

ics, the male migrant was an aberration and his sojourn created conditions of social disintegration both in the hometown and in North America. In the former, social disintegration was linked to women who, in the absence of rigid controls, gave into their innate sexual promiscuity, while in the latter, men became brutish because of their harsh working and living conditions. Harney's efforts to dismiss as exaggerated evidence of cuckolding in the hometown leads him to discuss the migration as a rational strategy employed by families. The migrant's "decline into brutishness," he adds, lay not in the sojourn itself but in its "betrayal." When a temporary stay was thwarted, either by climate or dishonest intermediaries, the migrant became separated from his family and village for an abnormally long time, thereby throwing into disarray family lifecycle rituals of sex, marriage and inheritance. In another historical piece on the immigration process to Canada, Franc Sturino focuses on the role of flexible kinship networks in facilitating the family- and village-centred migration from Italy after World War Two. Though more conventional in approach to migration, Sturino expertly covers points of continuity and discontinuity in the immigrant experience, and he employs a dynamic model of behaviour, except when it comes to his passive portraits of women, who are depicted as being taken care of, watched over and protected by men.

Among the more controversial papers are those contained in the third section, which deals with generational differences among Italian women with respect to motherhood and family, work, education, and sexuality. Exploring tensions and conflicts at work in the family and their impact on the young Italian woman caught between divergent worlds, most of the articles present research findings on

how women from different generations perceive their roles. In her well-documented historical essay on changing female work and family roles in Providence, Rhode Island 1900-1940, Judith Smith observes, for example, how by 1940 second-generation daughters shifted from factory to white collar work and began challenging their parents' hitherto undisputed control over their paychecks. Nancy Stroms' piece on changing sexual attitudes among third-generation Italo-American adolescent women is also well informed and avoids the heavy reliance on socialization theory with its static and stereotypic categorizations of Italian immigrant woman, a pitfall that mars most of the other contributions.

Middle class and ethnic biases abound in the two American essays documenting efforts to establish a mental health program for immigrant women, and in the Canadian article on the immigrant generation by Harriet Perry. Perry analyses the metonymic definition of the Italian female and concludes that of the variety of role models accessible to Italian women — spinster, nun, whore, girl and wife — it is the last role that is most revered in Italian culture, as though this were not the case for most other cultures, including the Anglo-Saxon North American one! Her reliance on a metaphor of woman as house is, ultimately, a weak substitute for a more dynamic model that might attempt to integrate into an analysis the contradictory and multifaceted roles women performed. These articles fall into the trap of drawing a dichotomous model that sees the Italian working class women in either pathological terms (the submissive housebound creature) or as the powerhouse of the family within the domestic sphere. Nevertheless, the authors do supply us with fascinating biographies and they expertly articulate the sexism under-

lining the cultural mores of Southern Italian peasants, particularly as they regard female sexuality and its link with familial honour. And though we may differ with respect to whether this constitutes real power within the family, they provide much evidence indicating the central importance of the mother in keeping family and kin networks intact.

The final section contains papers on stereotyping of Italian women in America literature and Hollywood films, and a piece on Italian actresses who worked the amateur and professional Italian theatres of late nineteenth-century New York City. It is concluded with a series of poems by accomplished Italo-Canadian poets, Rosario D'Agostino, Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, and Mary di Michele, that speak to the sense of marginality they experienced as first-generation immigrant children and adolescents. They explore their recollection of childhood in Italy and, in the case of di Michele's contributions, powerfully capture the class system which conspired against the peasants of rural Italy and the cultural customs regarding female sexuality which oppressed its women.

This volume has been superseded by new scholarly works and the MHSO itself recently hosted a second conference on the history of immigrant women in Ontario. While the anthology suffers from a lack of cohesiveness and the empirical findings and theoretical discussions may seem somewhat limited, perhaps even stale, to us now, it nonetheless represents an important early attempt to address questions raised by the once renegade sub-fields of women's and ethnic studies. And there are research findings and interpretive insights that have withstood the test of time.

WOMEN OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Edited by Monique Gadant. Translated from French by A. M. Berrett. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986. Available from DEC Book Distribution.

Poppy Cobanoglu-Padley

The collection of articles contained in *Women of the Mediterranean* was first published in French as an issue of *Peuples Méditerranéens*, in 1984. It was then translated into English, by A. M. Berrett, and published in 1986. Those of us who

are interested in Women's Studies from a cross-cultural perspective are aware that a great majority of work is not available to us because of nonexistent translations. Therefore it is a welcome change when translations become available. It is also a welcome change to see many of the essays contributed by individuals from the actual countries addressed. Half the contributors are from diverse backgrounds — a potter, a mid-wife, women activists, social workers and so on; and the other half are social scientists.

Although the majority of articles in the book are contemporary, they deal with women operating in diverse cultures

(Europe and Asia, Christian and Muslim, rural and urban) and, in particular, in societies at very different levels of economic development. In spite of this fact, the contributors of the book stress with some success the problems as well as the experiences that women of the Mediterranean have in common. In the majority of cases the women speak for themselves.

One of the major themes in the articles is that Mediterranean women are closely subject to the authority and control of the men of their family — their father, brother and husband. The majority of the women interviewed are conscious of the strong patriarchal order and their oppression as

women. The articles focus on the various problems faced by Mediterranean women, and specifically examine their status and roles within the private and public domains.

