FEMINIST ISSUES

Race, Class, and Sexuality

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Prentice Hall Canada Inc.
Scarborough, Ontario

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Mandell, Nancy
Feminist issues

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-13-076365-9

1. Feminism. 2. Women–Social conditions.
I. Title.

HQ1206.M35 1995 305.4 C94-931366-1

Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey
Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited, London
Prentice-Hall of Australia, Pty. Limited, Sydney
Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., Mexico City
Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, New Delhi
Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., Tokyo
Simon & Schuster Asia Private Limited, Singapore
Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., Rio de Janeiro

ISBN 0-13-076365-9

Acquisitions Editor: Marjorie Munroe
Production Editor: Kelly Dickson
Production Coordinator: Sharon Houston
Page Layout: Jaytype Inc.

3 4 5 RRD 99 98 97 96 95

Printed and bound in the USA.

For Lionel, Jeremy, Dan, and Adam

Preface

This collection of chapters addresses a variety of feminist questions that have received little attention in Canadian texts. All of the pieces, were written specifically for this volume with the intention of providing an overview and summary of the most up-to-date material in each field. Authors explore the range and diversity of contemporary feminist perspectives applied to critiques of gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, and poverty. The lives of previously forgotten and silenced women are brought to the forefront as their experiences of work, family, violence, sexuality, law, aging, health, and education are examined. The result is an innovative, challenging, and comprehensive survey of Canadian feminist issues today.

Undergraduate students should find this book particularly accessible as authors have been asked to present their arguments in as clear and compelling a fashion as possible. Our purpose is to answer a number of central questions: How (in what ways) is a particular topic a feminist issue? What have feminists researching health care or education, for instance, discovered as systemic and persistent biases against women? How have feminists addressed inequities revealed through feminist analyses? What sorts of personal and institutional responses have been taken to redress the mislabelling and misdirection of women, such as gender tracking in high schools? And finally, what are the immediate and long-term consequences of feminist intervention and analysis? Has the discovery of the "double day" of wage and domestic labour, for which women are responsible, in fact lessened or redistributed their load? Students, as members of groups usually ignored and as members of institutional settings in which they are often silenced, may find, for the first time, their lives, their experiences, their feelings, and their histories explored. Students may find such revelation unsettling, contentious, validating, and liberating. It is unlikely they will emerge untouched.

Putting this book together has been truly enjoyable. An excellent group of contributors have broadened previous feminist critiques by incorporating debates around race, class, sexuality, disability, poverty, and violence into everyday explanations of women's omission and oppression. I am immensely enriched by and delighted with the excellent work of Canadian feminist academics and activists who continually contest mainstream definitions and struggle to expand the boundaries of our collective enterprise.

Introduction

In the last twenty-five years, a forceful but largely peaceful revolution has altered the lives of Canadian women and men. Traditional relationships between the sexes, dating and courtship rules, family structures, workplace scenarios, and leisure patterns have given way to more varied, diverse, and nonconventional forms. Fuelling these structural and institutional rearrangements are a host of cultural and personal demands for variety and flexibility. Women who now anticipate a lifelong combination of wage and domestic labour need and want more participatory, interchangeable, and pliable arrangements in order to cope with their responsibilities. Men, who no longer self-identify solely through their jobs, share more fully in raising their children with same or opposite sex partners. The institutions in which we work, receive health care, and become schooled have begun, slowly, to shift their foci in response to individual and social claims for greater flexibility and individuality.

These and other trends have led to the virtual demise of traditional ideas of femininity and masculinity. Gender ideologies created in everyday and institutional practices no longer condemn women and men to restrictive patterns of behaviour. Women are no longer assumed to be more passive, unassertive, caring, kind, and helpful than men. Conversely, men no longer conform to 1950s stereotypes as cool, unemotional, domineering, and career-driven. Relationships between and among women and men have also modified. The century-long trek toward the liberation of individuals from the oppressive features of patriarchy has fostered the emergence of the "postmodern" relationship. Individuality, diversity, and plurality prevail.

Societal and personal innovation have altered the landscape of Canadian universities in profound and irrevocable ways. Student bodies are finally becoming more variegated, international, and incomparable. A healthy tension of diversity charges the atmosphere. Academic programs are moving toward models of inter- and multidisciplinarity as traditional intellectual boundaries are expanded. Women students and faculty have been leaders in fashioning new courses out of shifting interests.

