She feels that this would have been an invasion of their privacy. In addition she argues that the information that she did get on these aspects of the women's lives came in its most relevant possible form for her purposes, as it was filtered through factory experience. Lastly, Pollert did not just accept and passively record whatever the women told her, rather, she actively argued with them. In explaining this "interventionist research" approach, Pollert says:

It was (I hope) less patronising than the attitude which comprises the fascination of seeing "how the masses think"; I genuinely wanted to argue with and challenge attitudes as well as to learn.

With all the strengths of the book, Pollert can probably be forgiven for one curious lapse. There is a section of the text where she uses the word "girls" instead of "women" to refer to adult females. And this same term appears in the title of the book! Possibly Pollert, given the chance, could justify this also. She does such a brilliant job of explaining everything else.

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Women, The Family And The Economy. S. J. Wilson. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1982.

In dealing with the sociology of women, work and the family, we are no longer limited to works primarily in the British and American contexts. With the publication of S. J. Wilson's *Women,*

The Family and The Economy we have a basic, if brief, source which focuses on Canada. The book's value lies not so much in the presentation of new statistics and facts or original historical material, although the selection and use of these are very good, but in the integration and synthesis of existing historical and sociological materials on women in Canada. Wilson's intention to assess critically the current state of knowledge and methodology and to articulate the questions and issues with which we should concern ourselves is successfully executed. The author states that the book focuses on "the changes in family and work roles of Canadian women" with an emphasis on women's experience in the social world. Therefore, at the centre is "the relationship between women's domestic roles and their secondary position in other social institutions," particularly as it involves the issue of economic dependence, including ideological and structural barriers which maintain women's subordination in Canadian society.

The strength of the book can be summarized in terms of four attributes: scholarship, organization, critical perspective, Canadian context. First, the text reflects a scholarly grasp of the literature and is complemented by provocative, useful footnotes. The Socratic emphasis on questions helps to accentuate the crucial issues and to avoid the slogans and outworn generalizations of other texts. Wilson presents her arguments cogently and is careful to specify the limits of the work, avoiding tangents while providing references to important sources for related topics. She is particularly skillful in showing the interconnections of social factors which define and structure women's situations. Various theoretical positions for understanding women, work and family are discussed succinctly and critically, especially in Chapters One and Three. Although her agreement with the Schwendingers' assertion that sociologists have been historically "sexist to a man" and with the implication that women had no role in the founding and early development of sociology can be seriously chal-

lenged, Wilson summarises well the sexist context of sociology and its major feminist challenges. She raises the central question, "what form should a sociology of women take?" and responds

...We need to go beyond protesting the inequalities, we must explain why they exist. It seems to me that the task is to acknowledge, then define, then analyze the differing realities or world views of men and women. This implies that we start from a position that does not take the existing structures for granted...(p. 12)

A second strength is the book's organization. As she states in the Preface, Wilson's concern with the historically entrenched division of labour, with the impingement of society on our work as sociologists, and with the necessity of relating sociological problems to our (women's) experience has provided the basis of the book's organization. The three major parts of the book focus on "Woman and the Family," "Women's Work" including housework, labour-force participation and its historical development in Canada, and "Ideological Structures and Social Control" including the women's movement and women's politics and the mechanisms of social control. The treatment of these topics is inclusive and provocative. Wilson's sense of organization is reflected in the presentations of the plan for each major section and in excellent chapter summaries and conclusions. Clarity encourages the reader to focus on the questions and arguments presented.

