A bridge across the gender gap: The role of men in feminist discourse

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A BRIDGE ACROSS THE GENDER GAP:
THE ROLE OF MEN IN FEMINIST DISCOURSE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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ABSTRACT

The ongoing discourse about meanings and impacts of feminism is a dynamic process of ideas influencing ideas. The process directs the course of the development of feminist theory. Most of the discourse is directed at women by women, but many men have also contributed to the dialectic. This study is an examination of those contributions by men as well as an attempt to understand the impact they may have on the women's movement.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In April of 1995 the president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Patricia Ireland, debated feminist issues with Jim Peterson, a senior editor for Playboy Magazine, on the campus of University of Nevada, Las Vegas\(^1\). When the floor opened for questions or comments, one young white male addressed Ireland and the audience saying that the demands and expectations of feminists were unreasonable and that any system, such as Affirmative Action, that gave women or minorities or anyone preference over someone else, including white males, was unfair. Many men (and a few women) in the audience cheered and applauded. But one young woman shouted out, "Yeah, that's right. It's unfair. How does it feel? Try it for a few hundred years, then talk to me!" This exchange illustrates the emotional reactions of many men to the goals and philosophies of feminism, and the response of many feminists to angry, white men.

\(^1\) The debate took place in the Moyer Student Union ballroom and was sponsored by several on-campus organizations and the Nevada NOW chapter.
White males frequently feel frustrated and defensive with all the various groups who are currently attacking their central position in society, undermining their power, taking away their jobs, and blaming centuries of racism and sexism and other such isms on them. The generic white male has in many cases become the politically correct scapegoat for all the world's environmental, economic, and social problems.

Yet men are not the cause of all the world's problems. In fact, in many cases men are as much victims as women of a system which dictates what individuals may or may not do, determines how they should act, and which controls many aspects of their personal and public lives. White men are certainly a privileged class, but they are also products of the system which educates individuals and directs their worldviews. Men have the power and preference of the system, but that system also tells them that they must be strong, independent, logical, good providers, at the same time denying them the freedom to be self-revealing, nurturing, sensitive, and emotional.

Feminism may actually help men escape the confines of societal stereotypes. In 1914 Floyd Dell commented, "Feminism is going to make it possible for the first time for men to be free" (in Kimmel & Mosmiller, eds.,
Feminism has served as the impetus for a men's movement that encourages men to overcome some of the social barriers that inhibit their self-expression. These barriers have taken a different form for men than for women, as their oppression has no defined oppressor, yet it still exists in the social requirement to "be a man" and behave according to some predetermined male stereotype. When Jensen (1994) undertook to learn about feminism, he discovered that it "critiques power in a way that can help men understand their own lives and open their eyes to the workings of other types of oppression" (p. 170).

Yet the fact that men are also victims of the system, and that there is no conscious, intentional plan to keep women and minorities subjugated does not absolve men of responsibility. For men to remain oblivious of their privileged status and its impact on others is a blithe disregard of the rights of others. If men to do nothing and either accept or defend the current situation, they are essentially choosing to accept and be part of an oppressive system. In order to overcome the system, men need to become informed and aware of others' experiences and how the current systems and institutions reinforce social inequities.
It is not easy for men to accept the responsibility to become informed and to reassess their positions in society. "Anti-sexist politics for men is difficult at a personal level," explained Connell (1994) in his analysis of men and the women's movement, "[f]eminism (especially feminism concerned with violence) often reads to men as an accusation" (p. 72). Yet feminism does not constitute a criticism of men so much as a criticism of a system that creates expectations and rigid roles for both men and women. Just as women must learn to be feminists and learn to recognize that the restrictive stereotypes that they have been raised to believe are not truth, men have the even more difficult challenge of learning to be feminists, which means learning to recognize all those same things and also be willing to give up the power and privilege the current system naturally affords them. Men are the focus of feminism. They are the oppressors, whether intentionally or not, and it is up to them to assume the difficult task of accepting that reality. Heath (1987) commented:

To refuse the confrontation, to ignore, repress, forget, slide over, project onto "other men" that fact, is for a man to refuse feminism, not to listen to what it says to him as a man, imagining to his satisfaction a possible relation instead of
the difficult, contradictory, self-critical, painful, impossible one that men must, for now, really live (p. 2).

The objective of feminism is to change the way the social system oppresses women. And change is often scary. The transformation feminists expect is especially frightening for men because it asks them to recognize and relinquish their position of power and preference. Men are confronted with the reality of having women, at least half the human population, insist that they move over and share their political and economic privileges. At the same time men are being forced to reconsider their interactions with women, and try to redefine their roles and responsibilities. Feminism asks men to think, speak, act and relate to women differently than they may have been accustomed to doing. Should they open the door for a woman, or let her open it for herself? Should they admire her appearance or will they be accused of harassment? Should they treat her differently or just like one of the guys? This is difficult time, when roles are unstable and uncertainty complicates every move.

In the minds of many people, feminism also has a bad connotation, "conjuring up images of militant, man-hating women in combat boots" (Foss, 1992, p. 151). Feminists have been portrayed as a small faction of bra-
burning radicals or lesbian separatists by the media, and “[f]eminism has been the object of derisive humor and angry vilification” (Kimmel & Mosmiller, 1992, p. 2). Many people, both male and female, who support the ideals of equality and fair treatment of women would deny being feminists or having any alignment with that group because of the negative images.

In addition to the negative connotations of feminism, there is a perception by many men that in order for women to achieve equality in the workplace, in government, and in society, that they, the men, must give up some of their control and authority. What they don’t realize is that power does not exist in finite quantities so that if women get more, they will necessarily have less. True power comes from within, and it grows by being shared and nurtured. It is not demonstrated by power over someone, but derives from strength of conviction, courage to do what is right, and compassion to help others along the way. To empower women does not mean men must be emasculated.

**History of The Women’s Movement**

Questions and debates about women’s abilities, their roles and positions in society, and their inherent
characteristics have been going on for centuries. One man who studied the origins of women’s oppression found that “Gender difference originated when we began to imagine ourselves as human. It developed as we did; and it extended its reach into the period we call modern” (Wolfe, 1994, p. 27). The role of women has been preserved and dictated through traditions, laws, and religions. For instance, in the Bible, Paul’s injunction is to, “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” (1 Corinthians, 14:34-35). Nor is it only in Western culture that such attitudes about women’s position prevail. Traditions, laws, religions in most cultures dictate submissive roles for women, such as the Hindu tradition of sati2 where a widow is expected to throw herself onto her husband’s funeral pyre. No such response was ever expected of widowers.

Attitudes about women and their abilities are ingrained in other aspects of culture as well. In Western society women’s roles are cemented in early philosophy and epistemology. In his defense of

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2Also sometimes spelled in English “suttee” or “sutee."
Aristotle's evaluations of the role of women, Arnhart (1994) admits that Aristotle determined women to be inferior to men because they begin life as "mutilated males," they "never develop morally or intellectually beyond the level of children," and "lack the requisite moral and intellectual virtues" to be citizens (p. 392). Even Charles Darwin proposed that women were incapable of attaining male standards of intellect or performance because, biologically "the average mental power in a man must be above that of a woman" (in Arnhart, 1994, p. 397).