Gender challenges have been collected under the rubric of "Women's Studies," a label that pulls together into one curriculum any courses that place the study of women and women's own experiences at the centre of their investigation. Women's Studies endorses the fundamentally simple, yet radical, belief in an approach to knowledge that places women at the centre of an intellectual

analysis and critique of androcentric/phallocentric systems of knowledge, ones in which men's experiences and priorities have traditionally been seen as central and representative of all (Robinson 1993). Such a recentering of knowledge has wide-reaching implications for our teaching and research within the disciplines and the academy in general.

The changing nature of women's lives resonates in academic pursuits. Women's Studies was initially seen as supplying missing information, both historical and contemporary, about women's activities. Did women ever have a renaissance? What were women doing in pre-agricultural communities? Women's invisibility has resulted in part from our own silence about ourselves. Women have tended to be excluded from public discourse, have rarely been taught to read or write, and their work, when it has been published, has not been seen as interesting or worthy. This lack of interest in women can be traced to a general devaluation of women: women's work is ignored because it is produced by women.

Women's Studies also corrects misconceptions about men and women. Some serious misconceptions about women's bodies, mental capacities, activities, and achievements are widely believed. Myths about "man-the-hunter" ignored women's foraging. Conceptualization of women as irrational and hysterical ignored women's powerlessness and victimization by abusers. In some cases, these misconceptions are the result of too narrow a focus of study. In other cases, they come from entrenched ideological beliefs and practices.

In the past, both women and men have studied women from a predominately male perspective largely because, until recently, all theories about humans, our nature and behaviour, have been "man-made" (Spender 1981). Observations and their resulting interpretations within each discipline reflect male perspectives of reality, meaning these narratives are simply not as "true" for women as for men. Explanations do not correspond with women's understandings and thus may be poor guides for predicting women's attitudes and behaviour. Women's Studies attempts to rectify this appalling lack of knowledge through historical recovery and contemporary investigation.

Emanating from the women's movement, the establishment, within the academy, of Women's Studies journals, courses, and programs in the early 1970s in Canada represented a profoundly political act. Feminist academics, by questioning conventional knowledge claims to "objectivity," "truth," and the separation of experience from theory, transformed teaching, learning, and research. Feminist critiques of objectivity, inquiries into feminist methods of research, and the linking of feminist research with the political goals of the women's movement challenged basic methods and presuppositions in established disciplines. Women's Studies also produced new bodies of knowledge that both corrected and complemented the established disciplines while slowly constituting itself as a new academic discipline of its own.

Central to the creation of woman-centred knowledge and its dissemination through feminist pedagogies remains the fusion of experience and politics. Conventional ideas that research and teaching have been about, and not for, women is counteracted by Women's Studies insistence that women's experiences as workers, as lesbian mothers, as political activists, and so on, not be left outside the classroom, separate from the serious job of theorizing. Therefore, feminist learning connects with the everyday world of women's daily lives as well as with their sexuality and emotional life.

The feminist classroom offers the possibility of dialogue between women with different conceptions and relationships. It offers a safe space within which to explore the idea of the contradiction between women's lived experience and perceived feminist ideas. A widely diverse group, with differing motives, take Women's Studies courses. Varied student expectations lead to challenge and conflict within the classroom as students feel the right to demand, discharge, and disclose in ways unthinkable in traditional disciplines. At the same time as it politicizes its students, Women's Studies faces the dilemma of being co-opted and deradicalized as it enters the university mainstream. In terms of its activist connections, feminist teachers are sometimes viewed as corrupted by a male hierarchy that demands obedience to a patriarchal orthodoxy, or as careerists unconnected to the women's movement, or as token feminists (Robinson 1993).

Such criticisms fail to acknowledge how political an act teaching Women's Studies remains in most Canadian institutions. Women's Studies is far from mainstreamed or institutionalized in most universities. Indeed, most programs seem precariously perched, dependent on the goodwill of administrators and a pool of part-time instructors. Such criticisms also deny the energy and effort feminist instructors expend in maintaining feminist programs, taking for granted their hard work. Moreover, faculty, staff, and students still find it difficult to survive as feminists, as out lesbians, as Native, Black, poor, or disabled women in the institution. Indeed, feminism's recent focus on "forgotten women" has attempted to lessen these burdens by accepting a diversity of feminist approaches, classrooms, and pedagogies, all aimed at the empowering of students to create social and political change. In fact, empowering energy, capacity, and potential has become the 1990s feminist goal (Shrewsbury 1987). This collection aims to encourage student's empowerment through knowledge and thus to further the feminist project.

