

# Feminism and the Writing and Teaching of History

Ruth Pierson  
Alison Prentice  
Ontario Institute  
for Studies in Education

No one would deny that the contemporary women's movement has had an important impact on the writing and teaching of history. It has produced, above all, the vital subfield now known as women's history. But almost from the beginning, historians in this field have been critical of their own enterprise. As many early proponents of women's studies now prefer to think of their project as feminist studies, historians concerned about the place of women in the past increasingly look to the development of a feminist history, a history which will have an impact beyond the study of the history of one half of the human race.

What does a feminist perspective mean in the practise of history? It seems to us impossible to answer this question without first putting forward a definition of feminism itself, admittedly not an easy task. We recognize, first of all, that there are many feminisms<sup>2</sup> and that it is unlikely that our brief discussion can encompass all of them. Risky as it may be, we nevertheless argue that no discussion of feminism and the writing and teaching of history makes sense without an attempt to sort out what the word feminism actually means to us. From definition, we will move to a consideration of

how a feminist perspective affects the historian's task, first as a writer and, briefly, as a teacher of history.

Feminism, in our view, is both a movement and an ideology. Insofar as some of its followers have engaged in extended philosophical analysis it has also given rise to theory.<sup>3</sup> Intrinsic to feminism is women's sense of grievance, arising out of an awareness that "women suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex."<sup>4</sup> This awareness of injustice depends, in turn, on a belief in and commitment to the ideal of equality. In a world where there existed no concept of equality, we would argue, there could be no feminism.<sup>5</sup> As an ideology, feminism is premised on the belief that women suffer from oppressive inequalities in a number of areas and puts forward the ideal of a world in which the sexes would be equal. As a movement, it strives to make the achievement of justice, perceived as the attainment of women's equality with men, a political and economic reality. While we recognize that inequality is not necessarily synonymous with oppression, we believe that systematic inequalities lead to abuses of power and therefore to oppression. Feminists, by definition, are par-

ticularly concerned with systematic inequalities based on sex.

The critical task of feminism, therefore, is to examine the structures of women's inequality. When and where has systematic subordination of women existed? What have been the social, economic and political mechanisms of women's oppression? Because an exclusive preoccupation with these mechanisms could lead to a distorting and purely negative picture of women as victims, it is equally a task of feminism to reclaim, elucidate and reevaluate the positive aspects of women's experience in the present and in the past. In fact, one of the basic oppressions that women suffer is the silencing of their whole experience, both negative and positive. A basic injustice that feminists wish to redress, therefore, is inequality in terms of visibility. What feminists demand is the right to know and understand the experience of women and to have it analyzed, taken into account, recorded and valued, equally with the experience of men.

Women's invisibility is rooted in the language itself, for often imbedded in conventional language are usages that marginalize the experience of women or leave them out of the picture altogether. The most frequently cited case in the English language, and one frequently encountered in historical writing is, of course, the use of male pronouns or prefixes when both sexes are intended or when "mankind" is used to refer to the entire human race.<sup>6</sup> Another subtler form of devaluing women and their experience, which current language usage reflects, involves assigning from a pair of related terms the exalted one to an activity usually performed by men and the lowly one to a similar activity performed by women. A case in point is the historical emergence of a distinction between "art," seen as the creative act of "men of genius," and "craft," which has been reserved for smaller, less significant and often collective

and anonymous productions. Although nothing in the language logically assigns art to men or craft to women, the fact is that few women have made it into the domain of high art,<sup>7</sup> as this has been defined historically, while many have devoted themselves to the creation of works to humanize the domestic environment. Contemporary feminists have sought to open our eyes to the excellence of design and execution in such objects as hooked rugs and patchwork quilts, indeed to abolish the distinction between craft and art altogether.<sup>8</sup> This aim is part of the larger feminist insistence that all matters of interest to women including, for example, childbirth, childbearing, family relations and domestic labour, deserve more serious and intelligent attention than they currently receive.

