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Death Without Weeping: The Violence Of Everyday Life In Brazil



Synopsis

When lives are dominated by hunger, what becomes of love? When assaulted by daily acts of violence and untimely death, what happens to trust? Set in the lands of Northeast Brazil, this is an account of the everyday experience of scarcity, sickness and death that centres on the lives of the women and children of a hillside "favela". Bringing her readers to the impoverished slopes above the modern plantation town of Bom Jesus de Mata, where she has worked on and off for 25 years, Nancy Scheper-Hughes follows three generations of shantytown women as they struggle to survive through hard work, cunning and triage. It is a story of class relations told at the most basic level of bodies, emotions, desires and needs. Most disturbing - and controversial - is her finding that mother love, as conventionally understood, is something of a bourgeois myth, a luxury for those who can reasonably expect, as these women cannot, that their infants will live.

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Customer Reviews

In Brazil's shantytowns, poverty has transformed the meaning of mother love. The routineness with which young children die, argues University of California anthropologist Scheper-Hughes, causes many women to affect indifference to their offspring, even to neglect those infants presumed to be doomed or "wanting to die." Maternal love is delayed and attenuated, with dire consequences for infant survival, according to the author's two decades of fieldwork. Scheper-Hughes also maintains that the Catholic Church contributes to the indifference toward children's deaths by teaching fatalistic resignation and upholding its strictures against birth control and abortion. This important, shocking study resonates with the emotion of Oscar Lewis's ethnographic classics as it follows

three generations of women in a plantation town. The compelling narrative investigates the everyday tactics of survival that people use to stay alive in a culture of institutionalized dependency ravaged by sickness, scarcity, feudal working conditions and death-squad "disappearances." Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book by an anthropology professor from Berkeley, formerly a Peace Corps volunteer in northeast Brazil, is simply breathtaking. Its controversial theme--that mother love as conventionally understood is a luxury for those who can reasonably expect, as poor women in Brazil cannot, that their infants will live--is, in the best sense, illuminated by deconstructionist and feminist thought. The author's understanding of these lives on the edge is at times sympathetic, passionate, and sophisticated. But what makes the book as exciting to read as a good novel is her long-term interaction with a group of people that she clearly loves and the complete lack of the sense of the "other" that is so often found in anthropological writing. This work should have as much influence on studies of the relationship of women and children as did Margaret Mead's *Growing Up in Samoa* (1936) on the shaping of adolescence or Oscar Lewis's *The Children of Sanchez* (1961) on the cultural effects of poverty. Highly recommended.- Nancy Padgett Lazar, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was an amazing read. It was a requirement for one of my college classes and was painfully difficult to get through because of the extreme poverty that the author helplessly witnessed. It's one of the few books that I have read which inspired me to do additional research. For all of the happy-ending-story-loving people out there -- be warned! This is a very depressing read, but I would argue that feeling something from a book is better than nothing.

Great book examining the poverty and disparity in Brazil. Scheper-Hughes accounts were eye opening and really turned me on to the concept of global health.

The book itself was in good condition however the story was just so so for me. If you are into world health you will love this book.

I am extremely pleased with my order the book was in really great condition and as a bonus fast

shipping. Thank you!

Such an amazing book and insight into reality of the northern province of Brazil. For anyone interested in anthropology, global inequality or the facts with hunger and poverty-this book is for you!

in northeastern Brazilian 30 years ago. Scheper-Hughes conducts a profound study of the origins of poverty, hunger and death. One wonders how this society has changed, if at all...

In this brilliant ethnographic work, Nancy Scheper-Hughes situates us in a favela of Brazil's northeastern region. It is a world of abject poverty, exploitative economic relations, and unspoken racial divisions. While most ostensibly an inquiry into the region's exceptionally high infant mortality rate, the book is - in a broader sense - a critical analysis of the nature of motherhood. The unlikely heroines of the story are the women who 'overproduce' children, leave them unnamed until age two, and withhold care and affection from those who seem unlikely to survive. One cannot help but find their actions reprehensible. One also cannot help but empathize with their incredibly difficult lives and find inspiration in their resilience. This book is heartbreaking and will make you see the world in a new light.

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