Such estimations of the nature of women have dictated social, political, and personal interactions for centuries. In the United States women were not permitted to vote in national elections or hold office until 1919. Any property women owned automatically reverted to her husband upon marriage, and women had little or no say in how men determined they should live or behave (Herttell, 1839). In 1775, two months before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Abigail Adams warned her husband John that if women were not given more say in the politics of the new nation that "we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice, or representation" (Kimmel & Mosmiller, 1992, p.
1). Her prediction proved true even though it was nearly a hundred and fifty years before the federal government acknowledged a woman’s right to participate in the process of creating those laws to which she was expected to adhere.

Yet even with access to political influence, women recognized that they were still disadvantaged politically, as well as economically and socially. In 1923, almost immediately after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, women and some men who had been involved in women’s suffrage began to organize a movement to pass an equal rights amendment. Such an amendment was introduced to Congress that year, but did not pass (Steiner, 1985).

Attitudes, laws, and societal norms have conspired to keep women in positions of inferiority to men. As recently as 1961 the Supreme Court reaffirmed a 1874 ruling that the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment did not apply to women, that the amendment "prohibits any arbitrary class legislations, except that based on sex" (Campbell, 1973, p. 76) (italics mine). Following the Second World War, as more women began working in positions outside the home, and became more independent and better educated, they began to recognize the extent of their oppression. Women began
more and more to question assumptions about their roles, abilities, and worth.

The modern women's liberation movement began in the tumultuous sixties when many different social movements either began or gained new support and vigor. Along with the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, the student movement, the environmental movement, and the hippie movement, the women's movement has confronted the social order and challenged previously undisputed assumptions. In speeches and articles, in various public and private forums, women, and men, continue to question accepted beliefs about women's roles and abilities.

One impetus for the modern women's liberation movement was the publication of Betty Friedan's (1963) *Feminine Mystique*. The book addressed middle-class American women and made them aware that the vague dissatisfaction and sense of personal ambiguity they felt was neither unique nor personal. The feeling was something most women experienced, and was the result of the constraints and limitations imposed on women by stereotyping and societal mores. Friedan explained that women's dissatisfaction with their lives was not due to their ineptitude or unwillingness to accept their roles and be content as hommakers, wives, and mothers. Rather their frustration was due to the inappropriateness of
the roles to which women were assigned, that it was a common complaint among women all over the world, and it was the roles, not the women themselves, that were to blame. What had seemed a personal problem was actually a political constraint.

In the three decades since the modern women's liberation movement began it has diversified into many forms and approaches. These newer feminist ideologies deal with various aspects of women's experiences and often are based on beliefs or objectives which are contradictory or inconsistent with some other feminist concepts. Although various researchers have applied different names to the various types of feminism, there are some labels that seem relatively standard through much of the literature. To most writers, "traditional feminism" deals with such issues as pay and job equity, child care, and personal independence. "Marxist feminism" interprets the role of women in the economic system as exploitation of a social class, and considers the unpaid labor of women as a major form of oppression in capitalistic systems. "Cultural feminists" are concerned with the status of women within the social structure and with women's essential nature more than their positions in the legal or political system. There are "radical feminists," some of whom preach a
separatist strategy for forcing social change, and “ecofeminists” who maintain that the oppression of women and the destruction of the environment are products of the same patriarchal practices and ideologies of conquest and control. In addition to these mainly white, middle-class, American feminist groups there are black feminism, Hispanic feminism, multi-cultural feminism, and third world feminism (Tuttle, 1986; Humm, 1990; Bate, 1992). With all these different perspectives, often with opposing definitions about the sources of and solutions to the oppression of women, and how women and societies are affected, debates and discussions flourish. Although most of the discourse is produced by women and aimed toward women, there are many men who have contributed to the evolution of current feminist ideas and theories. Those contributions by men form the basis of this study.

**History of Men in Feminism**

Throughout the history of the United States there have been men who have accepted the challenge of understanding women’s oppression and have taken action to try to change the institutions that promoted it. Men have supported and spoken out for women’s rights, and
contributed much to the dialectic and rhetoric that have evolved as feminist theory. Thousands of those letters, speeches, articles, poems and excerpts by men, covering the period from the earliest days of the United States to the present, were gathered by Kimmel and Mosmiller (1992). They compiled 135 of the most representative of these documents into a history of men’s contributions to women’s struggles in U.S. history. Many of the contributions they included were by famous individuals, such as Thomas Paine who wrote in 1775, “If we take a survey of ages and of countries, we shall find the women, almost—without exception at all times and in all places, adored and oppressed” (p. 63). In 1848 Frederic Douglass wrote, “This cause is not altogether and exclusively woman’s cause. It is the cause of human brotherhood as well as human sisterhood, and both must rise and fall together. Woman cannot be elevated without elevating man, and man cannot be depressed without depressing woman also” (p. xxxi).

These men wrote or lectured for women’s rights to hold property, vote, and be self-directing. They spoke out and marched with women in the suffragist movement, and they helped pass the laws that eventually provided women with political equity. Since the passage of voting rights for women, some men have continued to support
women in their efforts to gain equality in the workplace, recognition in academics, influence in politics, political representation, reproductive freedom, and changes in social attitudes and stereotypes about women— who they are and what they are capable of being.

The history of men in feminism is as long as is feminism itself. In the United States today feminism is manifest in almost every area of endeavor, and men may be found teaching feminist courses and speaking or writing on feminist issues. Current discourse on feminist topics is carried on mainly in academic journals, though popular magazines and national newspapers sometimes also provide a forum for debates. Most of the writers are feminist women, but some men have taken the time and interest to become informed and discuss these diverse issues via the print media. Their ideas present an intriguing part of the women's movement which deserves to be recognized and studied.

Purpose

All people face some obstacles in reaching their full potential for happiness and self-actualization. In order to tear down those barriers which are constructed
by societal stereotypes, individuals need to understand each others’ true abilities and limitations. Women need to make the effort to understand men and how social stereotypes limit them. Yet because women have had a subordinate role thrust upon them, and have been oppressed and victimized by the system, it is especially important for men to understand the issues and concerns of women. This study is an attempt at acknowledging men’s understanding of and contributions to feminist discourse. It may encourage more men make the effort to understand what feminism is all about and to recognize the extent and the personal and social expense of the subjugation of women. Such recognition may, as Jensen (1994) hoped, “make the pitch to men that they would benefit from actively engaging feminist theory” (p. 170).

In addition, this study proposes that it is important to determine what role men play in feminist discourse. Has the support of these men helped the movement or hindered it? Has it added some degree of validity or visibility, or detracted from the viability of the women’s movement? Although many men have contributed their time, effort, and rhetoric to the struggle for women’s equality, just what effect these contributions have had on the women’s movement is not
always clear. Many women are wary of men who profess to support feminism and are suspicious of their motives. "An academic man teaching a feminist course, for instance, may be seen as taking resources away from women, and asserting men's cultural rights over all areas of knowledge..." (Connell, 1993, p. 73).