Invisibility because of the traditional usages of language or marginality because of a lower value implied in words attached to women's activities is perceived by feminists as based in patriarchal social structures. A major focus of feminist research is thus the examination of the origins and perpetuation of such structural inequalities. In such analysis the modern severance between the public and the private spheres is seen as serving to reinforce patriarchal power by circumscribing women within the domestic realm, or, insofar as they are drawn into the public domain, relegating them to menial and low status positions within it. This emphasis on the public/private is central to feminist analysis for, insistent as feminists are that the domestic sphere is important, we also recognize that we ignore at our peril the larger world outside the home, the realms for instance, of the state and its military, of institutionalized religion and education, or of space science, computer technology and the multi-national corporation.

Crucial decisions affecting the lives of all human beings are made in the public realm. And, insofar as decisions made there impinge

on private and domestic life, it cannot be said that the two spheres are equal in power. It is this recognition of the interconnectedness of the public and private spheres and the subordination of the latter in modern western society that has driven and continues to drive feminists to demand that women move into the public world. And here the concern of feminism with personhood comes into play. For, so long as women do not participate or represent themselves directly in the public realm, we are not persons in our own right. Systematic inequality of representation or participation in any field of endeavour is, in the present order of things, diminishing to women. In order to be at least as autonomous and self-determining as men, whether it be in respect to marriage laws, the price of bread or the possibility of nuclear war, women need to be able to participate in public power equally with men.

Feminist goals are not without their attendant problems. It has been suggested, especially by those who fear feminism, that by seeking an autonomous selfhood for women, equal to men's, feminism promotes a further atomizing of society. A society of selfish individuals living alone, unencumbered by intimate ties to or responsibilities for other human beings is hardly a feminist goal; rather, feminists insist that women and men have equal needs for affection and emotional support and that for satisfaction of these needs one sex should not have to make a greater sacrifice of autonomy than the other.<sup>9</sup>

Another major tension arises out of the co-existence of the demand for equality with the acceptance or celebration of difference. How does one reconcile the ideal of equality with the fact of difference? For the feminist, a more important question perhaps concerns how socially significant are we going to allow the irreducible biological differences between men and women to be and who is going to define them and say how limiting they should be. Woman's personhood is curtailed insofar as definitions of dif-

ference are established by a male-dominated "science" and used to set limits to women's expression and development.<sup>10</sup>

A crucial example of the different but equal dilemma concerns birthing. If women demand control of the birth process, is this because they have a superior claim on the grounds of biological role or inherited or socialized traits not shared by men? Or should women demand, rather, an equal share in the government of childbirth—with fathers, doctors, hospital authorities and the like—on the grounds of an equal right to govern a process that affects all of us intimately? As feminists we should like at the moment to live with this as an open question. Our fear is that the answer will be preempted by a male-oriented socio-biology with theories of genetic determination or mother-infant bonding, for example,<sup>11</sup> or by male judges issuing injunctions against abortions in the name of fathers or fetuses.<sup>12</sup>

We recognize that all too often women's choices have been circumscribed by rigid categories and dichotomies, positing unreconcilable conflict between two solutions, two interpretations, or even two supposedly opposite types of feminism that force women into one camp or another. It has been pointed out time and time again that "feminist theorists do not agree on whether their long-term goal is to maximize female identity or to reject gender as a primary category."<sup>13</sup> We believe that it is possible and desirable to pursue both goals at once, despite their apparent contradiction.<sup>14</sup> We think that having to make choices of that nature is analogous to the traditional choice forced on middle class women between career and marriage.<sup>15</sup> We want to argue that women can be both different and equal, separatist and assimilationist; that women have a right in certain situations and moments in their lives to their own organizations and the creation of sisterly solidarity at the same time that we have a right to integration with men in the public domain of power.

We recognize that the achievement of these goals depends on a radical reorganization of the social order and of the division of labour and responsibility between women and men. We, like the feminists of the past, value many traits traditionally associated with the domestic sphere: among others, nurturance, compassion, cooperation and interdependence. Like them, also, we believe that a wider dissemination of these values would have a transforming effect on society.<sup>16</sup> We go beyond them, however, in recognizing the negative impact of the isolation of women within the domestic world and, in particular, of women's monopoly of certain roles such as cleaning and childrearing.<sup>17</sup> We insist that women should have a wider, indeed a genuinely equal share in public power; but we also insist that the domestic sphere should be opened up to genuinely equal participation by men.

