

What should the goals of feminism be?

Chapter 5 from

Feminism

OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS

What Should the Goals of Feminism Be?

This pamphlet is chapter five from *Feminism: Opposing Viewpoints*. Other chapters, also available in pamphlet form, are:

Historical Debates on Women's Rights
How Does Feminism Affect Women?
How Does Feminism Affect Society?
Is Feminism Obsolete?

Viewpoints

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The Importance of Examining Opposing Viewpoints

The purpose of this pamphlet, and others in the series, is to confront you with alternative points of view on complex and sensitive issues.

Perhaps the best way to inform yourself is to analyze the positions of those who are regarded as experts and well studied on the issues. It is important to consider every variety of opinion in an attempt to determine the truth. Opinions from the mainstream of society should be examined. Also important are opinions that are considered radical, reactionary, minority, or stigmatized by some other uncomplimentary label. An important lesson of history is the fact that many unpopular and even despised opinions eventually gained widespread acceptance. The opinions of Socrates, Jesus, and Galileo are good examples of this.

You will approach this pamphlet with opinions of your own on the issues debated within it. To have a good grasp of your own viewpoint you must understand the arguments of those with whom you disagree. It is said that those who do not completely understand their adversary's point of view do not fully understand their own.

A pitfall to avoid in considering alternative points of view is that of regarding your own point of view as being merely common sense and the most rational stance, and the point of view of others as being only opinion and naturally wrong. It may be that the opinion of others is correct and that yours is in error.

Another pitfall to avoid is that of closing your mind to the opinions of those whose views differ from yours. The best way to approach a dialogue is to make your primary purpose that of understanding the mind and arguments of the other person and not that of enlightening him or her with your solutions. One learns more by listening than by speaking.

It is my hope that after reading this pamphlet you will have a deeper understanding of the issues debated and will appreciate the complexity of even seemingly simple issues when good and honest people disagree. This awareness is particularly important in a democratic society such as ours, where people enter into public debate to determine the common good. People with whom you disagree should not be regarded as enemies, but rather as friends who suggest a different path to a common goal.

David L. Bender
Publisher

Chapter Preface

Feminism is a broad movement that encompasses a vast number of people with varying goals and objectives. Liberal feminists, radical feminists, ecofeminists, and lesbian feminists, for example, may all support the broad goal of increasing equality for women, but they often disagree on the causes of women's inequality, the definition of equality, and how to improve women's status. These conflicts make setting goals for the feminist movement difficult.

For decades the primary goal of feminism was to gain for women the rights allotted men: the right to vote, the right to work in traditionally male jobs, the right to serve in the military. But as women have begun achieving these goals and making inroads into men's domains, some feminists are questioning whether seeking to be "just like men" is a worthwhile goal for women. As author Elizabeth Fox-Genovese explains in *Tikkun*:

For some, feminism necessarily means the promotion of equality between women and men; for others, it just as necessarily means the celebration of the differences between women and men. . . . In practice, the debate between the two strands in feminism amounts to a disagreement over whether women simply need access to the same rights as men or whether women need protection on the basis of their irreducible differences from men.

Those feminists who favor deemphasizing the differences between men and women tend to fight for legal and social changes that gain women entry into corporate boardrooms, military jets, and other places women have not traditionally been welcomed. Most of these would argue that there are few meaningful differences between men and women and that there should be no difference in the opportunities given each.

Feminists who believe women and men are different in important ways also believe that women should not be denied opportunities. But they argue that by convincing women that they must become "like men" to gain equality, society demeans the unique nature of women. For example, these feminists might maintain that women are by nature more nurturing than men, and that men, women, and children would all benefit if nurturing occupations such as child care, nursing, and social work were more highly valued.

Whether feminists should strive for equality by deemphasizing the differences between men and women or by emphasizing women's unique nature is one issue explored in the following chapter. The authors in the chapter present differing feminist views and discuss how feminists can unite to establish goals.