Women may also question whether men can ever truly be feminists because they have not felt the oppression, have not experienced deep in their souls and psyches the feeling of being objects, or of existing as adjuncts or sexual commodities for others. In one criticism of men in feminism, Jardine (1987) wrote about feminism's male allies that, although what they say is not incorrect, "It is almost as if they have learned a new vocabulary perfectly, but have not paid enough attention to syntax or intonation. When they write of us – always of us – their bodies would seem to know nothing of the new language they've learned..." (p.56). Heath (1987) also noted the difficulties men have in understanding or supporting feminism, because "no matter how 'sincere,' 'sympathetic' or whatever, we are always also in a male position which brings with it all the implications of domination and appropriation, everything precisely that is being challenged, that has to be altered" (p. 1).
Yet, perhaps in spite of the difficulties, men can understand, and become involved enough to do more than merely not be anti-feminist. Because people are human they can imagine how others feel by imagining ourselves into their positions. Even if oppression is not a “lived experience,” imagination can help people experience some of the realities of another. As Shacochis (1995) said during a “Writing Across Cultures” symposium at UNLV “Being a white male, they say, I cannot ever understand the experience of a female, especially a black female,” But, he continued, “the only way I could possibly establish empathy with a black female [...] is to try, in good faith, to imagine my way into her life” (p. 15). Therefore this analysis will attempt to determine whether the men who have contributed to feminist discourse have furthered the aims of feminism.

Therefore this study of men’s contributions serves two purposes: to recognize the commitment of those men who have taken the time to become informed and involved, and to understand the impact of their participation. Men have seen that societal stereotypes create impediments for both women and men to achieving personal freedom and true opportunities for achievement. Their efforts in understanding feminism and the effects of their contributions must be considered so that in the future
men will continue to support feminism, yet will also recognize the possible implications of their support.

**Method**

What constitutes a contribution to a dialectic about any issue is rather subjective. For the purposes of this study, a contribution to feminist discourse is any comment on feminist issues or concerns, whether positive or negative, which demonstrates that the author is informed about the issues and which offers some unique insight or perspective. Because most of the current feminist discourse is written by women, it is difficult initially to locate articles or books by men about feminism or feminist theories. Even perusing feminist journals doesn't help because merely looking at an author's name does not always insure the author's gender. Some women may select male-sounding pen names, just as some men may adopt a feminine pen name.

One solution to determining the gender of authors is to rely on the personal knowledge of individuals working in academia and of the editors of feminist literature. Letters to Women's Studies programs, feminist journal editors, and on-line requests on
feminist forums resulted in a diverse and relatively thorough, though by no means complete, listing of men who are writing on feminist issues and the articles or books they have written. Each referenced publication often further provided a bibliography which led to more writings that were self-defined as being authored by a man.

Three books in particular proved useful in discovering men's contributions to feminist discourse: *Men in Feminism* by Jardine and Smith, eds. (1987), *Against the Tide* by Kimmel and Mosmiller, eds. (1992), and *Rethinking Masculinity* by May and Strikwerda, eds. (1992). These books not only contained sections written by men, they also often referenced other articles or books authored by men. In addition to these books, a few journal articles proved valuable specifically to understanding how men view and respond to feminism. Most helpful among these were Connell's (1993) *Men and the Women's Movement*, Kimmel's (1995) *Men Supporting Women*, and Maltz's (1995) *Gender Discrimination and the Original Understanding*. The remainder of the articles by men examined in this study focus not on feminism itself or men's responses to it, but rather on other issues which affect women, or which may be viewed through a feminist perspective.
Categorizing these writings proved less time-consuming, but more open to dispute. Feminist theorists have developed many definitions and classifications of feminisms and have written at length about the affects and meanings of these in all areas of social interaction. Such diversity makes the issues seem extremely complex, and because many of the differences are on a continuum rather than being distinct, it is extremely difficult to separate them into definable categories. The focus of feminist scholarship frequently overlaps as topics cross boundaries between types of feminism and the areas they address.

Nearly all the feminist literature concerns at least one of three main aspects of life, however: the political, the economic, and the social. These also represent the main stages in the development of the women's liberation movement (Bate, 1992). The first issue to become a major public concern was women's suffrage and women's access to the legal system. Following the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, feminists began to argue for equal pay and fair access to opportunities. Finally, as strides began to be made in the workplace, and in legislation affecting women's economic condition, feminists expanded their focus into issues of social attitudes and stereotypes. This pattern
of development was not in distinct stages, certainly, as each issue has been a concern from the beginning, but they constitute the progression of how the movement developed in the public consciousness and in legislation. Because most feminist discourse falls primarily into at least one of these three areas, regardless of its overlap into other areas or the "type" of feminism involved. Based on the title of an article, type of journal in which it was located, and the description in the abstract, these will compromise the three broad classifications for the purposes of this analysis.

Finally, there are many different approaches possible for analyzing discourse. A rhetorical study may consist of a content analysis or may focus on some particular aspect of the communication such as the speaker or the audience. However, to determine what has been the role of men's contributions requires more than merely reviewing or scrutinizing the rhetoric itself or some isolated aspect of it. Discourse in a social movement such as the women's movement is a dynamic process with many factors affecting its course, including what is said, when and where, and by whom. Thus an examination of men's influence on feminism as part of that dynamic social process provides the best
lens through which to interpret just how men’s contributions influence feminist discourse.

Men’s responses to the women’s movement have been much like the responses of any established system of power to any social movement. Generally an establishment’s response is aimed at preserving the status quo. Responses or actions by the established powers in society may or may not be planned for achieving a specific result, and sometimes may have unintended effects. Although the contributions by men contained in this study may seem to be aimed at furthering the dialog of feminism, it may, in fact, have other, unintended impacts. Thus interpreting men’s contributions from the perspective of their effects on the women’s movement will help determine the role of their discourse.
CHAPTER 2

MEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO FEMINIST DISCOURSE

In the process of reading, analyzing, and classifying what men have written about feminism, a picture emerged of men who have made a serious commitment to understanding the issues and applying that understanding to their many areas of expertise. Many of these men are academics in various fields, including sociology, philosophy, communication, political science, or even in physical sciences and mathematics. Others are journalists or business professionals who have taken the time and thought to include the concerns of women in their analyses. All of them bring new insights and ideas into the realm of feminist theory.

The first classification of men’s contributions, political feminism, includes studies and comments by men who have recognized how the political system has developed according to male values and men’s concerns. It includes discussions of men’s participation in the women’s suffrage movement and later their support of an Equal Rights Amendment. This chapter contains a section
on how women have influenced party politics, and another section on what is meant by feminist legal theory. Issues of how women are treated differently than men by the legal system, and legal issues concerned with pornography and violence against women constitute the remainder of the section on political feminism.