PART ONE: THEORIZING WOMEN: HISTORY, POLITICS, AND PLACEMENT

The first chapter, *"Feminist Theories"* by *Patricia Elliot and Nancy Mandell*, provides a thoroughly accessible and comprehensive review of feminist theories.

Feminists are born and move into particular arrangements that shape all aspects of their lives. These arrangements confer obligation and responsibility, and share access to economic resources, power, and privilege. As Elliot and Mandell point out, feminist theories emerge from the various explanations of women's oppression. Feminist theories are thus visions guided by experiences and experiences corrected by visions.

Masculine models, such as patriarchy, are constituted and validated through social arrangements of power. By producing knowledge we affirm what counts as reality, as truth and progress, and what counts as experience, identity, desire, and the "good." New models of society, feminist ones, arise with new structurings of power. New knowledge, constructed along with social power, is reflexive and demonstrates that which has been forgotten, denied, or invalidated. Misogynist influences on theory and history expose a bias toward a single, immutable, static, and fixed set of "truths." However, feminists studying both the natural and social sciences have shown the ways in which masculine self-images and desires permeate intellectual work previously situated as "objective" and "universal." Feminist scholars like Nancy Hartsock, Jane Flax, and Carol Gilligan reveal that an author's standpoint or theoretical perspective results from her social location and that knowledge claims are forms of discourse and as such are meaningful only as social interchanges. Feminists, as producers of knowledge, all produce theories or interpretations of events and, in the process, deconstruct traditional scripts.

Elliot and Mandell review traditional feminist theories, including liberal feminism, Marxism, socialist and radical feminism, before moving into an engaging discussion of antiracist feminism, psychoanalysis, and poststructuralism. All of this sounds daunting to the new Women's Studies student, but Elliot and Mandell present a simple, precise, and demystified account of what are complicated bodies of thought—an encouraging incentive to read on.

They conclude with an historical summary of the interface between feminism, as a political movement, and its academic counterpart, Women's Studies programs. Women's Studies examines relations of power between women and men that are social processes through which ideas about masculinity and femininity, sexual identities, and sexual preferences are continually constructed. This analysis necessarily involves us in a massive critique of society's institutions, ideologies, and day-to-day relations. As Elliot and Mandell point out, the tools for this endeavour are the questions raised by feminist theories that critique the current distribution of power and privilege.

In the next chapter, *"Silenced and Forgotten Women: Race, Poverty, and Disability,"* Barbara Cassidy, Robina Lord, and Nancy Mandell provide an overview of the ways in which the second wave of feminism has largely ignored the history and contemporary experiences of many groups of women. Feminism, the political movement that aims to liberate all women, is revealed as

historically and geographically specific. Its analysis of the origins of women's oppression and the solutions it proposes tend to be relevant only to middle-class White women. White solipsism (Spelman 1988)—thinking, imagining, and speaking as if whiteness described the world—has dominated feminist writing, thinking, and activism.

By focusing on five groups of women—First Nations, African-Canadians, immigrant, disabled, and poor—the authors attempt to partially redress this imbalance. They highlight central historical events that have shaped these women's understandings of, and engagement in, Canadian social life.

They point out the role of First Nations women in ensuring the survival of voyageurs and merchants in the North by acting as interpreters and guides and making items such as snowshoes. They also describe the destruction of matrilineal and matrilocal systems of kinship and marriage and the loss of status that Native women suffered as White men and women colonized natives. First Nations women enjoyed equal status with men, laboured alongside men growing crops and trapping animals, and held important community positions. Attempts to civilize natives and to decimate native culture, while partially successful, have been strenuously resisted by continual struggle against white society.

The history of African-Canadians can be seen within the context of legalized slavery. While Canadians tend to remain smug about their relatively non-violent and non-exploitative past, a more careful and cynical reading reveals a legacy of abuse and degradation. Missing also from this story are the many successes of Black women as they founded companies, joined police forces, held political office, and raised families, all the while battling prejudice and discrimination.

