

Some of the material can be found in previously published works. In particular, the chapter by MacLeod and the final one by Singerman are directly based on their respective books. However, there is certainly value in rereading their work within a larger comparative perspective on Cairo.

In sum, *Development, Change and Gender in Cairo* successfully serves both introductory and more advanced levels of readers. Most certainly, it can be used for undergraduate classrooms in political science, anthropology, sociology, development studies, and women's studies. It also offers advanced researchers in-depth detail valuable to anyone studying grassroots or informal politics and economics in Egypt or pursuing comparative work on the Middle East or the developing world.

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Roberta Hamilton — *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic: Feminist Perspectives on Canadian Society*. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996. Pp. xvi, 261.

Roberta Hamilton has set herself a near-impossible task in this book — to convey, in a concise and accessible way, how Canadian society might be understood from a feminist perspective. Both historically and theoretically informed, it is a welcome contribution to Canadian feminist teaching resources. As she recognizes from the start, neither “feminist” nor “Canadian” are unproblematic terms, and she defines her project as a critical examination of “the very concepts that constitute the book’s themes, namely Canadian society and feminist perspectives” (p. 1). Her point of departure, as the book’s title suggests, is John Porter’s 1965 classic, *The Vertical Mosaic*. Porter’s legacy is to understand Canada as hierarchically organized in terms of race and class, and this frames Hamilton’s analysis. Rather than entitle her work “Gender and the Vertical Mosaic”, however, she insists on “gendering”, to press home the point that “gender is not a thing but a process”: “gendering may be understood as ongoing action that plays out on every terrain from the psychic structures of individuals to the ways in which power is deployed in all organizations, institutions, and relationships” (p. 3). Her introduction, which sets out this general framework, hints at just how difficult and complex doing justice to this perspective might be, and warns that it will be the reader’s task to “relate many of the different subjects in this book to each other” (p. 9). The warning turns out to be appropriate and, caveat aside, constitutes the main weakness of the book.

The first two chapters, on feminist theories and women’s movements, are broad, introductory overviews. Hamilton works hard to demystify the idea of “theory”, showing how integral it is to the everyday process of making sense of things and why the development of feminist theories has been important in enriching our understanding of all manner of concepts, from human agency to social change. Her substantive treatment of various theoretical perspectives is sketchy, however, with liberal feminism accorded only a couple of paragraphs (which do not go much beyond a brief commentary on Wollstonecraft) and brief outlines of one to two

pages of Marxism, socialist-feminism, radical-feminism, anti-racist feminism, psychoanalysis, discourse analysis, and poststructuralism. More illuminating is the juxtaposition of some of these perspectives in the latter half of the chapter, where varying ideas about feminist theory and social change and the origins of gender hierarchies are discussed. This leads nicely into the chapter on women's movements, in which Hamilton locates the impetus for the development of feminist theories. While recognizing that it is a contentious demarcation, Hamilton analyses the contemporary women's movement as beginning in the late 1960s, arguing that this was a watershed in thinking about gender: "from this period on, whatever people *thought* about gender, gender relations, and gender inequality, these questions were up for discussion. No forum was too public or too intimate to preclude them" (p. 41). Her aims in this chapter are to explain why women's movements in Canada burgeoned in this period and to outline the agenda for change that emerged. With respect to the first question, two factors are identified — the intensification of the "double day" for women, as they entered paid labour in greater numbers, coupled with the "decline of the marriage contract" (p. 45), and the growth, during the 1960s, of widespread social movements for equality and justice. An array of movement sites is surveyed, from lobbying organizations (such as the National Action Committee) to women's centres to feminist academics. Finally, a wide-ranging set of issues is enumerated, some emerging in the early stages of the second wave (equal rights, the family, sexuality and reproductive rights, violence against women, women and work, the ideology of romance, education, critiques of masculinity/femininity and heterosexism) and others emerging as outgrowths and critiques of earlier feminist agendas (women and disability, anti-racism, feminism and nationalism in Quebec, aboriginal women and self-government). While much is sacrificed in the interest of brevity, Hamilton is successful in making her point that there has never been one, unified women's movement, thus putting lie to the popularly propagated notion that the women's movement has "self-destructed". She suggests that "for the media's descriptors like splintered and fragmented, we may wish to substitute terms like diversified, multifaceted, and enriched. Certainly, the women's movement appears as a fluid and open-ended event; those who have tried to draw boundaries or act as gatekeepers have been persuasively challenged" (p. 80).

