

when discussing the work of modern feminists, especially radical and liberal feminists, she makes no allowance for its political context. Furthermore, some of her generalizations about schools of feminist theory are outrageous. She says, for instance, that the aim of radical feminists is to return to matriarchy. Yet she recognizes Marge Piercy's book, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, to be presenting a radical feminist picture of utopia, and that book describes a sexually egalitarian anarchist community. She claims that all liberal feminists are positivists and environmental determinists, and that they rarely speak of citizenship. She even states later in the book that feminism has tended to be hostile toward or suspicious of discussions about heterosexuality and the needs of children. One begins to wonder if Elshtain has ever seen a *MS.* magazine.

The author's own thoughts on the public and private realms are presented in the third section of the book. They divide roughly into a discussion of research methods and a presentation of her conclusions thus far. She praises Dorothy Smith's method of taking subjects' self-descriptions seriously but then expresses a serious reservation about this and other methods of inquiry and theory-building. This reservation is, I think, based upon a couple of fundamental mistakes. Elshtain equates the particularity of individuals' lives with the realm of the private, and she seems to think that any application of abstract concepts to individuals, i.e. any general description of people, especially in terms of the public world, robs them of their particularity and of their private lives. Of course, abstract description does not destroy or even deny the particularity of individuals, and theorizing about people in public terms does not cast them out of their private lives, yet at a number of points in the book (especially p. 305), Elshtain seems not to understand these things.

One of the major theses of the book's final section is that some form of family is universally necessary to meet the needs of children. Although

it is not clear what sort of family the author has in mind, she talks of children's need for intensive, eroticized relations with parents or their permanent surrogates. This is an important idea which has been discussed extensively by others. Elshtain's evidence for her thesis, however, seems to consist of the wild boy of Aveyron, the failure of many 1960's communes to raise their children well, and the cases of neglected children who turned out like Charles Manson. In the end she encourages feminists to defend family life against those pressures from the public world which erode it. But I was left wondering what sort of family life we are to defend, especially since Elshtain repeatedly implies that there can be no application of the ideals of freedom, justice and equality in the private sphere.

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NOTES

1. J.S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1970, page 6.

Images of Women: Report of the Task Force on Sex Role Stereotyping in the Broadcast Media. Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission, Government of Canada. Hull: *Ministry of Supply and Services*. 1983. Pp. 189 (available in French and English).

The Task Force began its work in Oct., 1979, originally intending to complete its report within a year. Its composition was as follows:

1. Four representatives from private broadcasting.
2. Six persons representing the public interest (including two women each from the fields of social science research and the media).
3. Four representatives from the advertising industry.

4. Four representatives from the CRTC.
5. One representative from the CBC, whose position was, "Coordinator, Portrayal of Women in programming."
6. Two representatives from the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The Task Force obviously worked very hard. Their accomplishments on the level of consciousness raising and publicity represents an enormous input of energy and commitment.

On the most general level, the report is not overly lengthy and it is informative. It contains: a brief definition of the problem as seen by a heterogeneous group, a listing of concerns, and a concise statement of the existing government regulations pertaining to the problems. The inclusion of the Advertisers and Broadcasters' Code of Ethics clauses relevant to sex-role stereotyping, as well as the procedure for registering complaints are useful aspects of the report. Similarly useful are the brief histories of the involvement of relevant agencies and institutions. The responses of the advertising and broadcasting industries are briefly summarized.

In a brief Foreword, the report calls attention to a list of 9 demographic statistics that reflect the types of changes in women's relationship to the labour market which have co-incided with the economic recession. Many of the facts are not unfamiliar, but are usefully isolated for reflection. It is important to note, for instance, that 43.5% of all women in the labour force solely support themselves, or themselves and others (1979). And it is useful to see that fact listed next to the statistic that: "For every dollar a full-time male employee earns, a full-time female employee earns only 62.9 cents." (1979).

The concrete proposals for eliminating those biases in language usage which most offend feminists will be appreciated by those concerned to establish symbolic reassurance that steps are being taken. Almost one half of the report con-

sists of appendices relevant to the work of the Task Force, and providing information useful to those working in the field.

However, the short section summarizing the achievements and further recommendations discloses the extent to which the major contribution lies in the realm of consciousness raising/publicity.

There are some major difficulties with the report that are common to the form of public commissions and Task Forces. They can best be understood within the context of a discussion of the report and particularly the decisions made early on which defined the conceptual framework for approaching the problem.