The history and contemporary experiences of immigrant women reveal their simultaneous experience both as victims of class and ethnic discrimination and as heroines in a new land. Racist immigration policies made it virtually impossible for many women to join their husbands in Canada. The result was split-family households with husbands and wives separated for many years. When women did finally begin to arrive, immigration afforded many of them new opportunities and experiences they might not have encountered otherwise. Rather than being portrayed as victims of oppression, many immigrant women prefer to envision themselves as hard workers whose years of domestic and wage labour enabled their families to achieve their goals of security, educational advancement, and financial stability.

The lives of women with disabilities remain relatively unknown in feminist writing. Their struggles for political recognition as activist groups, their international organizations, and their influence on current political and social agendas are largely unrecognized. This historic invisibility reflects their obliteration in feminist and sociological work. Little is written about disabled women's day-to-day experiences, their struggles with teachers in the education system, their difficulties in overcoming the innumerable institutional barriers to their engage-

ment in ordinary social life. Norms of femininity and myths of beauty are described as negatively constructing women whose bodies and minds are seen as deviant. The omission of women with disabilities reminds us that feminist theorizing and activism needs to reevaluate its goals.

Poor women also receive insufficient attention in feminist work. Poverty rates for the growing number of female-headed, single-parent families attest to the contemporary social fact that women without access to male wages often live in poverty. Also, increasing numbers of women remain "unattached," often by choice, for increasing periods of time as adolescents, as young mothers, and as elderly women. Feminist writing needs to reflect upon the challenges and conflicts that poor women face. Economic discrimination, coupled with systemic racism, heterosexism, and disability prejudice leave far too many women embattled and beleaguered. While help exists in the form of government assistance, often it is too little. Food banks, clothing drives, and demands for safe and affordable housing suggest that basic needs of this growing population of women are not being met.

In *"What Makes Lesbianism Thinkable?: Theorizing Lesbianism from Adrienne Rich to Queer Theory,"* Kathleen Martindale provides a comprehensive overview of the ways in which the concepts of "lesbianism" and "sexuality" have been elaborated by historians and used by lesbians and feminists. Contextualizing lesbian theory means studying the history of lesbianism as a sexual practice, an identity, and a politics of same-sex female desire that parallels, but is not identical to, the history of feminism. Martindale tells us that lesbian theorists do not agree as to whether lesbians or lesbianism existed before the end of the nineteenth century. Lesbianism existed in that lesbians have always been present, but not as self-conscious groups such as those which emerged in large Euro-American cities at the end of the nineteenth century. Heterosexuality was a term invented in 1901, thirty years after sexologists invented homosexuality as a social category.

Beginning in the 1970s, theorists differed as to definitions of lesbianism. Definitions raise the question of what lesbianism means for feminism. Should lesbianism be construed broadly as a form of womanly bonding rather than a sexual practice, or narrowly as a self-conscious sexual identity? Adrienne Rich's critical 1980 article attempted to decrease homophobia in the women's movement and build bridges between all feminists by defining lesbianism as "woman identified woman," a broad definition characterized by desires, experiences, and self-perceptions rather than social categories. Lesbianism, it was argued, is shaped by ideological and political preferences as much as by explicit sexual practices.

The year 1982 marked the beginning of the sex wars between those lesbians who were cultural feminists and those who were sex radicals. These differences reflected conflicting perspectives of basic meanings of femaleness and lesbianism with which women have long struggled. Sex radicals argued that feminism is of

limited usefulness for lesbians and other sexual minorities. What became obvious was that feminism had produced lots of theories and texts on gender oppression, but no adequate theory of female sexuality.

Postmodernism provides a way out of the divisions among lesbian theorists. Rejecting a minoritizing view of homosexuality, one that sees lesbian and gay issues as being of interest only to a minority, Martindale favours a universalizing view, one that sees the production of the category of the homosexual minority as interesting to everyone as it constructs and normalizes the heterosexual majority which would not make sense without it. "Queer Theory," a postmodern outgrowth fashioned in 1991, attempted to force a paradigm shift in our ways of thinking about links between gender and sexuality. Postmodern feminist lesbianism seeks to break out of the gay/straight theoretical impasse by formulating a new way of relating lesbianism to feminism that refuses to centre or naturalize either discourse. Such tensions between lesbians and feminists, Martindale reminds us, can be politically and theoretically productive.