"Free markets are good for all women and men because they allow greater choice. This is what feminism is all about."

Feminism Should Promote Capitalism

Deborah Walker

Because capitalism provides prosperity and economic freedom to women, feminists should support capitalism and promote free enterprise, Deborah Walker maintains in the following viewpoint. Walker believes free markets allow businesses to operate efficiently, without government involvement. This strengthens the economy and provides both women and men with more freedom concerning their occupations. Walker is a Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank that promotes free enterprise and limited government.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. What does Walker mean when she says she is not a "politically correct academic feminist"?
2. What did Ludwig von Mises state concerning feminism, as quoted by the author?
3. Who or what is to blame for the backlash against feminism, in Walker's opinion?

Abridged from Deborah Walker, "Feminism and Free Markets: Friends or Foes?"
The Heritage Lectures, no. 443, November 19, 1992. Reprinted with permission.

The term feminism often conjures up images of angry women bashing men, criticizing capitalism, and turning to the state for answers. Indeed, as I researched the topic of feminism and free markets, I found that capitalism was often attacked not only by radical Marxist feminists, but also by the more mainstream feminists like Gloria Steinem, Susan Faludi, and Naomi Wolf, who have found themselves on best-seller lists. As an economist, my study of the market has led me to a deep appreciation of economic freedom. To me markets and prices are beautiful and wonderful. To understand how free markets work is to marvel at their ability to create wealth for a society that allows people like me to sit and think about such matters as feminism. So although my main interest in feminism is economic in nature, it does not stop there. I am not only an economist, I am a woman. There is a moral dimension to feminism that cannot be ignored.

In his recent book *Forbidden Grounds: The Case Against Employment Discrimination Laws*, Richard Epstein writes, "In my judgment, feminism is the single most powerful social movement of our time, one that addresses every aspect of human and social life." The feminist movement questions not only our economic order, but also the legal order upon which the economic order rests. And it also questions our moral order, upon which the legal order rests or should rest, in my opinion. In essence, feminism questions some of the basic cultural norms by which we live our lives. Is this questioning wrong? No, not necessarily. However, I disagree with how many people ask the questions. Moreover, I will argue that they give the wrong answers which, in turn, produce undesirable social and economic consequences.

Politically Correct? Not!

Let me begin by telling you what I am not. I am not a politically correct academic feminist. What does this mean? For those of you who are not in the academy, it means that I do not believe capitalism is bad for women. I do not believe men have deliberately designed every institution in history to enable men to dominate women. And I do not believe that there is only one research agenda for feminists. Most academic feminists today will not listen to alternative views of feminism. Ask, for example, Camille Paglia or Christina Sommers about feminist reactions to their alternative views.

Most academic feminists today are anti-capitalist statists. They are inconsistent, elitist, and, in my opinion, very anti-woman. They will say, for example, that men have deliberately designed institutions (capitalism for one) to dominate women. To quote one of the leading theorists in feminist legal theory, Catherine MacKinnon, "Here, on the first day that matters, dominance was achieved, probably by force. By the second day, division along

the same lines had to be relatively firmly in place. On the third day, if not sooner, differences were demarcated, together with social systems to exaggerate them in perception and in fact, *because* the systematically differential delivery of benefits and deprivations required making no mistake about who was who."

MacKinnon is saying that most of our institutions—private property rights, marriage, and exchange, for instance—were deliberately and consciously designed by men and that women throughout history have been passive agents. I believe this is insulting to women and gives undeserved credit to men. Genuine institutions are not deliberately designed by anyone; they evolve spontaneously out of the social interactions of men and women. To view free trade or market exchange, which is capitalism, as a deliberately designed method of domination is to be ignorant of why trade occurs and why private property rights emerge in civilization. . . .

