Silverman and Harding investigate the internalization of patriarchy: the association of life crises with socioeconomic functions on the one hand, and the structuring of personal influence in the absence of social authority on the other. Remy’s case study examines the economic, educational, ideological and political structures which limit the involvement of urban Nigerian women with regard to the neo-colonial political sector, and the growing capitalist sector; at the same time, they can no longer participate in traditional productive and exchange activities, for religious reasons (Islamic conformity) or because those products have been undercut by manufactured goods. Diamond’s essay closes the book with an analysis, as of 1974, of struggles against entrenched patriarchal ideology in the People’s Republic.

Clearly, some of the major directions in women’s anthropology today have taken off from ideas developed in these essays. Research concerning gender constitution, and the sex/gender systems of kinship and class societies owes much to Rubin’s pioneering formulation. Those involved in ethnohistorical research regarding State formation build on ground prepared by Rapp and Sacks. The critiques of male-centered methodologies have given many support in facing still-hostile committees. The collection is a grounding in the issues, and some of the initial approaches to problems confronting anthropologists doing research on women are still useful. (Anyone who considers the book outmoded should talk with beginning university students about “the woman question”.) At the time these articles were written, students like myself were being told in a major university that women were passive exchangees in a man’s game, that the Yanamamö were male-dominant—without mentioning the rather extraordinary colonial history of the Amazonian basin, that gatherers and hunters were “the Hunters”, and so forth. Today, there is sociobiology, structuralist exchange theory still extracts content from form, and form from context; and the antidialectical materialists continue to find rational functions for virtually every oppressive structure created historically.

*Toward an Anthropology of Women* emerged from questioning anthropological traditions, from fieldwork and archival research which sometimes scandalized male-centered advisors, from the political struggles of women anthropologists in the classrooms, on the home front, on the job (and on the unemployment) line. The research and the struggles continue; perhaps that is why the anthology remains useful and exciting.

Christine Ward Gailey

Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture, and Society*. Stanford, Stanford University, 1974, xi + 318 p., bibl., index, fig., tabl.

This book was the first general and theoretically oriented collection of essays to come out of the new Anthropology of Gender and thus in some ways marks the emergence of the field itself as a legitimate subdiscipline in anthropology. Many of the book’s papers have been enormously influential, and the issues they raise have proven central in the study of sex roles and ideologies; it thus behooves us to summarize and discuss these fundamental questions as they are developed in the papers.¹

The basic issue that permeates the collection are the twin questions: Are women

¹ Those articles which there is not enough space to discuss here nevertheless are equally interesting and stimulating: M. Wolf on China, N. Tanner on matrifocality, C. Stack on Afro-Americans, and L. Lamphere on cooperation and competition of women in domestic groups.
universally subordinate? And, if so, what factors—psychological, socioeconomic, and/or symbolic—can account for this fact? However, the articles which explicitly formulate general, universalist models answer the first question in the affirmative, while many of the later ethnographic articles provide evidence that contradicts this position.

First, a summary of the position that women are universally subordinate, as differently analyzed in the first three articles. Rosaldo ("Woman, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview", pp. 17-42) puts forth the controversial position that no matter how much de facto "power" and "influence" women may have in any society, including, for example, major roles in production, they are never given publicly valued power ("authority") commensurate with these powers. It is to Rosaldo’s credit that she gives clear definitions of what she means by "power", "authority" and "influence", derived from Weber. The result is that men are seen to have a monopoly on authority: women’s powers, while considerable in some societies, are never legitimate.

What is Rosaldo’s explanation for this state of affairs? Put bluntly, it is because of their association with children—i.e. the domestic sphere—that women are subject to men’s authority. But she soon modifies this with what has proven to be one of the most interesting and testable of her ideas: since the degree to which the domestic and public spheres are distinct is itself variable, she hypothesizes that the clearer this distinction, the more women will be subordinate, while the less clear this distinction, the more equal men and women will be.

Ortner ("Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?", pp. 67-87) proposes a theory similar to Rosaldo’s but differently developed. Drawing on Lévi-Strauss’s work on nature and culture, Ortner suggests that because of their association with childbirth, lactation, child-rearing and menstruation, women in all cultures are associated with nature, leaving men freer to create “culture”, especially “high culture”, including religion, law, art and so on. But the modification at the end of the paper has been the most fertile of Ortner’s ideas: because women are partly outside society, she argues, they are sociologically ambiguous, and like liminal spaces in other classification systems, this leads them to being the object of elaborate symbolism, but at both ends of the classification system—either below culture and therefore dangerous (natural symbols such as menstrual pollution), or above culture and therefore transcendent (supernatural symbols such as mother goddesses)—or, in some societies, women may take on both these polar symbolic attributes, highlighting their ambiguity.