PART 2: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES: ENGENDERING DIVERSITY

In a compelling fashion, *Sharon Abu-Laban and Susan McDaniel in "Aging Women and Standards of Beauty"* demonstrate that women cannot escape the cultural message that their worth is judged by their appearance. Attractiveness is a central dimension of the schema for femininity and sexual desirability, and girls are motivated to strive towards beauty (Unger and Crawford 1992). Women learn early in their lives that beautiful women are more likely to gain material and economic rewards, that "beauty power" is female.

Standards of beauty for women have actually become more restricted just as women's public and legal independence has risen. Few women can measure up to the ridiculously thin body image that is rarely applied to men. Nor are most of the world's women White, class-advantaged, tall, lanky, and heterosexual. What is the effect of such culturally and socially restrictive definitions on aging women? If very young women worry constantly about their weight, their attractiveness, and their desirability to men, how do older women feel?

Abu-Laban and McDaniel cite all the ways in which women attempt to starve, vomit, purge, and carve themselves into beautiful sex objects. Deprivatory dieting begins early in women's lives and often leads to anorexia and bulimia. Trips to the plastic surgeon, excursions only financially secure women can afford, become commonplace.

Aging is an experience that differs greatly for men and women. For women, aging means they are seen to be getting older faster than men, that women are more likely to be seen as less empowered, and that women

receive a disproportionate share of caring for others. Learning to care, to be self-sacrificing and self-deprecating is often the same thing as learning to be a good woman. Predictably, women experience stress, illness, depression, and anxiety that result from women's caring for others and not themselves being cared for. Less well documented, though, are the experiences of aging lesbians, visible minority women, and women with disabilities. Abu-Laban and McDaniel note that considerable research needs to be done to fill in these missing gaps.

In *"The Psychology of Women," Nikki Gerrard and Nayyar Javed* present a rich and detailed account of the many ways in which psychology, as a discipline, objectifies and positions women as "other." Biologically, socially, culturally, and politically, women are viewed as "less than," "different than," and "inferior to" men. Connected with this theorization and treatment of women as deficient lies the actual material and psychological oppression of women. Interconnected and multiple oppressions, exemplified through objectification and the writing of women out of language, leave women psychologically vulnerable. Women grow into adulthood convinced of their inadequacy as people.

How did it come about that half the population exhibits feelings of inferiority? Perhaps no other discipline has put so much time and energy into demonstrating the ways women differ from men. Psychology has generated a series of theories and practices that negatively construct women. Male standards for health, mental health, leadership, culture, competence, judgment, relationship, and personal freedom constitute our recorded and received social reality. Gerrard and Javed lead us through a devastating review of psychology's damaging placement of women. Beginning with its methodological borrowing from physics, psychology dichotomizes women's experiences, contrasting them constantly and artificially with those of men. Sex difference research, for example, tries to draw distinct gender differences, but in fact posits far fewer than might be imagined. Freud's ideas of psychosexual development come under close scrutiny as does Kohlberg's moral maturation sequence and Piaget's cognitive development scheme. All three theorists, long revered in psychology, are exposed as sexist.

Gerrard and Javed also point out that virtually all psychological theory, traditional or feminist, assumes heterosexuality as its norm. Rather than questioning the hegemony of heterosexuality, psychologists marginalize homosexuality. Lesbians are mislabelled and misdiagnosed, overmedicated and shocked, in the mistaken belief that their depression, anxiety, or other manifestations of alienation represent individual pathology. Gerrard and Javed expand the boundaries of psychological analyses by noting the social origins of women's illnesses and separation from self that emanate from social isolation.

On an optimistic note, the authors end with a summary of "new directions in the psychology of women." From the uncovering of new research areas to the revisioning of traditional theories, feminist psychologists have renamed,

reframed, and redefined most of psychological theory and practice. Gerrard and Javed have traced, in precise detail, this restructuring as well as providing an excellent "road map" for future feminist psychologists.

In *"The Feminist Challenge: Knowing and Ending the Violence,"* Ann Duffy points out that one of the greatest accomplishments of modern feminism has been the naming and exposure of violence against women. In a chilling portrayal, she documents the extent to which large numbers of Canadian girls and women are exposed to and experience violence in their lives. In both public and private spheres, women face harassment, sexual assault, date rape, woman assault, and intimate femicide. These experiences of violence unite all women across political and cultural grounds: violence against women represents male demonstrations of power, control, and domination. Fear of violence restricts women's behaviour, making them unwilling to assert their needs, unsure of their public use of space.