Are we therefore advocating androgyny in all spheres of human activity? Not necessarily. For androgyny, too, can be seen as yet another straight-jacket.<sup>18</sup> If feminism is to be a liberating movement, it must not only reject simplistic dichotomies and the compartmentalization of women and men in separate spheres, it must go further and insist on the full complexity of human lives and possibilities. Freedom of choice for men and women, the recognition of complexity, as well as of a multitude of possible contexts and arrangements for the realization of human potential, should be among the goals of feminism. In this sense, liberty joins equality as a watchword of the movement. Women, we argue, should have an equal right with men to freedom, as well as to fulfillment as adult human beings.

## II

How does feminism apply to the writing and teaching of history? Is there a legitimate connection between our feminism and historical study? We contend that there is. For one thing,

present-day concerns frequently suggest new lines of inquiry or new perspectives which serve to enliven historical discourse.<sup>19</sup> But beyond that we are also convinced that no student of the past entirely escapes from her or his rootedness in the present; thus a complete separation of one's scholarly enterprise from one's personal and social reality is impossible. A feminist consciousness is therefore compatible with the historian's task, and, indeed, the present-day women's movement, by exposing bias against women and raising questions of concern to women, has had a stimulating impact on the discipline.

Feminism challenges all existing knowledge in every discipline on the grounds of possible sexist bias. The feminist perspective has exposed the preoccupation with men's activities in, and the general absence of women from, most official, published and academically respectable history. Insofar as conventional history has been about politics, military affairs or macroeconomics and therefore about realms dominated by men, it is understandable that men have figured as the chief or sometimes the only actors on the historical stage. Conventional history has been criticized because it left out all kinds of groups of people excluded from power, not just women. But when the new social history, to which that critique gave rise, did not take the experience of women into account, the failure to do so seemed unwarranted. The eminent socialist historian Eric Hobsbawm failed to include women in his 1971 theoretical plea for a social history so all-encompassing that it would become a history of all society.<sup>20</sup> In 1978 he admitted the justness of the criticism "that male historians in the past, including marxists, have grossly neglected the female half of the human race" and included himself among the culprits. But then, as the feminist historians among the editors of *History Workshop* have pointed out, he proceeded to make sweeping generalizations about women's aims and perceptions, betray-

ing a cavalier disregard of the “bewildering range of experience in working, political and domestic life for nineteenth century British women” revealed in recent feminist scholarship.<sup>21</sup> Another example of bias is Philippe Ariès’ pathbreaking study of the history of childhood, which deals almost exclusively with male children. A much more recent book, *Youth in History* by John Gillis, does not pretend to deal with other than male adolescents, leaving the history of adolescent girls to some other historian.<sup>22</sup> Feminists recognize that, in these circumstances, women continue to have at best an incomplete history.

The feminist perspective is also responsible for our growing understanding of the fact that women, like men, need their history. The sense of self depends on having a sense of one’s past. To the extent that modern women have been denied, in the historical canon, all but the faintest glimpses of their own history, they are like victims of amnesia. The fact is that the experience of women and men in the past has not been exactly the same. Woman cannot be subsumed under the general category of “Everyman.” The nature and implications of the differences between the histories of the sexes must be discovered and examined if as women, we are to reposses our past.

The first task of the feminist historian, then, is the simple retrieval of women from obscurity. This task is necessarily compensatory, at this stage of the undertaking, because there is so much lost ground to be made up. A certain kind of feminist consciousness has focussed on the female heroines of the past, “great women” in the public sphere, comparable to the “great men” of history. In the same vein, feminist historians are re-examining historical movements, revolutions, wars, intellectual and artistic endeavour—indeed, nearly every facet of public life in the past—to ferret out the ways in which women have participated, but which traditional histories have overlooked. Both of

these enterprises have an important morale-building value, insofar as they reveal to women precedents for their participation in the public realm. To the extent that women’s roles have been hidden in traditional historical writing, women are deprived of inspirational models, or indeed of any examples of the public exercise of female energy and competence in the past.

