

youngest wife, her now successful sons did not stay in touch with her or send money to ameliorate her poverty, she lacked for close friends due to her years of prioritizing children and family over friendships, and her body was badly worn by her successive pregnancies and daily toil. In the end, it is of a broken heart that the middle-aged Nnu Ego dies, her entire being consumed by a complete giving of the self that was the expectedly unreciprocated act of true womanhood/motherhood. Thus, in a tone reminiscent of radical feminism, Emecheta concludes that the tight link between a good woman and motherhood makes African women prisoners of their own flesh and blood (210), and it is personhood that is the ultimate cost of the stoicism and self-sacrifice for which African mothers are often praised in patriarchal cultures.

## **More Than It Seems: Household Work and Lifelong Learning**

Margrit Eichler, Patrizia Albanese, Susan Ferguson, Nicky Hyndman, Lichun Willa Liu, and Ann Matthews.  
Toronto: Women's Press, 2010.

### **Reviewed by Fiona Lee**

*More Than It Seems* describes the rich and diverse learning of household workers who are engaged in an effort to change social discourse, policy, and systems that position these workers, both paid and unpaid, as inferior non-learners. The authors name and affirm the menial and repetitive tasks of *housework*, as well as the creative and sustaining nurturance of *carework*; through careful research and incisive analysis, they caution readers not to dismiss household work as necessary but virtually insignificant.

As the authors note, much of household work is unpaid or underpaid, but the women who perform household work refuse to dismiss it as isolating, repetitive, and lacking in affirmation (185); instead, they see their household work as fostering learning. The authors lament that the most vulnerable among these workers wrestle with a multitude of things that they “should not have to learn”: denial, discrimination, harassment, neglect, and poverty (107, 142, 177, 205).

Eichler et al. challenge the notion that paid household workers perform tasks that are only necessary to less significant members of society, such as mothers and their children, the disabled, the infirm, and the aged, while un-