



Sheila's Shop: Working-Class African American Women Talk about Life, Love, Race, and Hair

Kimberly Battle-Walters

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Sheila's Shop invites us into a Southern beauty parlor to meet working-class African American women. We get to know the women individually as they discuss everything from relationships and beauty to politics, equality, race, gender, and class. We hear them speak in their own words about their families and communities and the struggles they face in all areas of life. *Sheila's Shop* acts as a microcosm of female, working-class, African-American society.

Kimberly Battle-Walters spent over sixteen months interviewing and listening to women at Sheila's Shop while researching this valuable ethnographic work. Literature and the media tend to report either on the lives of upwardly mobile, middle-class African Americans or on the poor, ignoring working-class women. *Sheila's Shop* focuses on these women, introducing a conceptual model of "racial and gender victorization" to explain the process by which working-class African American women learn to see themselves as victors rather than victims, despite their complex and often difficult lives. This book also provides insight into the informal support networks that are fostered in public places such as beauty shops?these support networks lay the foundation for strong African American women, families, and communities.

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