Writing women into history is not a problem-free enterprise, however, and not all women’s history is as comprehensive or sophisticated as we would want it to be. Many studies of “women worthies,” for example, verge on the hagiographic.<sup>23</sup> Equally, we must recognize the flawed nature of analyses which assign importance to women only insofar as they have contributed to or supplemented the work or achievements of men. Concentration solely on those women who have “achieved” in terms of patriarchal norms, it has been pointed out, will produce at best a truncated history. Women’s history must embrace the whole of women’s experience in the past. Therefore feminist historical writing must wary of the temptation to plug women into historical chronologies or outlines that were established with other priorities in mind. The “Renaissance,” for example, may not be a category which sheds much light on the lives of the majority of women in early modern Europe. Nor does relegating the turn-of-the-century women’s movement to a small part of a supposedly wider and more significant phenomenon of “social reform” capture the full implications of pre-First World War feminist aspirations.<sup>24</sup>

Feminist analysis necessarily helps to establish new schemes of periodization as well as to open up inquiry into a whole range of topics not previously considered within the purview of historical research. Among these are women’s domestic work and the domestic arts, childbirth and childrearing, female net-

works and female sexuality, as well as women's health and reproductive lives, including menstruation and menopause. Many of these subjects are also being explored by historical demographers, but all too often the female experience is muted or lost in the tendency to focus on macro levels of historical change, such as the impact of fluctuations in fertility on the overall growth of population. Similarly historians interested in family structures who ignore power relations between male and female members of families omit a dimension of crucial importance.<sup>25</sup>

But getting at the actual experience of women in the past is not an easy task. Much valuable work has been done examining prescriptive literature directed to women. Equally valuable examinations exist of medical, legal, educational, religious and other texts which reflect norms and prevailing attitudes towards women and their roles in various periods.<sup>26</sup> Insofar as women followed or participated in public debate over the nature and role of their sex, these debates were an important part of their emotional and intellectual lives. But it must always be recognized that women's actual behaviour did not necessarily coincide with such projected images and pronouncements.<sup>27</sup> These, therefore, must be studied with caution for they raise many questions, not the least of which is the extent to which ethnicity, literacy, or economic or social class might have affected women's exposure to and internalization of what was prescribed.

Historians of women thus recognize the necessity of going beyond the prescription of and debate over roles wherever possible, in order to examine women's actual behaviour and lives through whatever sources are available. New approaches to the problem of sources have been discovered: official statistics and their categories have been challenged, different questions have been put to old sources and new sources have been found. Without unusual detective work resulting in interviews

with the descendants of Lancashire suffragists, for example, much about the contribution of these working class women to the British suffrage movement could not have been known.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the provision of *salles d'asile* for children of working mothers in nineteenth century Montreal went unnoticed until historians began to examine lives of working class women and the archives of female religious orders.<sup>29</sup> A commitment to getting at the actual experience of women underlies the collection and publication of such primary sources as the letters and diaries of ordinary women, scrapbooks and photograph albums, recipe books and reminiscences recorded in writing or on tape.<sup>30</sup>

But women's private lives and women's activities in the private domain, as we have suggested, do not proceed in splendid isolation from the society at large. Changes in ways in which the public impinges on the private world and in the functional relationship of the one to the other also require historical investigation. For instance, women's lives in the twentieth century will remain partially obscured if studied outside the framework of the emerging welfare state. One new study has examined the meaning of mothers' allowances for Canadian women and a number of others have demonstrated how the state's provision and withdrawal of childcare facilities have manipulated female participation in the paid labour force.<sup>31</sup> Analyses by socialist feminists of labour performed by women and its relationship to the capitalist mode of production has stimulated historical research into the interaction between changes in a society's overall economic system and changes in women's work and domestic experience.<sup>32</sup>