The original mandate as communicated by the Minister of Communications (who also assumed responsibility for the Status of Women), read:

"The Task Force's purpose will be to delineate guidelines for a more positive (and realistic) portrayal of women in radio and television (in both programming and commercials), and to make policy recommendations for consideration by the Commission and the broadcast industry. The Task Force could propose one of several mechanisms for the implementation of the guidelines it sets up; industry self-regulation, CRTC regulation, or government legislation. Which route will be the most effective will be up to the Task Force to decide."

The mandate statement definitely suggests that the Task Force could have moved in a number of different directions. One would have been to focus on the alternative mechanism as a topic of research and reflection. Instead, a decision was made early on to opt for the self-regulation mechanism. The report does not discuss how this decision was arrived at. The extent to which the composition of the Task Force, with a large

group representing the broadcasting and advertising industries, influenced that decision may be one of the most important questions not answered in the report.

The decision in favour of self-regulation by the industry altered the character and life span of the Task Force. Rather than completing their report within the original one year time frame, they chose to extend their life for a further two year period after which an assessment of the effectiveness of both the self-regulation of the industry and that original choice, were the major focus of the report.

Since the representatives of the public interest were least enamored with that early decision, the report also includes their additional and specific recommendations. Their greatest concerns were with the need for greater specificity and accountability.

The wording of the statement of purpose very clearly captures the main thrust underlying the work of the Task Force, while masking the extent to which changes in women's realities (co-incident with the growing necessity for two person salaries to maintain middle-class life styles in a degenerating economy), actually represent a positive increase or betterment of status. "Things have changed," is the message, and the broadcasting and advertising industries need to be informed of the changed realities so that they can be both more 'realistic' and more 'positive' in their portrayal of women in the media. Unfortunately, the question: "Why?," or "For what purpose?" is not raised in the report.

The answer, of course, would be different for the advertisers (and broadcasters dependent upon advertising revenue), than for the women's movement (if it does indeed exist behind the wall of cliched rhetoric promulgated by the recently emerging official feminist ideology, *sans* analysis). It is an obvious advantage to the salesman (the advertising industry), that he be aware of

both the new realities women live within, as well as to their new dreams, fantasies and vanities. For women, not unlike people in general, are more than socio-economic statistics with a genetic need for certain products. Images which capture new realities and new dreams are essential in the mediation between the availability of products and the belief that encourages their consumption by women. The Task Force and the public hearings did a grand service to the advertising industry in providing information that would make the 'new woman' vulnerable to the appeal of new products designed for the working mother, the careerist, and the "liberated" female.

Aside from opting for self-regulation, other decisions were made early on by way of defining the problem, and establishing the points of reference which narrowed the conceptual framework and virtually guaranteed its character as a documentation of official feminist ideology. Insofar as it did not allow for radical questioning, it does not allow for the slightest possibility of effective solutions to the problems suggested by its topic and by its mandate.

The points of reference, as listed in the report, are clear obstacles to intelligent problem formulation and intelligent problem solving. The first claims that "...as the problem of sex-role stereotyping has already been well defined and well documented, the Task Force therefore would not undertake its own research." Instead, a very thin bibliography with such major works as John Berger's analysis of advertising conspicuously missing, gives the lie to an awareness on the part of the Task Force of significant and thorny problems they have dismissed with a stroke. (To their credit, Goffman's "Gender Advertising" appears in the bibliography, but with few signs of having been used in any way in the report).

The second point of reference attempts to elevate the problem of sex-role stereotyping to the level of a moral problem (of inequality and injustice), while dismissing its intellectual and

aesthetic dimensions. In doing so, the Task Force has lost considerable support from those who believe that the problem with television and radio programming and advertising goes far beyond the problem of female sex-role stereotyping and touches upon the indignities inherent to the underlying myth of the 'idiotic masses,' so useful for those 'border guards' frightened of innovative creative forms not already established well enough to perpetuate the media as soothing drug rather than dynamic and multi-potential expression of human, dignified culture.

The third point of reference was to establish commercials as the priority over programming, granting recognition perhaps to the supremacy of economic factors, but with no theoretical justification. In doing so, the Task Force is able to avoid the obvious fact that all programming, in being framed by the loud noisy and perpetual commercial break, become one and the same form.

Finally, and perhaps most disasterously, "while recognizing that other forms of stereotyping can and do exist, it would concentrate on the sex-role stereotyping of women." Again, the task force loses the support of those genuinely interested in the quality of life and culture and as dissatisfied with the narrow formats of programs and commercials whether they employ men, or women who look and act exactly like the stereotype of men, but in drag.