The next three chapters examine, in turn, feminist perspectives on the Canadian state, the challenges to conventional understandings of the state that have emerged in the politics of self-determination, nationalism, regionalism, and anti-racism, and the struggles, both historical and contemporary, around women and work. A great deal of theoretical and empirical information is conveyed in these chapters, as Hamilton moves between recounting "mainstream" perspectives, critiques of these understandings, and the growth and development of more inclusive and extensive feminist perspectives as new questions emerge. She is particularly good at placing theoretical developments in the context of their development, drawing on a range of historical and contemporary data. While the framing of the chapter on the Canadian state seems rather truncated, in terms of the focus on liberal pluralism and neo-Marxism as competing paradigms and on women's participation in "official" politics and debates about pay equity as delineating the key sites of critique for

liberalism, some interesting questions are raised about the complexity of the state/society relationship and the degree to which the Canadian state can be analysed as patriarchal. These questions point to the need for a more historically specific analysis, nuanced by attention to questions extending beyond class and gender, and these are pursued in the chapter which follows. Here, Hamilton tackles some very big questions, including aboriginal self-determination, Québécois nationalism, racism, and the place of Canada in the international economy. This chapter goes a long way towards advancing her overall goal of problematizing both “Canadian” and “feminist” as analytical concepts. Demonstrating that the formation of the Canadian state “was based on and is sustained by fundamental inequalities”, which are not just “incidental features of a society that in all other respects is fair-minded and just” (p. 112), she traces these fundamental inequalities historically, identifies the consequences for those who are advantaged or disadvantaged by them, and draws out both the theoretical and political significance of the struggles to dismantle them. She concludes, not surprisingly given the complex set of intersecting hierarchies she has examined, that “whether feminists can unite around common interests for equality, and whether they use whatever power they have to work together to erode, rather than buttress the inequalities of nation, ethnicity, region, and gender are open questions” (p. 135).

The complex issues related to women and work are treated in a separate chapter, in an attempt to explain why work-related issues have always been central to feminist agendas and to demonstrate some of the ways in which the effects of intersecting hierarchies of gender, race, and class coalesce in specific contexts. In countering the erroneous belief that feminists have devalued the contributions of women in the home, Hamilton organizes both her historical and theoretical overview of the issues in terms of women, work, and family. Reviewing both “first-wave” and “second-wave” feminist struggles around work, she integrates the impacts of class, sexuality, regionalism, and ethnicity on the intersections of paid and unpaid work, and she explores how these questions have enriched and stretched our theoretical understandings of work. Most of the familiar issues are covered here — access, wages, unions, domestic work, immigration, childcare — but Hamilton considers some less familiar issues as well, such as sex work and the organization of women-only workplaces, such as shelters and women’s centres. She mentions the current restructuring of the Canadian economy only as a brief addition to the chapter’s conclusion. This is surprising, given the linkages that could be made here to her earlier attempts to rethink the Canadian state, especially in terms of the discourse of globalization and neo-conservative economic policies.

The final chapter shifts the focus to issues of representation and subjectivity and introduces students to some complex and current theoretical debates within feminism. Tackling the complexities of sexual objectification and the binary construction of masculine/feminine requires introducing some fairly difficult conceptual frameworks — primarily semiotics, psychoanalysis, and poststructuralism. Hamilton succeeds in giving a basic introduction to some of these analytic tools and provides numerous examples of how they might be deployed to understand some current cultural politics. Sexual objectification, for example, is explored through the multi-

ple constructions of gender, sexuality, race, (dis)ability, and age as they are culturally represented, and the significance for understanding how we live subjectively through the resulting categories is suggested through discussion of the insights of psychoanalysis and queer theory. Hamilton argues that these poststructuralist approaches are not a replacement for, but coexist with, more established feminist perspectives, such as political economy. While this is an argument with which I am sympathetic, the links between the material presented in this chapter and the arguments of the preceding chapters are not drawn clearly nor extensively enough for students to do much but take the connections on faith.

It is at this point that the need for a further, concluding chapter becomes most apparent. The final paragraph of the book argues that “the political discourse on the mid-1990s reinvents, with a vengeance, long-standing distinctions between those who are dependent on others and those who fend for themselves” (p. 220). A final chapter, which took this as its theme, would have provided the opportunity for Hamilton to juxtapose and integrate many of the diverse themes which are woven through the book — for example, the increasingly complex relationship between state and society, debates about citizenship, the role of “identity” in official political discourse, progressive social movements and counter-movements, and policy-making as meaning-construction. All of these questions require thinking historically, theoretically, and strategically about the intersections of hierarchies of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and region with which Hamilton has been concerned throughout; all involve bodies; all implicate how we experience ourselves both individually and as members of “society”. They are also all questions central to feminism, and to which feminism is central in understanding. The author warned us from the start, however, that we would have to make most of the connections ourselves — it is a good thing she has provided us with so much material to work with.

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Jacques-Paul Couturier et Phyllis E. Leblanc — *Économie et société en Acadie, 1850–1950*, Moncton, Éditions d’Acadie, 1996, 203 p.

Depuis quelques années déjà, l’histoire des Provinces Maritimes aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles s’est considérablement renouvelée, et ce renouvellement s’est accompagné d’un intérêt accru pour l’histoire socio-économique. Citons comme exemple les deux gros tomes constituant *The New History of Atlantic Canada*, les trois ouvrages de la série *Planters Studies*, et les autres récentes publications de Acadiensis Press, telles l’ouvrage édité par Janet Guildford et Suzanne Morton sur les femmes, par Daniel Sampson sur les travailleurs ruraux, par Kris Inwood sur l’économie et par L. Anders Sandberg sur l’industrie forestière. Dans cet impressionnant corpus, une grande absente : l’histoire des Acadiens. Les différents titres mentionnés ci-dessus, l’histoire des Provinces Atlantiques exceptée, incluent un total de deux articles sur les communautés acadiennes!