Chodorow ("Family Structure and Feminine Personality", pp. 43-66) explains women’s near universal subordination using psychoanalytic concepts. Again, the explanation for basic psychological differences between the sexes lies in women’s universal commitment to child-raising: women become more person-oriented but at the same time their personalities are less individuated. This is because mothers are more attached to their daughters who thereby have a role model to follow and less of a need/possibility of individuating themselves, while sons, who are less emotionally attached to their mothers (especially after the resolution of the oedipal conflict), find it easier to individuate themselves. Correlated with this is the sociological supposition that women remain confined to kin units with diffuse, personalistic relationships, while men’s associations cut across kin groups, permitting “positional” relationships and roles. Unfortunately for women, males come to define masculinity as all that is not feminine and therefore develop a negative attitude toward women, justifying female subordination. Nevertheless, with their strong identification with their mothers, women can be more psychologically secure than men who remain defensive and insecure.

What support is given in the remainder of the papers for these general models of
universal female subordination? Probably the most elegant paper to support this view is O’Laughlin’s interesting combination of Marxism and symbolism (“Mediation of Contradiction: Why Mbum Women Do not Eat Chicken”, pp. 301-318). Mbum (Tchad) women are seen as structurally parallel to chickens: both are domesticated and kept for reproduction rather than production—not to eat but to breed. Hence the taboo on women eating chickens—symbols of themselves. More, the products of women’s labor and reproduction are alienated from them by men, who control the distribution of surplus and bridewealth. Hence the contradiction of women’s reproductive powers being alienated from them is only seemingly mediated by the taboo on eating chicken.

However, many of the other articles provide data that directly or indirectly challenge or contradict the models of female subordination constructed by Rosaldo, Ortner and Chodorow. First, given that in most societies women’s status is inferior to men’s in the public sphere, Sanday (“Female Status in the Public Domain”, pp. 189-206) seeks to discover exactly in which situations women’s public status would be equal to men’s. Her preliminary findings (based on a sample of twelve societies) reveal that where women’s contribution to production is approximately equal to men’s, their public status will also tend to be equal (conversely, where women contribute either much more or much less than men to production, their public status will be lower). Likewise Hoffer (“Madam Yoko: Ruler of the Kpa Mende Confederacy”, pp. 173-187) shows that at least elite women can achieve the same level of public authority that elite men can. Indeed, Madam Yoko managed to create a Mende (Sierra Leone) Confederacy larger than her predecessor-husband’s, by using a type of power only accessible to women: making alliances via members of the female Sande Society, for whom she arranged both initiations and marriages, making them doubly dependent on her. Hoffer’s is an important example, for while such means to power are not open to all women in a society (or, for that matter, to all men), their being open to some (the elite) demonstrates that “woman” in a given society may not be a homogeneous category but may contain heterogeneous subdivisions occupying different statuses and having different sources of access to power and authority.

Another approach is to accept that there may be an ideology of male dominance but women may still be seen as political actors manoeuvering against their own subordination. Thus Collier (“Women in Politics”, pp. 89-96) shows that in patrilineal, patriarchal societies supposedly powerless and apolitical women may manipulate male kin to further their own ends by threatening or disrupting. Denich (“Sex and Power in the Balkans”, pp. 243-262) proposes that this situation of women paradoxically holding significant sources of power in patrilineal societies that have ideologies of female helplessness can effectively be termed the “patrilineal paradox”, the obverse of A.I. Richard’s “matrilineal paradox”.