Sexual violence, even that directed against little girls, is not related to sexual needs. Victims are usually chosen because they are available and powerless, easy targets for male coercion and abuse. The greater women's social and individual powerlessness, the more likely they are to find themselves victimized. Native women face eight times the risk of family violence as non-Native women. Every day the newspapers report incidents of assault directed against women with disabilities, older women, and visible minority women.

The feminist response to violence against women has shaped the political agenda. Government funding for transition houses for battered women helps maintain many of the more than 200 shelters across the country. The "battered woman's syndrome" has been used, successfully, as a legal defence for women who have killed their abusive partners. Federal incidence surveys, a royal commission, and numerous government projects have highlighted woman assault as a national problem. Many feminists decry the use of public funds for more data gathering on what they see as a well-acknowledged problem. Indeed, many feel the money should be used to implement prevention projects. Concerted research has produced a mass of data confirming the enormity of its destructive influence. Duffy reminds us that violence against women remains a horrendous social problem around which all women must unite in order to eliminate it.

What is the position of men in feminism? *Norman Morra and Michael Smith, in "Men in Feminism: Reinterpreting Masculinity and Femininity"* provide numerous answers to this question from the positioning that men are equally as subordinated as women to suggesting that, as oppressors, men cannot occupy any space at all. Those who see men as historically, culturally, and politically duped prefer to rename "Women's Studies" as "Gender Studies," thus emphasizing the social production of gender. Opponents view such categorization as obscuring and depoliticizing the relations of power between women and men.

Those who support the principle of "woman-only" courses and discourage profeminist men from teaching in Women's Studies do so from a position of

political suspicion. Feminists wonder if sympathetic men privately and publicly act on their academic beliefs, if sympathetic men monopolize classroom interaction, if sympathetic men endorse feminist studies as a politically correct career decision. Of course, all of these criticisms could equally be applied to "sympathetic women."

Morra and Smith realized, when they set out to write their chapter, that they were entering a politically contested arena. Feminists feel passionately about their goals and vigorously defend their right to define and interpret subject matter. They also recognize, however, that men can make important contributions to feminist scholarship and practice. It is men who must end violence against women.

In a wide-ranging look at feminist research, especially in the area of sexual violence, and at the historic construction of gender identities, Morra and Smith draw out the similarities in men's and women's experiences of isolation, indifference, brutality. Under capitalism, men were just as likely as women to hold low-paying and unrewarding jobs and to suffer abuse at the hands of other men. Power over other men has long been the preserve of only a few men even though all men enjoy more privileges than women. Feminism has prompted men to rethink masculinity and to envision themselves as non-violent, equal partners with women. While it is often easier to state what the new masculinities do not constitute, Morra and Smith make a heartfelt plea for feminists to "leave open the lines of communication vital to the creation of more compatible masculinities."

PART THREE: RESTRUCTURING INSTITUTIONS: CHALLENGES AND CONFLICTS

Does the legal system act to advance the interests of women or is it an instrument of oppression? In a compelling and detailed fashion, *Mary Jane Mossman, in "The Paradox of Feminist Engagement with Law,"* probes the inherent contradictions in the workings of the Canadian legal system. The system, paradoxically, both acts to facilitate change and constrains women's achievement of both formal and substantive equality in law.

Beginning historically with the early twentieth century, Mossman outlines women's struggles to achieve legal recognition for their fundamental claims to participate in public life. Women's legal claims, during the early years of this century, can be characterized as efforts to establish the civil or political status of women. These claims were based on the idea of women's equality, defined as having access to the same status as men in terms of citizenship. Women's legal claims defined women's equality entirely in terms of men's existing rights and responsibilities and asserted women's right to participate in public life.

Until 1897, Canadian women could not vote and were not eligible to be legislators, judges, or jurors. Achieving the vote occurred in 1916 in some provinces, although Aboriginal women and men could not, up until 1960, vote unless they gave up their Indian status. The famous "Persons" case of 1929 declared women were persons as well as men and thus were eligible to hold appointments to the Senate.