It has become clear from such research that a radical split between the public and private spheres has not been a universal phenomenon, but rather specific to certain classes in certain places and periods. Feminist historians have shown that in many milieus the sexes have

worked side by side or, even when there has been a strict sexual division of labour, men's and women's economic activities have been clearly interdependent. The work performed by women in the home under industrial capitalism, for example, can only be fully understood in terms of its function of replenishing and perpetuating the publicly employed labour force. Equally the development of the professions, so often considered in the past in isolation from women's roles, is increasingly seen to have depended on the decline of women's participation in these occupations, or on their entry as low-status workers or paraprofessionals in related fields.<sup>33</sup>

The assumption that women's experience cannot be fully understood without reference to men's in any given time and place applies not only to the history of work, but of education. Joan Kelly-Gadol has demonstrated the importance of comparing the educational histories of both sexes if we are to understand clearly the impact of any educational movement on either. It is increasingly apparent that the same principle could and, from a feminist point of view, should be applied to all historical topics.<sup>34</sup>

With this insight, feminist historiography has come full circle. It takes us beyond the study of women to the study of men in the past. Gender becomes an essential category, a category which can never be ignored, since almost everything in history happened to and affected both sexes and affected them differently. A fully human history—of any topic, from work to war—will consciously strive to take into account the experiences of both sexes. The "facts" may not change, but often the importance accorded to them and the historian's interpretation of them will. Above all, oversimplifications which hide women's past, trivialize it or misunderstand it should be relegated, once and for all, to the dustbins of history as antiquated and obsolete, in fact, as garbage.

### III

We have concentrated above on the problems of defining feminism and on the relationship between feminism, as we see it, and the writing of history. Feminists, historians, and, necessarily, feminist historians are recognized in this account as being inevitably the products of their time and place, and, most importantly for the purposes of this paper, of their own lives as women and men. Feminist perspectives, we have argued, have much to offer to historians, both male and female. We have outlined a number of problems that arise in the writing of feminist history and we recognize that, for male historians, the imaginative leap required by a feminist perspective may be a large one. Nevertheless we would submit that the leap can be made and that in fact it has been. No less than the male novelist whose insight enables him to create believable female characters, the open-minded and imaginative male historian should be able to overcome the biases of his discipline and his socialization. But the very structures within which knowledge is created and disseminated still militate against a feminist approach to history. No analysis of the relationships between feminism and the historical discipline can avoid, therefore, at least some comments on the structures within which historical research, teaching and learning take place.

The most obvious problem is the sex structure of the historical profession. As is well known, it is male dominated at all levels of the educational system. Men are in the majority in high school, college and university history departments and in archival and other research related positions. Male historians tend to monopolize the full professorships and department headships, while the women are clustered in the bottom ranks. With the exception of women's history courses—and these are still rare and taught mainly by women on the fringes of academia—the history curriculum at

all levels is still heavily biased towards the traditional. Potential feminist historians are therefore deprived of opportunity and, as a result, women continue to be denied their history.

Feminists question many aspects of traditional education, although they are not the only critics to do so and opinions among them obviously vary according to their particular points of view, but here are the questions that seem especially significant to us as feminists. Are hierarchical teaching structures with men dominant at the top conducive to learning, for either sex, but particularly for women? Should the teaching of history be as print-oriented as it currently is, or is it time that the techniques of oral history, material history or even genealogy, were more widely adopted by learners as well as researchers in history? How effective is the lecture, in which an expert (usually male) defines what is to be learned and how? Does the competitive seminar or the competitive grading system lead to the best development of feminist scholarship in history? Why are students kept from collaborating or penalized if they do, when more and more established historians are finding collaboration productive? Finally, how are feminist students to find mentors in scholarly environments that are only marginally welcoming to women's history or feminist scholarship?

From the schools, colleges and universities, we turn to the archives, funding agencies and publishers. In these, as in the most progressive history departments, the light is beginning to dawn. But there remain the projects not funded, the repositories without an archivist responsible for women's history and the studies that have not been published, not to mention the poverty and isolation of feminist presses and of some of the journals that do publish women's history. Even in the relatively enlightened environment of the academic society, feminist scholars struggle to make an impact.