The section following political feminism is concerned with economic feminism. This part deals with considerations of women’s property rights, earning power and access to various positions, the impact of women on economics, and the economics of marriage. The first writings examined in this portion focus on how women’s roles in the workplace have been stereotyped so as to limit their access to higher paying and more challenging positions. The next section discusses how economic systems impact women, followed by an analysis of how feminism may influence economic systems and business practices.

The final portion of the analysis of men’s contributions to feminist theory covers three main areas of social feminism: essentialism, academics and education, and communication. Each of these parts discuss stereotyping and gender bias in social systems. Essentialism deals with the ongoing debate among feminists, sociologists, psychologists and others, on
whether women and men have inherent differences in the way they think, feel, and act, or whether these differences are due to their socialization.

The section on academics and education covers issues of women’s access to education, and how the educational system reinforces stereotypes. These stereotypes disadvantage women in certain fields of endeavor, both academic and professional. This part also examines feminist pedagogy and alternative ways of gaining knowledge.

The communication portion of the paper analyzes issues of language, women in the media, and considerations of interpersonal communication. It discusses men’s contributions to understanding how language affects and creates human perception of reality, and examines how the media creates concepts of reality that reinforce gender stereotypes. It also covers issues of men’s interpersonal relations with women, and how those relations are influenced by the stereotypes people learn from the time they are young children. All of the section on social feminism includes articles by men on the ways human communication serves to generate or intensify the gender biases built into human social systems.
Political Feminism

The role of men in the politics of feminism is perhaps the most visible aspect of men's participation in feminist discourse. In the United States men have participated in feminism from the time the nation was being established, through the suffragist movement, and into the current era. In July of 1848, nearly three hundred women, plus forty men, gathered at a chapel in Seneca Falls, New York, at what was labeled the first Woman's Rights Convention. This was the first major gathering in the United States aimed at transforming women's positions where women demanded reforms that would provide them with some personal autonomy as well as access to the political system. It took over seventy years for women to gain that political access, and the process continues today.

The political system constitutes perhaps the most important avenue for women to gain equality. Through the political system laws and policies are inacted that force social change. Although women still do not have equal representation in Congress, and there has not yet been a female president or vice president, they have
made some great inroads into that bastion of male dominance. Men's efforts have played a vital role in assuring women's entry into the political arena. This section examines some of those early efforts by men, as well as some current issues and concerns which men have debated about feminism and politics.

It has been assumed by many researchers and historians that, prior to suffrage, most women in the United States were not interested or involved in politics. However, a study by Zboray & Zboray (1996) demonstrated through an analysis of women's personal correspondence and diaries of the mid-1800s that they were not only interested and informed, but quite active in considering and speaking about the politics of the day. Yet women were systematically denied public access to politics and political power, with various sorts of arguments about women's nature, abilities, and roles presented as justification for that restriction. In his analysis of Constitutional definitions in regard to gender equality, Maltz (1995) found that the framers had no intention of extending definitions of equality to include women. He determined that they specifically addressed issues of gender in a number of contexts, indicating that "gender-based classifications would be subject to less constitutional scrutiny than many other
continued to be enforced through various Constitutional interpretations and challenges. In 1835, Congressional Representative William Lawrence asserted that "distinctions created by nature of sex ... are recognized as modifying conditions and privileges" that generally are afforded as being part of the rights of citizenship (quoted in Maltz, 1995, p. 416). Such legal restrictions extended not only into women's participation in politics, but in the legal profession and public service positions as well. In 1873, Supreme Court Justice Joseph Bradley determined that civil law, nature and the Creator were in agreement that women's sphere was the domestic and that "The paramount destiny and missions of woman are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator ..." (quoted in Maltz, 1995, p. 417).

Although generally defined as dealing with governance and public affairs, politics also refers to laws, how they are implemented, and the assumptions underlying them. There are many areas of the legal system where men have illuminated how women and their concerns are silenced or ignored, including in criminal sentencing, definitions of sexual harassment and rape, child custody and support, and whether the legal definition of a "reasonable man" is the same as a
"reasonable woman" (Zaitchik & Mosher, 1993; Dilworth, 1995; Schulhofer, 1995). Most of these examinations demonstrate how laws and the legal system are designed by men, while women must obey them. Men continue to work together with women to change that situation.

Early writings by men on feminism focused mostly on the politics of women's suffrage. During the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century there were men who supported the goal of women's rights to participate in the political system and to have a voice in determining the laws of the land to which they were expected to adhere. Some of the great male writers and lecturers of that time did much to influence public opinion and the course of women's suffrage, in spite of the fact that they were frequently criticized, jeered, or belittled. Reformers and abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and attorney Wendell Phillips; clergymen such as Parker Pillbury, William Channing, and Henry Ward Beecher; writers and journalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Stephen Foster, and Finley Peter Dunne; and politicians like Wyoming Governor John W. Hoyt, Congressman Gerrit Smith, and Wisconsin Attorney General Enterprise Estabrook, plus others too numerous to list, were tremendously influential in the development of a public consciousness about women’s
rights. They were instrumental in the eventual passage, in 1919, of the Nineteenth Amendment which gave women with the right to vote in national elections³.

Following the passage of women's suffrage, feminist politics began to focus on the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). In his study of the history and course of a proposed Equal Rights Amendment, Steiner (1985) found that such an amendment was introduced into Congress in 1923, but failed to win sufficient support. One impediment to the passage of such an amendment was the perception by some women in labor unions that an unqualified equal rights amendment would eliminate any chance of special or compensatory protections for a presumably weaker sex. In 1950 a resolution with a protection proviso passed the Senate, but failed to win in the House of Representatives. A constitutional amendment passed the House in 1971 and the Senate in 1972, yet failed to be ratified the requisite thirty-eight states to become a part of the U.S. Constitution. By 1982, in spite of a time extension granted by Congress to enable its passage, the Equal Rights Amendment became the first proposed amendment since the Civil War to die in limbo after Congressional passage. Some supporters were angry and frustrated at the defeat,

³ Some states, notably Wyoming, permitted women to vote in state elections prior to passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.
feeling that opponents used lies and distortions to misrepresent the intentions and effects of the amendment. Others, such as Senator George Mitchell of Maine, took it philosophically saying “[i]t took three generations for women to win the basic, fundamental, democratic right to vote. Perhaps it will take another three generations for women to obtain equal protection under the supreme law of our land” (in Steiner, 1985, p. 5).

An equal rights amendment may never become law, but it won’t be because men have refused to support it. Norman Lear, Henry Winkler, and Phil Donahue have used their public renown and recognition to gain support of such an amendment. Howard Cossell, who practiced law for ten years before becoming a well-known sports commentator, remarked that the reason many states had not ratified the Amendment was due to opposition by some “[m]isguided, misled people like Phyllis Schlafly, who simply do not know what they are talking about” and that their arguments against the ERA were “prima facie, which is a term in law that more or less means ‘absurd’” (Cosell, 1975, p. 407). Alan Alda, who supported the Equal Rights Amendment, wrote “How long can we do nothing while people are shut out from their fair share of economic and political power merely because they’re
women?" (Alda, 1976, p. 412). And as recently as 1989, Representative Don Edwards said in a speech to Congress that "Women have waited long enough: the ERA needs to be incorporated into our Constitution now" (Edwards, 1989, p. 432).