Feminism and Freedom

There are natural differences between men and women and they manifest themselves in different ways. But I would argue that capitalism is responsible for technological advances which have changed the economic order from one in which physical strength and stamina are necessary for the production of goods to one in which they are no longer prerequisites for financial success. Women can now enter fields they could not enter earlier—remember, this is because capitalism has made possible technological progress. As a result, I am not afraid of how cultural norms may change in a free society as women make non-conventional choices. I am *as* opposed to social planning to preserve particular cultural norms as I am to economic planning. Both suffer from the same fallacy: the belief that there is a person or group able to know the subjective values and desires of others and the individual circumstances of their lives.

I think free markets and a free society are compatible with feminism. Let me define feminism and the principles to which I subscribe. I believe women have been treated as second class citizens, for lack of a better phrase, in one form or another throughout history. In the United States this has manifested itself in such laws as those which did not allow women to own property, to sue, to enter into contracts, to enter certain occupations, or to vote. Women have been governed—and in some cases still are governed—according to cultural norms which tell them that only certain types of behavior are appropriate. For example, speaking in a public place to a mixed audience of men and women was considered inappropriate 150 years ago. In essence, feminism as I understand it asks for equality under the law, but it also asks that women command the same respect as

complete human beings as men. Free markets not only support but promote this brand of feminism.

To make my position clearer I want to quote Ludwig von Mises. This is from his book *Socialism*: "So far as Feminism seeks to adjust the legal position of woman to that of man, so far as it seeks to offer her legal and economic freedom to develop and act in accordance with her inclinations, desires, and economic circumstances, so far it is nothing more than a branch of the great liberal movement which advocates peaceful and free evolution."

Peaceful and free evolution. I cannot say it any better than that. Professor Mises describes how man is dominant over woman in violent societies and in violent times. He explains that this domination breaks down in a free society, in the absence of violence, and that it is not in the interest of men to dominate women, even within the household. Societies that are based on the premises of socialism, on violence, on the premise that might makes right, or on the premise of *equality of outcome* will not be societies conducive to feminism.

Feminism and Statism

Unfortunately, what most feminists call for today are socialist, statist policies. These policies include affirmative action legislation, government-supported child care, mandated employment benefits such as family leave, and, worst of all, comparable pay for comparable worth. These policies undermine the workings of free markets.

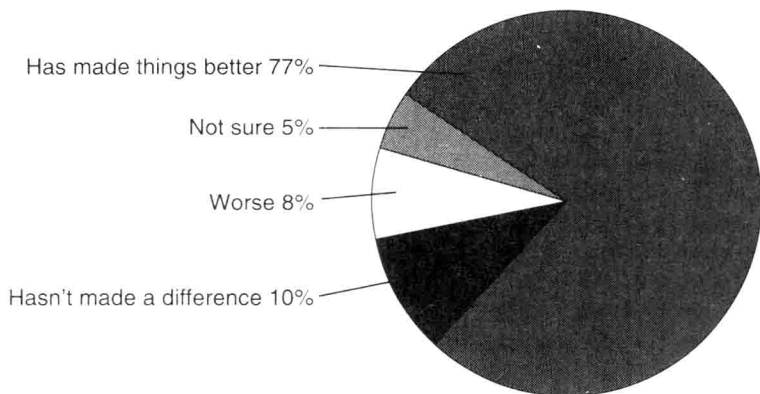
But do these policies work? What are they designed to do? These policies are supposed to decrease discrimination in hiring and salary decisions by employers. They are supposed to increase the ease by which working mothers and fathers can enter the workforce by turning over the responsibility of raising children to the state, or by forcing employers to take on that responsibility and, in so doing, hasten cultural change. In short, the principles of a free society, or what Professor Friedrich Hayek terms its *general rules*, have been betrayed, and expediency has become the order of the day. These *specific commands*, the policies I have mentioned, undermine and contradict the general rules of a free society in several ways. They take day-to-day decision-making from individual hands and put it in the hands of legislators. They destroy freedom of contract and undermine private property rights. What are the consequences? Do these specific commands accomplish what is intended? Do they decrease discrimination? I argue that they do not. Actually, they do just the opposite. Let me explain.