In attempting to make the work a moral and rhetorical issue devoid of intelligent questioning and aesthetic judgement, the Task Force has done a great disservice to the many millions of us who must use our minds and imaginations to survive the atrocities of a narrow debasing myth of conformity within the context of an unquestioned market-place supremacy. The myth that the economic market place is not itself a most irrational myth is as distasteful and as inaccurate as the one that claims that gender identity is the most salient issue in the power struggles that

divide and degrade humanity. The Task Force, in brushing aside the question of how stupid and degrading are the male stereotypes, encourages not only the perpetuation of a narrow conception of social roles, but also through its silence, legitimates the notion that the human species is capable of thought for 3 or 4 minutes at the most before she/he is ready to submit to a very loud series of sales pitches for commercial products. (Unless he or she is of course, clever enough to achieve sufficient economic rewards that would allow individuals to afford video cassettes of their choice. For the rest of us, a finite number of ritualized formats that dull our minds sufficiently to enable us to tolerate the incantations to the gods of commerce and vulgar materialism, is necessary to maintain the illusion that there are no alternatives to the morally and economically bankrupt world we inhabit and pour so much of our energy towards the pollution and potential total annihilation of).

Obviously, many of these criticisms are less specific to the Task Force on sexual stereotyping, and more common to the format of the public commission attempting to gather information and legitimation from the public for strategies and policies decided upon by private interests. The purpose of a commission is rarely expected to extend to the level of serious intellectual debate and inquiry.

Nonetheless, there are aspects of this particular commission that I find rather more reprehensible than was necessary. Given the obvious deference given to economic factors as the most basic level of conceptualization and underlying, unquestioned assumptions, it becomes all the more unjustifiable that the report would be organized in such a way as to mask the injustices perpetuated by the public broadcasting commission (and the ineffectiveness of the commission's choice of self-regulation). Consider the following example in light of the numerous studies which have found low economic status to be more salient than sexual status in explaining

anything of significance relevant to human behavior. Despite the CBC's own recent inquiry into the status of women almost a decade ago, the Task Force found a number of areas that remained highly problematic. To their credit they were able to examine a list of 49 recommendations made to counter these problems, and to evaluate the CBC's progress in acting upon them. On the surface, it would appear that to have 23 of 49 recommendations evaluated as "implemented" is one way to fill the pages of a report and to announce a positive optimism as a result of the Task Force's own work. However, this was only done by avoiding drawing attention to the fact that of the 5 specifically related to issues of salary and equal pay for equal work, 4 remain "in discussion," (# 25, 26, 28, 29, p. 131). Moreover, two recommendations which seem essential to the translation of the claimed policy of concern, are not only not yet implemented, but designated as "not to be implemented" (#44 and 46). Of the four still in discussion, #29, having to do with an examination of pay for contract workers, has special applicability to women, who we know from intensive studies are more likely to be involved in forms of work other than full time staff positions. To present the data in such a form to encourage the interpretation that 23 out of 49 recommendations is not a bad track record without a comment on the unequal significance of each of the recommendations, is at best, misleading.

Clearly, the report is much less about sex-role stereotyping in the broadcast industry than it is about the attempt to make a narrow, fragmented version of an interesting and important question an official ideology that legitimizes conformity and social control just in time to make the fiction of *Nineteen Eighty Four* a reality.

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In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development. Carol Gilligan. *Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982. Pp. 184.*

It has become commonplace in feminist circles to assert that most of the work in the social sciences claiming to illuminate *human* experience has actually grown out of a male perspective and examined only the male experience. In psychology, we routinely cite for our students the concept of penis envy and the failure to include females in the research on achievement motivation as blatant examples of this problem. Carol Gilligan's book is a potent reminder that blindness to the female perspective in the theories that shape our research on human behavior and development cannot be relegated to a list of quaint examples from the past. In her searching examination of the question of gender-related differences in moral development, however, Gilligan leads the reader *beyond* the tired sense of déjà vue that accompanies the discovery that, once again, our discipline has been seduced into an acceptance of the male life story as the norm for the human experience. This is because the book does more than simply point out the problem: it describes Gilligan's own research, and theoretical perspective in which she attempts to uncover a female pattern of moral development.

Gilligan argues that the theories of developmental psychology that equate maturity with increasing separation and autonomy often leave females looking inferior or incomplete because of a "failure" to achieve separation or independence. She suggests that, had the female rather than the male pattern of development been accepted as the norm, there would be more emphasis on the development of responsibility and care for others as evidence of maturity, and less on separation. In terms of moral development in particular, she hypothesizes that, while men in our culture may follow the sequence of stages identified by Kohlberg in which they