Even without the ERA, feminism encounters the legal and political systems in a variety of ways. Party politics and the historical alignment of women and minorities with the Democratic Party is the focus of Sirgo's (1994) analysis of the position of women and blacks in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. In this study he notes that the oppression of women and blacks are similarly rooted in the historical belief that white males are innately superior and therefore should be in control. The concerns of women and blacks greatly influenced Roosevelt's administration, partly due to the perspectives of one very intelligent and influential woman, Eleanor Roosevelt who "inaugurated her social and political activism in women's organizations and on behalf of women" (Sirgo, 1994, p. 58). Women's support of Franklin Roosevelt, Sirgo maintains, was a major key to his political success and the success of the Democratic Party in the early twentieth century.

That historical alignment of women with the Democratic Party continues today, as Dunham (1994)
demonstrated in his assessment of the problems that the Republican Party has in attracting women voters. In the 1994 elections, over 54% of men voted Republican, compared with about 46% of women. One reason he claims for this discrepancy is the difference in what women perceive is "the role of government in such issues as abortion, civil rights, social welfare, crime, education, and the environment" (p. 105). Dunham found that the Democratic Party is generally seen by women and minorities as being more sensitive to their concerns.

Party politics is far from the only, or even the main, issue of women in politics. Other considerations include such things as how laws may affect women differently than men, and how feminism may influence the legal system. In a symposium on "Feminism, Sexual Distinctions, and the Law," published in the spring 1995 Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy, men discuss and attempt to interpret feminist legal theory. One of these legal theorists, Lawson (1995) attempts to define just what feminist legal theory actually is. He posed what he called the "Schlafly question" (p. 327). That question asks if Phyllis Schlafly is a feminist legal theorist. The answer seems to be an unqualified "yes" because, regardless of her stance, the definition includes any person who addresses issues of how the legal system
affects women. Thus even those theories that appear inimical to women can be considered feminist if they address how women are affected (Lawson, 1995).

The application of feminist theory to the legal system is taken a step further in Sterba's (1994) analysis of how the legal system would function if it truly incorporated feminist values. He argues that such system of law would be less rigid and more likely to consider individual circumstance, and to take a more humanistic approach to all legal questions. He suggests that a feminist justice, which includes the concept of a gender-blind or androgynous society, would also constitute the foundation of a system for international peace. He also believes that "those who oppose violence in international arenas must, in consistency, oppose violence against women as well" (p. 173). Rather than accept the masculinist disputes over when and where it is appropriate to use force in the pursuit of peace, as is often done in internal as well as international "peace-keeping," Sterba maintains that people should cultivate both their masculine and feminine sides (as they are currently defined). They should eliminate the gender stereotyping, especially the male stereotype of militarism and macho brutality which has marked the country's international and internal affairs. In
Sterba's ideal society, children would be brought up in a manner "consistent with their native capabilities" (p.177), parents would share equally in child rearing and household maintenance, men and women would be employed and paid equally, and society would not glorify brutal sports such as boxing and football. His vision is a peaceable one where men, individually and in groups, do not demonstrate their manhood by exhibitions of force.

Sterba's concepts of individual responsibility and personal freedom are extended by Hill (1993) in his analysis of women's right to choose and debates about abortion. The legal issue of abortion concerns not only definitions of when human life begins and how courts have ruled in the past, but addresses a number of feminist considerations about a woman's control over her life and body and her right to make decisions about them. As Hill discovered, these concerns include questions of freedom, equality, politics, and religion. His main point, however, concerns the difference between personal liberty and political or social liberation. He argues that the ideograph of personal liberty has been taken by many as a sort of license to do whatever one chooses, including as a rationale for slavery (as free enterprise), of women and children as property of a
male, or Reagan's laissez-faire economic policies. He maintains that women such as Madonna and Camille Paglia "have elevated the cant of free choice and individual liberty to a new plateau, issuing a challenge to the perceived 'prudery' of traditional feminists" (p. 3).

Liberation, on the other hand, refers to "a woman's civil right to economic and political equality, which unwanted pregnancies and forced motherhood infringe upon" (p. 4). Hill demonstrates how his analysis can be extended far beyond the abortion debate into areas such as pornography, pedophilia, and a woman's personal freedom to choose to be beaten, diminished, or displayed as a sexual object. In his conclusion he comments that, with this distinction made clear, feminism "will continue to be a movement of liberation, rather than a passing fad or fashion statement. Granted, some women and men will selfishly exploit the gains of feminism and achieve fame, fortune and notoriety by pandering to the libertine sensibility. But that must be recognized, named, and fought against for what it is: backlash" (p. 6).

The issue of personal freedom and the rights of women is also the focus of Jensen's (1995) study of legal issues of pornography. The main legal question has been whether pornography is or should be protected by
the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of expression. Jensen explains that the question is not about impinging on the freedoms of the pornographers and their clients, but about balancing those freedoms against another freedom, which he calls "the expressive freedoms of women" (p. 2). He defines the assault on these freedoms by describing three forms of harm to women from pornography: "(1) the harm to women in the production of pornography; (2) the harm to women who are sexually assaulted by men who use pornography; and (3) the harm to all women living in a culture in which pornography reinforces and sexualizes women's subordinate status" (p. 3).

It is the last category where he argues women have their expressive freedom curtailed by pornography. He explains how "the speech of one group (pornographers) effectively silences another (women)" (p. 11).

There are many places where our legal system silences women or ignore their experiences. Even the methods of gathering information may sometimes stifle women's participation, as Smith (1994) discovered in his research on survey data on violence against women. A major problem with cases of violence is that women often fail to report cases because they are embarrassed, or the fact that the abuser is an intimate, or because they
fear retribution. Women may also suppress particularly frightening events, or they may forget minor incidents that occurred long ago. This underreporting is further complicated by some researchers’ narrow definitions of what constitutes violence and abuse. The consequences of such underreporting can be tremendous, for “without a reasonably accurate measure of victimization, an entire survey is put in jeopardy, for one cannot know if those women who disclosed having been abused are representative of all victims in the sample” (p. 110).

There are also implications for social policy, because “the greater the degree of underreporting, the lower the estimates of abuse, and the lower the probability of mobilizing resources to combat the problem” (p. 110).

Smith discovered that the way survey questions are asked is one element that will dictate the rate of response. For an example, he cites a 1982 British survey which determined that less than two percent of women had been victims of actual or threatened crime “(robbery, wounding, assault, indecent assault, rape)”. One year later a feminist researcher found that almost all the women in the same area had “experienced some sort of male violence during the preceding 12 months” (p. 111).

Smith provides six strategies to gathering survey data on violence against women, all of which incorporate
feminist approaches such as asking open-ended questions, assuring anonymity, and making sure the subject understands the questions and what constitutes criminal abuse. He concludes that acquiring good data requires “adopting a feminist approach to data gathering within a conventional survey research framework” (p. 124). Only then, he maintains, will the variety and extent of violence against women be recognized as the serious problem that it is.