Third and particularly refreshing is the manner in which Wilson thinks and writes from a critical perspective. She is a sociologist with an understanding of the importance of history in a sense which is worth quoting:

It has become increasingly evident that the kinds of questions sociologists ask about the sexual division of labour can only be

understood in an historical context. It only makes sense that we become familiar with the available primary data sources in order to critically assess the assumptions made by historians and economists in the past. The more we can understand the world view of the data collectors - and the constraints of the data-collection system - the better equipped we will be to assess the evidence. In the past, sociologists have been accused of uncritical acceptance of secondary analyses done by historians. Familiarity with the data will enable us to avoid this in future. (p. 74)

Wilson's critique of theories and approaches in Chapters One and Six raises specific questions about the limitations of sociology and economics. She summarises how Marxist, feminist and interpretive sociologies have challenged the distortions of sexist mainstream sociology, makes explicit her idea of a sociology of women and recommends the Kiuranov model (1980) for understanding woman as mother, worker and citizen to be a constructive formulation. In Chapter Six there is a critique of the supply approach (women workers and their characteristics as labour force participants) and the demand approach (dual-labour-market theory) as explanations of women's participation and segregation in the occupational and market structures. Wilson concludes that economic necessity and the changing need of the market, mediated by a male-oriented and controlled work structure and a traditional patriarchal family structure and domestic division of labour, account more accurately for the current shape of women's work.

Finally, anyone teaching and researching the history and sociology of women and work is aware of the limited Canadian material. Currently this problem is being addressed by Light and Prentice's new Documents in Canadian Women's History series with its first volume, *Pioneer and Gentlewomen in British North America, 1713-1867*. Wilson, in contributing to

the genre of works such as Tilly and Scott's *Women, Work and Family* (1978) dealing with Britain and France, gathers the existing research and issues into a useful analysis within the Canadian context. Especially important is Chapter Five, "The Early Years of Women's Paid Employment: Confederation to the Second World War," which is an historical overview of women's heavy involvement in the early Canadian economy and in the industrialization of Canada as cheap labour, the link of work to marital status, continual sex segregation in the labour force and the predominance of domestic service and factory work for women. The movement of women into male-dominated fields of teaching and clerical work and the reasons for it are also included. In the final section of the book she demonstrates the interconnections of ideas and structures, particularly showing how education and the mass media, including pornography, are crucial vehicles of social control. This is followed by a well-selected 20 page bibliography.

One of our tasks must be clarification of the definition and nature of women's work and of the ways in which women's work and lives are distinct from those of men. Work has been defined according to male criteria and the workplace structured by patriarchal forces. In this context, our understanding of women's work has been severely obstructed. We need to be aware always of the distortions thereby produced in our concepts and methodologies. The linkages of women's work to economic and political structures and familial constraints must be understood.

Wilson takes an important step in that direction, through her discussion of the myths of women's work lives, for example (p. 98). It is utterly essential, as Wilson demonstrates, to understand how women's domestic work and family relations form the base for the societal definitions of her roles and identity and mold the structural parameters of her work situation. The separation yet interdependence of the public and

private sectors operate to define and limit the life activities of women, to prevent recognition of the real work women do, and to measure women's life possibilities by male standards.

Women, The Family and the Economy is a very welcome textbook, a useful reference tool and a provocative source of questions and directions for our research. It is a valuable contribution to those of us who teach and do research on women's work in historical context and who wish to build an historical sociology of women's work in Canada.

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Wheat and Women. Georgina Binnie-Clark. Introduction by Susan Jackel. *Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979. Pp.313.*

A Flannel Shirt and Liberty. British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880-1914. Susan Jackel, ed. *Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982. Pp.229.*

In Western Canada Before the War. Impressions of Early Twentieth Century Prairie Communities. Elizabeth B. Mitchell. Introduction by Susan Jackel. *Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1981. Pp. 205.*

Susan Jackel has edited three volumes published before the First World War of writings by English "gentlewomen" that describe settlement of the Canadian prairie provinces. The books focus on women's experience, and generally are directed to English readers. Many of the writers, unmarried educated women of the middle and upper-middle classes, are capitalizing, as Jackel interestingly points out, upon the popularity of travel books. They describe Canada as a foreign land holding adventure and promise (a point of view that may startle those of us who live in or near these exotic regions). Certain themes recur. At the turn of the twentieth century in England