There is a backlash against women in our society. But it was not created by the press as Faludi claims. The backlash stems from the fact that employers do not like to be told whom they

can and cannot hire, and men do not like to be overlooked for jobs or promotions for which they are qualified simply because they are men. Unfortunately, this backlash (or increase in discrimination) is directed toward women. It should be directed instead toward the real cause of discrimination—the state.

Feminism Has Helped Women

Question: Since the women's movement got started in the 1960s, has it made things better for women, worse for women, or hasn't it made any difference?



Source: Survey by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman for *Time* and CNN, October 23-25, 1989.

Discrimination increases when government mandates, e.g., child care or family leave policies, increase the costs of hiring women over men. True, there are individual women who have jobs they would not otherwise have because of these specific commands. But that does not mean discrimination has decreased or that we are better off as a society. On the contrary, many people are out of a job or are underemployed because of these specific commands.

Undermining the general rules of a free economy decreases the efficiency of the economy. Jobs are created when resources are put to productive or more productive uses. This can only come about if resources, including human resources, are moved in directions that entrepreneurs freely choose. Entrepreneurs have their pocketbooks on the line and are closest to the problems at hand. They do not always make the right decisions, but even their failures provide vital information to future entrepreneurs, and certainly no government agency can do a better job. My

point is that specific commands hinder the entrepreneurial process. Resources are used less productively, and new jobs are *not created*. Unfortunately, no one can point to a *specific* unemployed person and say he or she is out of a job because of affirmative action legislation or family leave legislation. But any good economist can explain the relation of cause and effect.

Breaking the Rules

OK, you may say, but at least these specific commands have created social and cultural change. Oh, yes, change which has increased tension between the sexes and which, to some degree, is partly responsible for the breakdown of marriages. Domestic violence is with us in full force. These are the kinds of consequences that arise from favoring expediency over principle, from breaking down the *general rules* of a free society.

Women have made progress. However, that progress is the result of a cultural revolution that came about in spite of much government legislation. It began when the early feminists demanded equality under the law. Once women were on the same playing field as men, were allowed to play by the same rules, we began to make progress. It is those *general rules* and *free markets* that have created the kinds of cultural change favoring, in Professor Mises' words, "*peaceful and free evolution*."

So now we come to specifics. How do free markets break down discriminatory barriers for women and promote peaceful cultural change?

The Cost of Discrimination

First, discrimination against women in labor markets will decrease when it is in an entrepreneur's best interest. Discrimination on the basis of sex can be costly. Consider an instance of sexism in its purest form, i.e., as economist Thomas Sowell explains, "where people are treated differently because of group membership as such." If a firm decides that it will only hire men, for example, the firm must spend more time searching for qualified applicants who also must be men. The added search for men can be very costly, especially if there are very few qualified people in the relevant labor market. The discriminating firm can then face additional costs. In order to attract the few qualified persons to the firm who are men, it must pay them relatively higher wages. If other firms do not discriminate on the basis of sex, their labor pools are larger. They will not have to offer such high wages in order to attract qualified persons to their firms. Consequently, the discriminating employer faces higher costs in two ways: through longer and more extensive searches, the costs of which also include lost productivity, and through effectively decreasing the available (i.e., acceptable) labor supply,

driving up the wages that the employer must pay.

Since firms only survive in markets if they make monetary profits, discriminating firms with higher costs will be at a competitive disadvantage and will have either to stop the discriminating behavior to remain competitive or lose profitability and perhaps even close their doors. In this way, competition in markets can, at times, decrease pure discrimination. However, the less competitive a market is, the more likely a discriminating employer will be able to bear the costs of discrimination. For instance, in industries where there are legal restrictions to entry or in government-operated firms and nonprofit organizations, discrimination is more likely to persist. Nonprofit or government-operated firms are not subject to competitive forces in the sense that they do not have to make a profit to survive. In essence, in many cases they can afford to discriminate when firms faced with more productive competitors cannot.