The fact that women’s definitions of harassment or abuse may not match those of the legal system is also of concern in the selection of juries for the trials of such cases. In Chemerinsky’s (1995) analysis of the role gender plays in the make-up of juries he explains that men and women perceive guilt, responsibility, morality, and justice differently, especially in cases of rape or sexual harassment. When attorneys exercise their peremptory challenges for jury selection, they frequently consider those real and presumed differences in women’s perceptions. Chemerinsky explored numerous Supreme Court rulings regarding gender-based peremptory challenges. The solution he recommends is to eliminate peremptory challenges altogether, partly because it is impossible for people to overlook gender. He comments: “From the moment we are born, gender matters in
countless ways. It affects the names we are given, the friends we have, and the way others treat us. [...] In a society where gender matters so much, does it make sense to say that in jury selection gender shouldn't matter?" (p. 35).

Gender matters also in some definitions of legal standards, such as the "reasonable man" or "reasonable person" standard as they apply to cases of harassment and abuse of women. In the past few years many courts have been applying the "reasonable woman" standard. Leo (1991) disparages the reasonable woman standard and calls for a sex-blind reasonable person standard. He explains his position, "if the stereotypes of society (i.e., males and females alike) are the problem, why not exclude stereotyped views instead of sensible male views?" (p. 30). However, Ruthenglen (1995) supports the reasonable woman standard, commenting that "[a] neutral standard, paradoxically, does not even fulfill the aim of neutral treatment of men and women. To refer to a victim of sexual harassment as a person, while not technically inaccurate, ignores the very reason why that victim faced harassment" (p. 496). He goes on to explain that empirical research has shown that there are tremendous differences in the reactions of men and women to harassment, and that the "framers of the law of
sexual harassment are not the feminist, leftist liberals of conservative myth" (p. 487). He concludes that the law “need not be another battleground between the sexes” and that what is really needed is “some attention to what the law is and what the facts are” (p. 499).

Gender is clearly an important consideration in the legal system. All of the men in this section have supplied some new perspective or interpretation of exactly how gender matters. They have addressed feminism and women’s association with laws, how those laws are enforced, and how they are interpreted. It may well be that the current legal/political system and the goals and ideals of feminism are truly incompatible. Certainly these men have shown that the legal system is not always egalitarian when it comes to questions involving gender. Although historical legal restrictions on women have mostly been overthrown, the ideas and objectives of power and control which created them still exist, and the system is far from providing “justice for all.”
CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC FEMINISM

Feminism and economics is a particularly tough issue for many men because economic autonomy means power in both the public and private spheres. Historically men have controlled all decisions affecting property and finances, regardless of the source of the property (Kimmel & Mosmiller, 1992). Perhaps men have feared that if women had their own financial independence they would also have personal and emotional independence, or perhaps they feared that women might have superior skills in managing money. Women's increasing involvement in the economic realm constitutes a tremendous shift in power, and many men feel threatened by that shift. Yet other men have been and continue to be instrumental in facilitating women's economic independence, and equal recognition and compensation for their work. The work that women do both in the job market and in the unpaid domestic labor of the home have tremendous impacts on the economy of the nation and the world. The following section examines a wide range of men's perspectives and ideas on the issues and concerns of women and economics.
Property ownership has historically been a measure of individual worth and was also used to create class distinctions. In most societies a family's property passes through the male line, although there have been a few cultures, such as the Lakota Sioux and Navajo, where it was the women who owned property and passed it to their daughters. In many countries women still are not allowed to own property, and until 1880 in the United States a woman's property became her husband's upon marriage and she had no legal say in how it was used. Although these historical restrictions on women's economic independence has improved, women are still disadvantaged by the economic system. International Labor statistics show that women, who constitute at least fifty percent of the world's population, do sixty-five percent of the world's work, get less than ten percent of all wages paid, and own less than one percent of all property (Salleh, 1992). There are no legal barriers in the United States today to women acquiring or owning property, training for any type of career, or holding any particular position in the workplace, still only 5% of the CEO's in the Fortune 500 companies are women, and while male executives earn an average of $60,000 annually, female executives earn about half as much. It has also been demonstrated that salary
differentials are greater between men and women than between blacks and whites (Facts of File, 1995). Women are head-of-household in most homes with below-poverty level income. According to 1989 figures, men’s earnings were 143 percent of women’s, and if part-time workers and welfare recipients are included, men earned 195 percent what women did (Connell, 1993).

Part of the problem with women’s access to economic equality is the stereotyping of women’s abilities and needs in the workplace. Women’s income has often been perceived as supplementary, and their work often viewed as not as valuable or requiring as much skill or commitment as men’s work. In the early 20th century, along with social roles and assumptions, the Depression of the 1930s left women at a disadvantage in getting any job. During this period, 26 states had laws prohibiting married women from having a job that a man might do (Douglas, 1994, p. 45). Then came World War II when the wartime propaganda encouraged women to be like Rosie the Riveter and take on those jobs in manufacturing and industry for the machines and equipment of the war effort (which ironically would eventually kill or maim many of their fathers, husbands, brothers, lovers, and sons). Following the end of the war, with so many returning vets, women were encouraged to leave their
jobs to make way for the men-4 million women were fired (Douglas, 1994, p. 47).

Today women constitute nearly half of the workforce in the United States (Facts on File, 1995). One of the effects of the entrance of women into the workforce is that it reduces their dependence on men. As Astrachan (1986) summarized in his analysis of the development of women’s economic independence, “Women who worked for pay, even in low-paying pink-collar and other stereotyped jobs, had less need for men as suppliers of the money and status...” (p. 266).

Those low-paying pink-collar jobs such as clerical, sales, and care-giving, however, are the only fields in which many women today are able to find employment, and women often have a hard time breaking into traditionally male fields. The reasons the traditionally male positions and fields are tough for women to enter are many, including educational opportunities, internal corporate cultures, social attitudes, and lack of government diligence in enforcing equal-opportunity regulations (Facts on file, p. 229).

One area where women have historically met with barriers and restrictions of stereotyping is in the traditionally male area of science. Science has historically been considered masculine because both
masculinity and science have been associated with objectivity, logic, and autonomy. For example, Clayton (1995) wrote about women in the field of astronomy and admitted that white men are angry when they perceive that hard-to-come-by positions in astronomy are filled more often by hiring quotas than because a candidate is most qualified. Astronomers are predominantly white and male and women are only now beginning to be hired in that field in any numbers. Clayton comments that without affirmative action the trend toward including women and minorities would be much slower if it happened at all. He writes, "affirmative action barely hurts the majority, and greatly benefits the minority" (p. 33). His conclusion is that including women in traditionally male fields may not only improve the economic status of women, but may serve to introduce different perspectives and ways of doing things into those fields.