The years between 1960 and 1980 witnessed numerous changes in the practice and substance of law. Beginning in the early 1970s, women entered the legal profession in unprecedented numbers. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1970 articulated needed legislative changes in the areas of family law, tax, childcare allowances, social assistance, immigration and criminal law. The commission thus asserted the role of law as a significant component in achieving changes in the interests of women. In addition, numerous cases questioned women's traditional status. Family property claims were raised by the famous *Murdoch* v *Murdoch* case. By 1980, every common-law province except Quebec had enacted legislation amending the arrangements for sharing property between a husband and wife at the time of separation or divorce. Men and women were treated as economic equals. This recognition of the "formal" equality between men and women ignored the fact that the "substance" of their economic situations is often quite different. Other cases, including changes in the Indian Act, Morgentaler's challenges to abortion laws, equal pay cases, and the deportation of Jamaican workers, represented a preoccupation with property, equality, and equal pay legislation.

Since the 1980s, women's interests, as represented by legal claims, have widened. Most legal battles have taken place over readings of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which was enacted in 1982 even though its equality clause did not take effect until 1985. Charter cases around work, family, and sexuality reveal the contradictory way in which the law both advances and constrains women's search for fair and equitable treatment. While women's equality claims have advanced, so too have men's. In some cases, interpretations of the Charter have actually hampered women's claims; in others, the claims of some women may undermine those of others.

In *"Women's Work and Family Lives," Marion Lynn and Milana Todoroff* call for a revision in our thinking about the ways women organize their lives in families and in paid employment. Previous biases in family literature have resulted in a sexist, conservative, monolithic, and microstructural analysis of family forms and structures. Lynn and Todoroff demonstrate that a postmodernist reading of "family" critiques universalistic and essentialist analyses and stresses the social location of the speaker.

The postmodern family represents a variety of family patterns, forms, and structures combined together. Family history, as a unified story, is fractured. History, when viewed from various contexts, reveals a rich variety of patterns, including split households and egalitarian arrangements.

The interface of work and family is revealed in statistical patterns. Labour force participation rates for women have steadily grown over the century although employment is not evenly distributed. Fewer Aboriginal women, four in ten, are employed while seven out of ten women of colour work (Khosla 1993). Women with disabilities are even less likely to be in the labour force. They do not have equitable access to training and educational programs, and this restricts their access to the labour force. Unemployment rates are higher for women who cannot depend on a partner for support. A gendered wage gap still prevails for women in all occupational sectors. The majority of women remain clustered in just five occupations: clerical, teaching, nursing or other health-related occupations, and sales or service. Sexual harassment and institutional racism keep women marginalized, vulnerable, and literally shut out of certain graduate schools and workplaces. Even though women comprise 45 percent of the labour force, only 30 percent of women are unionized.

Lynn and Todoroff outline four current family forms: dual-earner, single-parent families, common-law marriages, and lesbian families. In a careful and precise manner, the authors touch on what they consider to be central issues for each of these family types. In dual-earner families, affordable day care, the division of household labour, and time spent on child care are contentious issues. Single-parent families, one of the fastest-growing types in Canada, face problems of poverty as women's wages and gendered labour force patterns mean their take-home pay is less than men's. Lesbian families face homophobic reactions to their living arrangements by neighbours, school officials, and children's friends. They fear losing custody of their children. The chapter ends with a quick look at extended families and kinship systems. Kinship has increasingly been "feminized" as women, acting on an ethic of care, uplift and strengthen entire communities (Collins 1990).

Feminist analysis of schooling has raised questions about the ways in which traditional beliefs about women and men have been used as inappropriate and inequitable sorting and streaming mechanisms. In a sweeping and comprehensive overview, *Cecilia Reynolds, in "The Education System,"* assesses the cumulative effect of the structure and practices of schooling on the life chances of females. Her conclusions are daunting. Rather than consistently acting as instruments of promotion, too often schools reproduce sexist practices commonly found in the larger society.

Rather than diminishing gender differences, schools construct experiences for males and females that facilitate differential outcomes. Clearly, as Reynolds suggests, some kind of "gender tracking" (Mandell and Crysdale 1993) appears to be at work in which extensive gender segregation of domestic labour, schooling, and workplaces means that women and men live, work, and study in different areas. High school streaming leads young men and women into different types of job experiences and/or postsecondary education.