Third Party Discrimination

In some cases, third parties can be the real cause of employer discrimination. For example, customers or existing employees can insist that certain categories of potential employee be eliminated from consideration. In some cases, it can be economically desirable to discriminate. However, the market in some instances can also diminish third party discrimination. Customer discrimination, for example, can be reduced if customers do not have direct contact with all employees. Customers cannot push their preferences on an entire firm without assuming considerable costs. When one buys a loaf of bread, one does not usually ask the cashier if a woman or man baked it.

Discrimination Perceived as Cost Reducing

Turn now to a case where an employer may discriminate on the basis of a group characteristic. This is sometimes known as statistical discrimination. For example, women may be seen as less productive than men because, on average, they have higher turnover rates and are more likely to take leaves of absence than are men. Therefore, an employer may refuse to hire specific women because all women are perceived to be, on average, less productive.

Whether the characteristics are real or falsely perceived is important. As I have argued, if the perception regarding the group average is incorrect, competitive forces will tend to punish discriminating employers. However, if the perception is correct, women who fall in the upper range of the scale, i.e., those who are more productive than the average woman, will be punished because of their sex. Employers may decide to discriminate because the costs of screening individual women to discover if

they fall in the upper range of the distribution will outweigh the estimated benefits of finding them.

On the other hand, most employers would rather screen individual employees and hire the most productive in any group. In essence, then, employers face a knowledge problem regarding which employees to hire. They must trade off the cost of screening individual employees against the cost of missing out on hiring very productive workers. This is why firms, indeed market forces, have come up with different ways to screen employees at lower costs. Employers use employment agencies, interviews, references, a variety of tests such as aptitude or skill level tests, and they look for brand names in the educational and vocational institutions which potential employees attended. All these devices decrease screening costs for employers and thereby increase the likelihood that potential employees will be hired on the basis of their individual attributes rather than on the basis of their group membership. . . .

Employment Contracts

Lastly, the employment contract itself is an important source of information for employers who are willing to hire from any group of employees, as long as they can in some way determine individual merit prior to employment. This can be especially important for women, who may be seen as less productive than men because of their biological ability to give birth. Through individual contract terms a woman can assure an employer that she will not leave the job within a specific period of time, will not ask for an extended leave if she does choose to have a child, and so on. In other words, she can legally promise the employer that she will take full responsibility for her personal choices and will not expect the employer's costs to increase because of those choices. In this way, women who have chosen to make their market career their top priority can signal that fact to employers and be judged on their individual merits. The freedom to make creative, individualized employment contracts can be a very important source of information to employers and it can thereby decrease discrimination.

When I once explained this theory to a reporter, her reply was, "But doesn't this put a lot of responsibility upon women?" And the answer is yes. If women want cultural change, they have to be the driving force behind it, they have to stop turning to the state, and they have to stop trying to force men to change. Freedom calls for individual responsibility. I am in complete agreement with Camille Paglia here. As she says, "This is my belief, that feminism begins at home. It begins with every single woman drawing the line."

I do want to note that there are other ways discrimination can

be overcome in free markets. When wages are free to vary as the market sees fit, discriminatory practices can be broken down. If an employer is faced with hiring a highly skilled male employee or a less skilled female employee, an employer can be induced to hire the less skilled woman if the difference in the wage rates between the two workers justifies the difference in productivity. Two important points must follow. First, if the perception regarding the skill or productivity level is correct, then hiring the less skilled woman enables her to gain valuable experience and skills, increasing her market value and wage rate over time. Second, if the perception of productivity is incorrect, hiring a woman over an equally productive male at a relatively lower wage rate allows the woman to obtain the job and prove her productivity, thereby also allowing her to increase her wage over time—sometimes almost immediately upon discovery that the employer's perception was incorrect. . . .