Their numbers are small and their professional lives often stretched to the limit as they strive, sometimes without sufficient institutional support, to meet the needs of their students, their own scholarship and the demands that arise out of the growing interest in the field of women's history.

All of this is not to deny the remarkable progress that has been made. We do have feminist publications and journals that are receptive to feminist scholarship; articles and books in women's history increasingly see the light of day; archivists are becoming interested, as are learned societies and funding agencies. Nevertheless feminist historians feel pressed on every side not least by the fact that so many students of history continue to question the very validity of their enterprise. Under these circumstances is a feminist history viable and can it flourish? If not, we believe that both sexes are the losers. If yes, we would submit that it has an important contribution to make to the liberation and humanization of both men and women.

#### NOTES

1. This paper was originally presented at the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meetings in Halifax, June 1981.
2. See also Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms: An Anthology* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980).
3. We do not use the term ideology pejoratively nor in the narrow sense of a system of values and beliefs imposed by a ruling class. Still, Paul Mattingly's view that "ideology" can be used synonymously with "theory" seems to us to deny the sense of logical construction implied in theorizing. We concur, however, with his statement that the word ideology need not "possess its popular American connotation of narrow deference to a particular manifesto or rigid apologia impeding practical action." Paul H. Mattingly, *The Classless Profession: American Schoolmen of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), p. 187. Mattingly refers to Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1936). If we followed Mannheim's distinction between ideology as a complex of ideas serving to maintain an existing order and utopia as a complex of ideas calling for transformation of an existing order, we would find ourselves among those of utopian bent. But partly because that term "utopia" implies a value judgement unrealizable from the point of view of the upholder of the *status quo*, we