Sonnert (1995) found that the barriers to women in fields of physical science and math extend beyond inequities in high school and college education and early career opportunities. "Among the younger women in the physical sciences, mathematics, and engineering, for example, the average academic status was almost one full rank below the men's" (p. 54). He interviewed many women who had careers in science, and discovered that 73
percent had experienced discriminatory treatment such as that “[c]olleagues, co-workers, and superiors didn’t talk to them as much or consult them for input. This subdued but noticeable marginalization in the social system of science made it harder for women to achieve visibility” (p. 54). His research was aimed at trying to determine what forces keep women from advancing in these fields even after they manage to break into them. He concludes that there are two major factors. One he calls a “deficit model” which “emphasizes structural obstacles—legal, political, and social—that exist (or existed earlier) within the social system of science. The other, the “difference model” focuses on “deep-rooted differences in the outlook and goals of women and men, be they innate or the result of socialization and cultural values” (p. 55). In summary he comments that one of the prescriptions to improving the position of women in science, and indeed in all fields, is to “raise men’s awareness of gender issues. Although one may suppose most male scientists today would not deliberately discriminate against women, there are many well-intentioned men who have little grasp of the more hidden and complex issues” (p. 56).

Discrimination against women occurs not only in the job market but in the economic system as well. In his
analysis of the effects of social and political policies on welfare recipients, Schram discovered that prejudice against single mothers reinforces the "feminization of poverty" (p. 56). Cultural conservatives have created a backlash against feminism by suggesting that social problems of "increased crime, unemployment, poor school performance, family deterioration, and welfare dependency" can be blamed on the "decadent" cultural ideas implied by such sitcoms as Murphy Brown. Schram suggests. He asserts that such "propagandizing of the two-parent family" is "embedded in the sexist, racist, and economically exclusionary practices of contemporary society" and it "aggressively silences attempts to articulate a family policy which could insure that all families have the resources to be able to avoid poverty" (p. 57). When these exclusionary social attitudes dictate economic policies and assistance programs, they increase the economic gap between ethnic groups and between men and women. He charted the percentage increase in below-poverty households headed by women from 1955 until 1990, commenting that such a shift was a result of attitudes and "is indeed troubling" because of the "increased risks for children" in many areas of social and educational opportunities (p. 65). Throughout his analysis he stresses how attitudes ingrained in
social and political policies reinforce the marginalization of poor women and children. "Work and family are assumptions" he concludes, they are cultural norms around which policy is structured "so as to help sustain the existing social, political, and economic arrangements" to the inevitable disadvantage of those who are situated outside the socially approved groups (p. 80).

Women are thus twice disadvantaged in national economies. First they contribute to the nation’s economic welfare by their unpaid domestic labor of homemaking and child rearing. Then they are denied respect and recognition by social attitudes and policies and denied assistance that would help them continue to be homemakers when there is no source of outside income. Even women who have jobs outside the home generally have the greater responsibility for housework and child care. Capitalistic exploitation of women’s unpaid labor is addressed in Kain’s (1993) study of the economic value and impact of women as unpaid domestic laborers, which capitalism does not include in its accounting.

Kain begins by explaining Carl Marx’s definitions of oppression and alienation. Oppression is related to domination as the unrecompensed use or abuse of another, while “alienation occurs when individuals engage in
activity that gives rise to a product, result, or institution that then escapes the control of the individuals involved" (p. 122). Thus one may be dominated and oppressed without being alienated, but if one is alienated she or he is most certainly oppressed. In the case of women's unpaid domestic labor of housework and child rearing, the work may be rewarding and satisfying when they are freely chosen. "But if they are expected of a housewife, if they are her duty, if she is coerced into doing them, if it is her role, her destiny, then they become slavish and oppressive" (p. 128). He uses this example to show how housework and child rearing may be oppressive without being alienating.

Kain goes on to explain how, in a capitalist society, oppression is intensified by the exploitation of women's domestic labor. The capitalist uses this domestic labor to maintain workers and reduce their need for increased subsistence income that they would otherwise need to pay for such service. "House work and child care, then, are necessary to produce and maintain the value of labor power. The houseworker produces use values — prepares food, sews clothing, provides shelter, and contributes to the upbringing and education of the worker or future worker" (p. 130). The impact is even
greater as capitalism draws women and children into the factory, increasing the family’s need for purchasing goods and services previously supplied by the woman, while not increasing the family’s income sufficiently to compensate for the costs of providing those goods or services.

Kain’s study continues with an assessment of the process of capitalism usurping women’s labor and creating alienation within the family. The fact that the woman “must now work both in the factory as well as in the home, produces intense alienation” (p. 131) as the fruits of her labor accrue to the owner, while the purchase of the goods and services she previously provided herself introduce alienation into the home. Thus, according to Kain, women are doubly exploited, in both the labor force and at home. A woman “has to engage in surplus labor in the factory over and above the necessary labor needed to reproduce her wage, which surplus labor the capitalist appropriates directly, which he exploits; and she also engages in necessary labor at home (necessary to the maintenance and reproduction of labor power), which she is not paid for, and which the capitalist does not appropriate directly, but which he benefits from by saving his surplus value” (p. 133). Kain concludes by demonstrating how the
process of oppression and alienation for women in a capitalist society becomes self-perpetuating.

Becker (1995) also commented on the impact of women's domestic labor on the national economy, saying that "housework is not recognized when measuring the goods and services that make up the gross domestic product [GDP]. This undervalues the contributions of women, since they are responsible for most of household production" (p. 30). He points out that even in egalitarian and modern countries such as Sweden women contribute well over half (about 70%) of the total time spent in domestic duties. He argues that this work needs to be recognized as a crucial portion of a nation's economy, not only because it would "provide a more accurate picture of GDP and growth" but would also "raise the self-respect of women and men who stay at home to care for children and do other housework" (p. 30).

Not only is the unpaid domestic labor of women an issue of economic systems generally, but is also part of the family economy in any marriage. Because men still tend to earn more outside the home than women, and because the value of domestic labor is not adequately accounted for, men usually have more power and control in the economics of marriage. In his analysis of power
in the economics of marriage, Pollak (1994) uses three models to describe the sources of the power inequities in the economics of marriage. One of these models, which he calls the “altruist model” discusses a ‘take it or leave it’ type of attitude from the altruist “(husband, father, dictator, patriarch),” (p. 148) which puts the rest of the family in a position of being supplicants. Although this situation is rapidly changing in many American families, it is not uncommon and remains the norm in many other nations. Pollack’s other models include “cooperative models” such as the “divorce-threat” model or the “separate-spheres” models which rely on a “threat point” which determines what each party has to gain by reaching agreement. For instance, in the “divorce-threat models the threat point is the utility each spouse would receive in the event of divorce” (p. 148). He also describes the less-common “non-cooperative” models which he describes as “alternating-offer” or “voluntary-contribution game.” These various models emphasize the division of surpluses of value in marriage and “presuppose that at least some marriages generate substantial surpluses whose distributions are determined by bargaining within marriage rather than by prior agreement” (p. 149). Each model attempts to explain some of the issues of power
and domination in the gendered economics of marriage. Pollack examines various criticisms of these models of distribution as they evaluate economic power relations in marriage.