Rosaldo’s point that women’s status is highest where there exists the least public/private distinction is elaborated by Sacks (“Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production, and Private Property”, pp. 207-222). Sacks modifies Engels’s idea that oppression of women originates with the development of private property; instead, she suggests that in societies where there is minimal public/private distinction and where subsistence production rules out extensive distribution, women and men will be relatively equal, but as classes and the State develop, the public/private distinction strengthens, keeping women in the domestic sphere, cut off from distribution and hence subordinate. Since the number of pre-class societies is large, if Sack’s scheme is accepted, Rosaldo’s group of societies with relatively egalitarian sex roles would likewise be large.
Certain of Chodorow's ideas are put into question by data offered elsewhere in the book. Thus her contention that women's relationships are personalistic and kin-based is not supported by Leis's article ("Women in Groups: Ijaw Women's Associations", pp. 223-242). Leis details the public functions exercised by the seven Women's Associations in the Ijaw (Nigeria) village, Patani. These Associations hear and settle disputes not only between women but, on occasion, between men and women as well; they pass laws concerning women's behavior both in and out of the women's market and they impose sanctions on women breaking those rules; membership dues go to loaning money to both men and women, and sanctions are imposed on defaulters. Certainly women are here acting towards each other and towards men in "positional" roles and their Associations surely possess public, legitimate "authority". In addition, Leis demonstrates that one must be careful to avoid considering all virilocal societies as structurally equivalent when it comes to sex roles, because the women of another Ijaw community, Korokorosei, which has the same residence rule, do not have Women's Associations. Leis attributes this to a difference in the inheritance systems: in Korokorosei, women inherit land which, because of a complicated tenure system, is often scattered and removed from their husband's houses, making all inmarrying women in a village independent of one another because of their separate economic interests. In contrast to this, Patani women do not inherit land so that inmarrying women in a village have no divergent interests to separate them, and cooperation via the Associations is possible. This negative correlation of inheritance and women's independence, we might note, is one that is found in Goody's recent work.

A further problem with the book's initial theoretical articles is the implicit assumption that all women are preoccupied with children. Preliminary recent statistical work on this area indicates that it is modern, industrialized women who devote considerable time to child-rearing; in contrast, in only 20% of the 186 societies surveyed, do mothers act as the primary socializers of their children. So many alternate child-rearers are available in tribal societies that have not been considered here—wet-nurses, co-wives, other kin (siblings, aunts, grandmothers), etc.

Perhaps related to this, many of these articles are grounded in the assumption that at some basic level, the mother-child tie is a "natural" one. Yet surely recent work has shown that kinship relations are above all socio-symbolic ones, created and defined by society and capable of infinite variations and manipulations. Thus we have abundant evidence that societies view the mother-child tie rather differently from one another: what of societies with various versions of the couvade, for instance, where the father is held to have strong mystical ties to the child that, however, have their physical aspects since if the father violates any of the taboos imposed on him by fatherhood the child's health or even life suffers? We know that in many New Guinea and Australian societies men say that they give birth, undergoing labor pains, and men may "men-
struature" through subincision cuts. Thus if we are going to take seriously societies' own world views, we must admit that conceptions of nature and culture, including childbirth, menstruation and other seemingly "natural" processes, are subject to infinite manipulations.

Lastly, what of Rosaldo's suggestion that women's status is higher where there is little or no distinction between public and private? Although recent studies (in addition to Sacks's) on hunter-gatherer societies support it, Rosaldo's model is nevertheless not immune to re-examination: other articles suggest that women's domestic lives and powers themselves may be equal to, greater than, or simply not comparable with men's public powers and authority. Thus Paul ("The Mastery of Work and the Mystery of Sex in a Guatemalan Village", pp. 281-299) observes that although among these highland Indians all public offices are held by men, women's work, contra Rosaldo, enjoys symbolic value; moreover, women's sexuality, including childbirth and menstruation, is seen by women and apparently by men as being intimately connected to the mystic powers of the universe. As a result, women are acknowledged to have esoteric knowledge not available to men and thereby powers which can be used against husbands, including witchcraft. This configuration is found elsewhere in the tribal world, including among the Baoulé of the Ivory Coast, where women's genitals are seen as containing the ultimate power against which all men are helpless.

That women's and men's realms may be conceptually incomparable is suggested by data offered in another article in the collection. Bamberger ("The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society", pp. 263-280) argues that tropical South American initiation cults and associated myths serve to support women's subordinate status by positing that in the beginning of society, women ruled but because of either incompetence or immorality or both they lost this political power to men who have morally and competently ruled ever since. However, the ethnographer of one of the societies mentioned, Cubeo (Irving Goldman, personal communication), suggests that rather than asserting male dominance, these initiation societies merely act to assert men's separate nature, making symbolic statements about gender identity rather than political statements about power and dominance. Thus ideologically separate realms may not necessarily imply ranking. Indeed, a recent article has suggested the opposite model to Rosaldo's: Rogers argues that the more separate men's and women's spheres, the...


more sexually egalitarian the society is likely to be, especially in peasant societies as documented by Rogers's own work in rural France.11

Because the Anthropology of Gender is just in its beginning stages, there is still plenty of room for such competing models to be tested in the face of ethnographic data, and indeed there is room for even more models to be constructed. Certainly this volume of articles has been an important and stimulating step in this direction.

Alma Gottlieb