- choose to employ the term ideology more generally to include sets of ideas and values which call into question and seek to change a prevailing social system as well as those which work to preserve an existing order. In accepting this view of ideology, we take issue with many aspects of Lewis Feuer's definition, especially the notion that all ideologies are closed systems that are inimical to scholarly inquiry. Lewis S. Feuer, *Ideology and the Ideologists* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975).
4. Janet R. Richards, *The Sceptical Feminist: A Philosophical Enquiry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 1. See also Abigail J. Stewart's and David G. Winter's "The Nature and Causes of Female Suppression" where they state that "Central to the field of women's studies is the concept of female suppression—which means the interlocking complex of lower status and limited opportunities for women, as compared with men, in the spheres of law, education, the economy, and social power." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2, 3 (Spring 1977), p. 531.
  5. Awareness of this point derives from conversations with the anthropologist Jean Briggs in which she has argued persuasively that in Inuit society one thinks in terms not of equality between the sexes but rather of complementarity and interdependence.
  6. On the question of bias in language, see Cheri Kramer, Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, "Perspectives on Language and Communication," Review Essay in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 3, 3 (Spring 1978), pp. 638-651. See also Robin Lakoff who has written of "The personal identity of women" as "linguistically submerged" in *Language in Society*, 2, (April 1973), p. 45.
  7. See Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race: The fortunes of women painters and their work* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1979).
  8. The idea for this discussion of craft and art came from conversations with Giovanna Peel and her unpublished essay "Woman's Art." Contemporary women artists' efforts to bridge the gap between art and craft may be seen in the work of Joyce Wieland in the quilt form in Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, which combines among other skills the techniques of pottery and embroidery.
  9. A woman's high intelligence, ambition and dedication to larger social goals do not necessarily make her immune to affective need any more than they increase her chances of overcoming obstacles to filling that need in an egalitarian relationship. See, for example, *Comrade and Lover: Rosa Luxemburg's Letters to Leo Jogiches*, edited and translated by Elzbieta Ettinger (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1979).
  10. The defects and bias of much so-called scientific research related to gender are blatantly obvious in examples drawn from the past. See, for example, Elaine and English Showalter, "Victorian Women and Menstruation," in *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. by Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 38-44. For discussion of more recent studies which parade as "scientific" while serving to buttress a challenged *status quo*, see Wini Breines, Margaret Cerullo, and Judith Stacey, "Social Biology, Family Studies and Antifeminist Backlash," *Feminist Studies*, 4, 1 (February 1978), pp. 43-67; and Marian Lowe, "Sociobiology and Sex Differences," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 4, 1 (Autumn 1978), pp. 118-125.
  11. William Ray Arney, "Maternal-Infant Bonding: The Politics of Falling in Love With Your Child," *Feminist Studies*, 6, 3 (Fall 1980), pp. 547-570.
  12. See "Denied Abortion, Thunder Bay girl pondering future," *Globe & Mail*, Saturday, 7 February 1981, p. 12.
  13. Ann Barr Snitow, "The Front Line: Notes on Sex in Novels by Women, 1969-1979," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5, 4 (Summer 1980), p. 718.
  14. This is an instance of our disagreement with Lewis Feuer who, in *Ideology and the Ideologists*, *op. cit.*, p. 134, argues that ideology by definition forces choice. "To the ideologist, it is always an either-or, with only two alternatives, two extreme choices." On the possibility and, indeed, necessity of a pluralist feminism, see Gerda Lerner's contribution to "Politics and Culture in Women's History: A Symposium," *Feminist Studies*, 6, 1 (Spring 1980), pp. 48-54. The whole symposium illustrates the variety of points of view among contemporary feminist historians. On the value of different points of view among feminist literary critics, see Annette Kolodny, "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism," in the same issue of *Feminist Studies*, pp. 1-25. "The fact of differences among us proves only that, despite our shared commitments, we have nonetheless refused to shy away from complexity, preferring rather to openly disagree than to give up either intellectual honesty or hard-won insights." p. 20.
  15. Agnes Macphail was one who felt that a career could not be combined with marriage and who claimed that hundreds of women of her era felt the same. Doris French, "Agnes Macphail," in *The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and their Times*, ed. by Mary Quayle Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), p. 195.
  16. This was certainly the view of Nellie McClung, one of Canada's leading suffragists. See *In Times Like These*, with an Introduction by Veronica Strong-Boag (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1972).
  17. See Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) and Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
  18. See Margrit Eichler, "A Critique of the Concept of Androgyny" in Chapter 3: "The Double Standard Internalised: The Inadequacy of the Sex Identity Approach," *The Double Standard: A Feminist Critique of Feminist Social Science* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp. 69-71.
  19. This point has been made admirably by M.I. Finley, in "Slavery and the Historians," *Social History/Histoire sociale*, 12, 24 (November 1979), pp. 247-261.
  20. E.J. Hobsbawm, "From Social History to the History of Society," in *Historical Studies Today*, ed. by Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971), pp. 1-26.
  21. Eric Hobsbawm, "Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography," *History Workshop: a journal of socialist historians*, 6 (Autumn 1978), p. 121; Sally Alexander, Anna Davin, and Eve Hostettler, "Labouring Women: a reply to Eric Hobsbawm," *History Workshop*, 8 (Autumn 1979), pp. 174-182.

22. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, translated by Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); John Gillis, *Youth in History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
23. The expression "women worthies" was coined by Natalie Zemon Davis, who was one of the first critics of this approach to the history of women. See her "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case," *Feminist Studies*, 3, 3/4 (Spring-Summer 1976), p. 83.
24. See Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: A 1975 Perspective," in *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays*, ed. by Berenice A. Carroll (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), pp. 357-367.
25. Miranda Chaytor, "Household and Kinship: Ryton in the late 16th and early 17th centuries," *History Workshop*, 10 (Autumn 1980), especially pp. 26-30.
26. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly*, 18, 2, Part 1 (Summer 1966), pp. 151-174, was one of the earliest examinations of nineteenth century American prescriptive literature. In a critique of Welter's approach, Ronald Hogeland pointed out that the early and mid-nineteenth century literature presented not just one, but at least four possible models of behaviour to women although some were more obviously accepted and acceptable than others. Hogeland, "'The Female Appendage': Feminine Lifestyles in America, 1820-1860," *Civil War History*, 17 (1971), pp. 101-114. Valuable studies of the literature on women in Canada and Britain respectively are Wendy Mitchinson, "Historical Attitudes Toward Women and Childbirth," *Atlantis*, 4, 2, Part 2 (Spring 1979), pp. 13-34, and Donna Andrew, "Female Vice and the National Welfare: Some Eighteenth Century Opinions About the Role of Women," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the CHA, Fredericton, N.B., June 1977.
27. See, for example, Carl Degler, "What Ought To Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review*, 79, (December 1974), pp. 1467-1490.
28. Jill Liddington, "Working Class Women in the North West II," *Oral History*, 5, 2, and "Rediscovering Suffrage History," *History Workshop*, 4 (Autumn 1977), pp. 192-202. Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *No cause can be won between dinner and tea, most of us who were married had to work with One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Virago, 1978). Liddington and Norris call attention to the way in which the barriers between the compartments of history—and life—break down in women's history. "Our decision to concentrate on local rather than national history, and to use the research methods that we did has meant questioning the historians' habit of compartmentalizing everything neatly into 'suffrage history,' 'labour history,' 'political history' and 'social history.' The lives of the radical suffragists overlapped into all these categories. Their attitudes to winning the vote for women like their commitment to the labour movement was dovetailed into their experience of growing up in working class families. They emerge not only as a group but also as women who were not deterred by the perennial problems of combining political activity with their family commitments." *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, pp. 18-19.
29. D. Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority: The Changing Role of Women in 19th Century Montreal," in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History*, ed. by Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), pp. 74-77; Micheline Dumont-Johnson, "Des garderies au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: les salles d'asile des Soeurs Grises a Montreal," *Revue d'histoire de l'amerique française*, 34, 1 (June 1980), pp. 27-55.
30. For Canadian examples, see Linda Rasmussen et al., eds., *A Harvest Yet to Reap* (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1976); Rolf Knight, *A Very Ordinary Life* (Vancouver: New Star Press, 1974); and Beth Light and Alison Prentice, eds., *Pioneer and Gentlewomen of British North America* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1980).
31. Veronica Strong-Boag, "Wages for Housework: Mothers' Allowances and the Beginnings of Social Security in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 14, 1 (Spring 1979), pp. 24-34; Ruth Pierson, "Women's Emancipation and the Recruitment of Women into the Canadian Labour Force in World War II," in *The Neglected Majority*, op. cit., pp. 125-145, and "'Home Aide': A Solution to Women's Unemployment after World War II," *Atlantis*, 2, 2, Part 2 (Spring 1977), pp. 85-97; and Patricia Vandebelt Schulz, "Day Care in Canada: 1850-1962," in *Good Day Care: Fighting For It, Getting It, Keeping It*, ed. by Kathleen Gallagher Ross (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1978), pp. 137-158.
32. Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978) is perhaps the most comprehensive attempt to date to relate the domestic lives and work of women to the larger social and economic trends.
33. See, for example, Peggy Morton, "Women's Work Is Never Done . . . or the production, maintenance and reproduction of labour power," in *Women Unite! An Anthology of the Canadian Women's Movement* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1972), pp. 46-68; Margaret Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," *Monthly Review*, Vol. XXI (September 1969), pp. 13-27; Jean Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men: A History of Inter-Professional Rivalries and Women's Rights* (London: Heinemann, 1977); and Alison Prentice, "Patriarch or Public Servant? Teachers and Professionalism in Mid-Nineteenth Century Ontario," paper presented to the Workshop on Professionalization in Modern Societies, University of Western Ontario, March 1981.
34. Joan Kelly Gadol, "Did Women have a Renaissance?" in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. by Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp. 137-164. See also her "The Social Relations of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History," *Signs*, 1, 4 (Summer 1976), pp. 809-823 and Alison Prentice, "Towards a Feminist History of Women and Education," in David Jones and Neil McDonald, eds., *Approaches to Educational History* (University of Manitoba Press, forthcoming).