One of the most insightful articles in this respect is Mirjana Morokvasic's article on *Women in Yugoslavia*. Morokvasic argues that despite the fact that the state officially encourages women to work, get an education and keep a career, there still remains a gap between the achievement and recognition of women in public life and the position of women in the private domain. Yugoslavian women can have their own careers, be economically independent as well as socially active; but once they are in the domestic sphere, the man retains authority. Morokvasic argues that, as a consequence of the artificial distinction between the private and the public domain, the position of women in public life has evolved differently from that of women in the family.

Similarly, the article on Turkish women points out that although Ataturk in the 1920s introduced secularization of social life, as well as introducing a series of reforms that were to help women gain rights, very little practical change occurred regarding women's rights. The Civil Code in 1926 granted women certain rights, but at the same time stated that the man was the head of the family. There were many such contradictions, and the

Muslim patriarchal order remained. Likewise, the article on Tunisian women points out that although the Code of Personal Status established in 1956 gives women more rights, there still seems to be a gap between the rights on paper and those granted to women in practice.

The patriarchal order is so inscribed in the Mediterranean culture that women, and specifically older women, are still bound by the traditional stereotypes themselves. In rural Algeria it is not only the men who do not want the girls to receive an education, but also their mothers, grandmothers and aunts. The girls are encouraged to stay home and raise a family. At the same time, there are some changes taking place: more and more young women are questioning the authority that the men in their family have over them. In Algeria, many young women no longer want arranged marriages, and are determined to have a say in choosing their partners for marriage. Likewise, more Corsican women are questioning their traditional role as women and the authority men have over them.

The articles on Palestinian women discuss the important role women play in the fight for nationalism. Palestinian women's movements are strongly associated with the nationalist movement, and are dedicated to two main causes: national liberation and emancipation for women. Although the link between the nationalist

movement and the women's movement is obvious, the demands for feminist developments are not always possible. The women encounter opposition mainly from traditional women's organizations and from the Muslim Brothers. Likewise, in the examples of Lebanese and Algerian women, there is no guarantee that being active in nationalist movements will create emancipation for women.

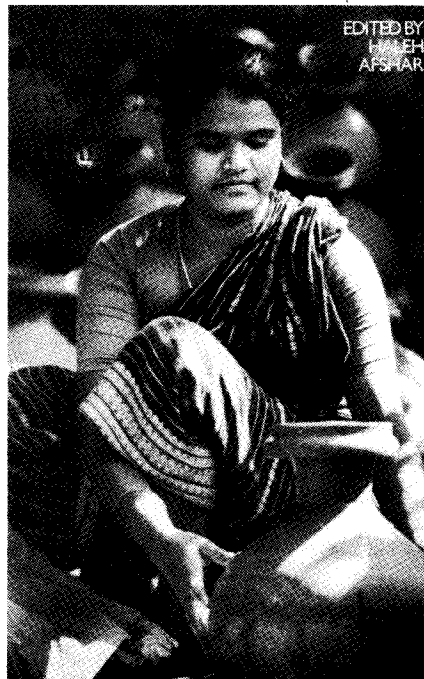
While the book is a welcome addition to the existing literature in the field, it does have some faults. First of all, since the articles cover such diverse cultures, and a variety of languages, one has to wonder what is missed in the translations from the original interviews, to the French, and then finally into English; in some sections of the book, the translation is a little rough. Secondly, the book deserves better editing. The introduction at times is not very clear, and the purpose of these articles being together is not always obvious: why, for example, was there an article on Iran included in a book about Mediterranean women? In some of the descriptive articles, such as the account of a birth in Algeria, an introduction or analysis would have been both welcome and useful. Finally, the book has a few printing errors. In spite of these flaws, the book is a valuable addition to the literature available on Mediterranean women.

WOMEN, WORK AND IDEOLOGY IN THE THIRD WORLD

Edited by Haleh Afshar. London: Tavistock Publications/Methuen & Co., 1985.

Anne Louise Currie

One of the primary methodological innovations of feminist researchers has been an assertion of the validity and centrality of the life experiences of individual women. This perspective arose partly to compensate for the malestream concentration on abstract theoretical issues that have little direct reference to the life experiences of the vast majority. In the latter approach, people are measured and evaluated with reference to how they fit into elaborate theoretical frameworks. The series of articles that make up *Women, Work and Ideology in the Third World* are refreshing in that they explore preconceptions of what women's work does and should constitute, and examine them in light of documented examples of



the conditions of work for women in various countries of the world. Thus, theoretic

cal frameworks are evaluated with reference to documentary descriptions of real life situations. When perceptions and expectations are compared with the results of research and study, the dichotomy between perception and reality becomes evident. These articles underline the 'grain of truth' in the feminist insight that women's work, especially in the Third World, is still, for the most part, 'invisible.'

The articles that make up this collection came out of a series of meetings of the Women and Development study group of the Development Studies Association at the University of Liverpool. They are written in the format of case studies of the conditions, both social and economic, of women's work, in particular regions of the Third World. While they focus on specific problems — land rights or levels of fertility — the underlying agenda of the authors is to try to understand and explain the ways that ideology functions as a tool that shapes and legitimates women's subordinate status. All the articles discuss, though in different ways, how ide-