

is requested--"May you help us all to finish our roads." The reader senses it is a plea which will be heeded.

These themes continue through the book; the celebration of birth, of woman's life, of new beginnings weaves through the recollections of Helen Sekaquaptewa, the fiction of Leslie Silko, and the poetry of Jeannie Alike Atya. Katz has traced women's lives in several ways and on different planes. Chronology provides one method: the book begins with older materials and ends with contemporary writers. The chapter titles reflect a different progression, from birth to the maturity of disillusionment to rebirth in the second section, where new voices pick up the strands of thought which appeared in early materials.

These selections present a variety of responses to being an Indian woman--there are Christian and traditional women, those with formal educations and those without, young and old, full bloods and half breeds. Yet there are common elements in what each voice says, concepts which appear and reappear in the book--the fear that native languages and old ways may be lost, a respect for age, the importance of women as socializers of the children, the pride involved in being an Indian woman, and the recognition of the strength that is within. Janet McCloud articulates the message of the Indian women represented in the volume: "If the spirit grows within us, we'll survive. We will survive. . . ."

There is only one problem with this kind of book: many of the pieces are excerpts from longer works. It is important that readers of this collection go on to read the books from which these selections were taken. By using this book as a resource, readers can begin to fully appreciate the materials to which *Bea Medicine* alluded.

-- Gretchen Bataille  
Iowa State University, Ames

---

Barbara Bryant Solomon. *Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976, 438 pp., \$15.00.

At long last an issue of great importance to the Black community in the social work arena has been addressed. The commencement of social service programs in the 1960's brought about an even greater need for a deeper understanding of the effects of social ills on minorities, especially Blacks. While some individuals had good intentions of bringing about this understanding, they lacked the necessary familiarity with the Black community and its conditions. *Black Empowerment* addresses itself to this concern by describing

the operational mobility of the Black community within a larger society.

Barbara Solomon outlines several positive dimensions that can be utilized in evaluating negative valuation. While some individuals may not view themselves as powerless, they must realize the negative effects of labels being applied to them.

It is necessary to examine closely the theoretical framework of "empowerment" that plays a prominent role throughout society. However, Solomon's weakness is an unclear definition of how traditional concepts of "empowerment" apply directly to the Black community. One is left waiting for an integration of the theoretical data presented and its direct application to the Black community. Within the social work paradigm, Solomon defines "empowerment" as a process whereby the social worker or other helping professional engages in a set of activities with the client aimed at reducing the powerlessness stemming from the experiences of discrimination because the client belongs to a stigmatized collective (p. 29). While this definition may lead to activities aimed at counteracting negative valuation, a more concise definition of empowerment is needed. The direct effect of a larger society on an indigenous one must be considered.

The strength of the Black community and the need for familiarity with it is thoroughly discussed. Structural characteristics of the Black community, though they may be distinct, are reviewed in the context of ethnic relationships. Because of historical considerations and oppressive forces, Solomon argues effectively that there are legitimate reasons for solving problems within the framework of the Black community because of inherent problems of the Black community.

Whatever shortcomings this book may have, it is welcomed as it fills a gap in social work literature. It is a valuable text that should be required in many advanced social work courses. The exercises at the end of each chapter provide a useful and added dimension by exposing the sensitivity needed when surveying situations faced by individuals receiving social services. The end-of-chapter summaries also provide a brief but lucid review of the chapter's content.

-- Emma Turner Lucas  
Chatham College, Pittsburgh

---