Markets and Families

Besides decreasing undesirable discrimination over time, there is a second way free markets produce positive change. As I have argued, free markets lead to real job creation and a strong economy in general. And a strong economy translates into more choices, including the choice *not* to enter the workforce when support of the family requires only one working spouse. So, for those of you who think I have forgotten the women and men who do the most difficult work in the world—building a loving home and raising decent children—I have not. Free markets are good for all women and men because they allow greater choice. This is what feminism is all about. Feminism should not only address choices in the workforce, it should address choices about lifestyles. In this way, free markets are good for men and children too. I am convinced that if left alone, the creative forces of the market would generate a variety of positive responses enabling men and women to juggle careers and child-rearing.

And finally, free markets create positive cultural change, change which takes place slowly and from inside the social system. Markets create change through the free choices and mutual give-and-take occurring between men and women.

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"It is time to retrieve our critique of capitalism and reassert the goal of economic justice as an explicit part of feminism."

Feminism Should Promote Socialism

Ann Froines

Ann Froines teaches women's studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. In the following viewpoint, Froines describes socialist feminism and explains why feminists should once again work for a socialist society in the United States. Women are oppressed both economically and because of their gender, Froines contends. Because of this, feminists must combine socialism and feminism to fight class and gender oppression.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. How did socialist feminists attempt to bridge the gap between white, middle-class feminists and poor women of color in the 1980s, according to the author?
2. What insights concerning women and work have socialist feminists formulated, according to Froines?
3. What aspects of Cuban society does the author admire?

Ann Froines, "Renewing Socialist Feminism," *Socialist Review* 92:4, pp. 125-31. Copyright Duke University Press, 1992. Reprinted with permission.

Recent socialist feminist analysis has tended to acknowledge social class difference primarily as one aspect of diversity, with an emphasis on understanding and appreciating class diversity, rather than analyzing the social and economic injustices of class difference. Yet what was distinctive about socialist feminist thought as it developed in the 1960s and 1970s was precisely the linking of social and economic class difference to a critique of capitalism as a whole, not as an abstraction, but as it exists today, in the world. This capitalism has created a world economic order that enriches the North (United States, Western Europe, and now Japan) at the expense of the South (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) and now perhaps Eastern Europe and the independent states of the former USSR. This capitalism relies increasingly on the global wage labor of women.

The decline or fall of socialist states worldwide and the inadequacy of socialist theory's analysis of gender inequality notwithstanding, I believe it is time to retrieve our critique of capitalism and reassert the goal of economic justice as an explicit part of feminism. Socialist feminism's critique of capitalism was based on an analysis of the relationship between women's work and women's liberation. The exploitation of women's labor power was a central concept. That analysis is still viable.

The History of Socialist Feminism

Attempts to establish socialist feminist women's organizations ended by 1980, and socialist feminist activism as such largely became socialist feminist theorizing in university Women's Studies programs. Yet socialist feminist activists remained in both left and feminist politics and, as several scholars have documented, have had a significant impact on the politics of women's issues in both settings.

Since the history of socialist feminism is a history of groups and tendencies rather than national organizations and agendas, a brief review of socialist feminism's place in women's activism over the last twenty years will help to demonstrate the importance of a new socialist feminist project. Many feminists who identify themselves as socialist feminists (myself among them) have been active in women's studies programs in academic institutions, labor organizing, antiwar and anti-intervention work, reproductive rights, and gay rights struggles. Moving beyond a heartfelt but naively one-dimensional view of sisterhood in the women's movement, in recent years we have explored, in a variety of forums, the reality of "difference" among women. We have struggled with the difficulties of creating a political activism that would transcend or better yet *utilize* difference. Socialist feminist thought is not an abstraction for us, but still guides decisions about, for example, how inclusive we need to be in creating a

syllabus, or in which women's groups we will participate. Some of us have been activists in trade unions and have represented women's concerns in that context. Women of color also identify with socialist traditions and theory as a solution to the quest for economic justice, but may identify primarily as African-American, or Latina, or Asian feminists, or community activists. I remember, however, that in the early years of the second wave of the women's movement in the United States—well before our current comprehensive discussions about inclusiveness—economic issues, as much as race and culture, separated white feminists from women of color and working-class women. Many of us in feminist organizations were middle-class, and articulated issues in a manner that made other women perceive feminism as a middle-class movement.

Helping the Poor

Socialist feminists responded to the perspectives of working-class women and women of color. We helped to broaden the goals of reproductive rights organizations to include the right to have children (by ending sterilization abuse) as well as the right to have abortion. In the 1980s, national and local women's groups focused on women's and children's poverty in response to Reagan's attacks on the welfare state, and some feminist groups supported coalitions to restore lost welfare benefits for low-income families. The many obstacles to the participation of low-income women in women's organizations as presently constituted, however, meant that contact between low- and middle-income women was often transitory. And even though we are reminded every day, in a myriad of ways, that an economic system that cannot provide for basic needs certainly cannot foster the liberation of women, somehow issues concerning poverty, or the conflict between women's work in the family and in the labor force, did not keep pace, in our theoretical debates, with discussions of violence, reproductive autonomy, and the meaning of equality.

Socialist feminist insights about women's work remain dynamic concepts, inextricably linked to other issues of women's survival. These insights were precisely the underpinnings of early revelations which led to the formation of an autonomous women's movement: women wanted to move in the world of work, of public power, which was dominated by men, even as we envisioned transforming this male-dominated world we were entering. We rejected definitions of ourselves as primary sexual beings who, as adults, would inevitably fulfill our "main" purpose in life—motherhood. We did not, however, reject motherhood itself, and demanded that women's work in the home, though unpaid, be recognized as real work.

The theoretical formulations that followed from these insights

include: (1) the vast majority of the women in the world must work in order to provide for themselves and their families; therefore, feminist theory must address fundamental economic issues of women and men in society; (2) there is a sexual division of labor both in production and consumption; (3) domestic labor—housework and childrearing—is socially useful work, and helps reproduce society (whether capitalist or socialist); (4) the patriarchal state has replaced many of the functions of the patriarchal family; (5) male supremacy exists in socialist as well as in capitalist societies.

Considering Diversity

Although classical socialist theory may not sufficiently recognize the place of race and gender in economic class relations, it doesn't follow from this that socialist feminist theory is inadequate to the task of theorizing about these issues. A socialist feminist perspective means paying consistent attention to women *in our capacity as workers*, and in all our variety. Zillah Eisenstein's *Socialist Review* article, "Specifying U.S. Feminisms in the Nineties: the Problem of Naming," is a good starting point for an exploration of socialist feminist thought in relation to the need for a new specificity in discussing women. Eisenstein develops the example of the "pregnant woman of color" as a more inclusive category of diversity. She argues that this "pregnant woman of color" lacks access to reproductive choice, so that even with the advance of reproductive rights she remains a "transcendent case of female need." The question then arises: how do we describe and analyze the relationship between the economic status of this woman and the economic organization of the society in which she lives?

Eisenstein's transcendent case of female need is incomplete unless we add "working" to "pregnant woman of color." As women have the capacity and right to reproduce, so do we have the capacity and the right to work, to have employment that sustains our physical, intellectual, and (dare we hope) spiritual needs. Work is required in this picture not only because women have to be able to feed ourselves and our children, but because we cannot imagine a society without work. To lose from our ethical vision of a just society the goal of a fair distribution of economic wealth, of employment for all, means a very narrow vision indeed, one which does not square with women's historical struggles or contemporary expectations.

The Basic Requirements of a Socialist Vision

The "working pregnant woman of color" requires access to an affordable quality health care center that offers counseling about birth control and pregnancy and provides both abortion