The issue of power in the economics of marriage is also the focus of Astrachan's (1986) evaluation of men's response to women's demands for economic and political power. Because men still tend to earn more than women, he explained, men have more power and control in the economics of marriage. Recent changes in the area of household economics are difficult for many men because it means that they have less power over women. He commented, "some of us feel outraged because women are rejecting the gifts of the breadwinner that we labored for, and that we thought showed our love and would win their admiration" (p. 202). His analysis highlights some of the problems and misunderstandings men experience with women's demands for economic freedom.

Women are not only the objects or recipients of the effects of economic systems and practices however, for they also influence business and commerce in diverse ways. How feminist theory may influence business was the focus of Wicks, Gilbert, and Freeman's (1994) examination of the economic theory called "stakeholder concept." The stakeholder concept is a theory of
business ethics which they found to have been constructed with masculinist assumptions and language. They determined that a feminist approach better explained relational and ethical situations within corporations. They listed five masculinist ideas that guide corporate activity:

1) the notion that corporations should be thought of primarily as an “autonomous entity,” bounded off from its external environment; 2) that corporations can and should enact or control their external environment; 3) that the language of competition and conflict best describes the character of managing a firm; 4) that the mode of thinking we employ in generating strategy should be “objective”; and 5) that corporations should structure power and authority within strict hierarchies (p. 478-479).

The authors examine each of these assumptions through a lens of feminist theory, and explain how such a perspective could improve the ethical and social aspects of corporate operations. They conclude that a feminist perspective imbues stakeholder management with means of “effective forms of cooperation, decentralizing power and authority, and building consensus among stakeholders
through communication to generate strategic
direction" (p. 493).

The insights and ideas that these men have provided
may help people reassess assumptions women's role in
business and professions, how economic systems and
development affect women, and how a feminist perspective
may improve business ethics and economic systems
generally. Although there are many other economic issues
affecting women, and many economic issues that might
benefit from a feminist analysis, these few articles by
men highlight how individuals can incorporate new
perspectives into commonly accepted economic beliefs,
attitudes, and practices.
Much recent academic discourse concerns the many social aspects of feminism. It is a difficult classification not only because of the wide range of topics covered, but also because there are some critical considerations that have a tremendous impact on how society is structured. Social feminism includes such considerations as the basic question of why and how men and women differ in their perspectives and ways of doing things, and how those differences are evaluated and reinforced by society. This section addresses aspects of women’s oppression that are often the most difficult to overcome because no law can force people to think or believe a certain way. Because of the diversity of topics in social feminism, this category is further divided into areas of feminine essentialism, academics and education, and communication. These three classification comprise the general focus of the topics that the authors in this portion of the study have examined.
Articles by men in this section deal with attempts to define differences in men’s and women’s behavior, and what those differences mean. There are pieces that examine women in education and how female children are taught differently than male children. The section devoted to communication includes issues of how language is gendered, how interpersonal communication affects male/female relations, and how the media stereotype the sexes.

Essentialism

Feminine essentialism deals with the question of whether there is an essential feminine nature or if all non-biological definitions of gender are purely social constructs. The debate is at the root of many feminist controversies. One group, whose members include such notables as Gertrude Stein and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, maintain that the belief that women are essentially different from men has permitted the oppression of women. If society views the male as the standard, and women are essentially different, then women must be inferior. Another group, whose members adhere to the belief in innate female characteristics, respond that women’s differences do not make them lesser, but the
system of evaluating those differences. This group finds support from various researchers, such as the often cited study by Carol Gilligan which demonstrated differences in the way men and women view morality, how each gender conceives of responsibility, and how they form and express their ideas. Both groups, however, object to society's tendency to consider men as humans and women as females.

The notion of essentialism may have far-reaching effects on many aspects of people's lives. For instance in Epstein's (1995) attempt to define feminist legal theory, he gets tangled in the sticky question of feminine essentialism. His critique examines the differences between the beliefs of different feminist groups such as cultural feminists and radical feminists. He acknowledges that "the richness and diversity of feminist thought is ... a sign of its vitality" (p. 332) but points out that all these different feminists have different views of the source and meaning of women's differences, and therefore how the law should accommodate women. Some cultural feminists maintain that women are different "because they are more committed to the preservation and transmission of life, while men are more concerned with individual transcendence or social control" (p. 31). Other cultural feminists "are willing
to acknowledge some role for biological influences in the creation and maintenance of social roles and legal order, while still other claim that law may be an ‘irretrievable male’ discipline” because it treats individuals as responsible entities separate from society. Epstein tends to align himself with those who believe in innate differences between men and women. He cites the biological fact of innate differences between the behaviors and approaches of various male and female animals, especially primates, in their different strategies for procreation because of the distinct form their contributions to procreation take. He cites these biologically-based differences as indication of the innate differences between men and women.

However Alper (1985) argues that biology should not dictate social structure nor reinforce cultural stereotypes. He claims that most studies of male/female differences are flawed either in their methods, interpretations, or underlying assumptions. He commented that theories about biological explanations of social differences go back to the nineteenth-century brain research by Paul Broca who found that there was a significant difference in brain weight between men and women. Yet, Alper explained, when Stephen Jay Gould analyzed Broca’s results he found that when corrections
were made for body size the brain size difference disappeared.

Alper (1985) discussed other supposed connections between cognitive differences between men and women and their brain structure. Two studies were based on the fact that the left and right hemispheres of the brain are responsible for different tasks. The studies are based on the theory that men's brains are more asymmetric than women's which would account for those differences in their cognitive abilities. Alper discounted the studies as unscientific in their "sampling techniques, cognitive tests, confounded variables, and statistical analysis" (p. 9-10). He argues that interpretation of data may easily be skewed by the biases of the observer because, "[a]s scientific theory is developed, the values become so embedded in it that they become both inseparable from and hidden in the theory" (p. 11). He determined that the conclusions of these studies were "based on more factors than simply an analysis of the experimental evidence" (p. 34). Yet because researchers on the human brain are "studying a material entity that obeys the laws of the natural sciences" their conclusions are generally afforded greater validity" (p 7-8).
Alper also explains that the presence of a particular trait in women and not men does not demonstrate that being female is source of that trait. For instance, women tend score higher on verbal aptitude tests. “However, because socialization of the sexes begins at the moment of birth, a separation of biological and environmental influences on behavior is impossible” (p. 8).

He concludes that “these theories have been based on the notion that group differences reflect an essential difference in the humanity of the members of these groups ... a notion that has proved to be totally bankrupt, not only morally, but also scientifically, and should be rejected once and for all” (p. 35).

Grim (1992) also attacked the so-called scientific evidence of women’s innate characteristics and the use of such evidence as justification for assigning roles and responsibilities differently to men and women. Like Alper, he found fault with the data, how it was interpreted, and the conclusions researchers developed from it. He also maintains that even if the research were scientifically valid, the assignment of roles and stereotypes that have resulted from such studies would not necessarily follow. “There are very few tasks indeed which call for one and only one simple qualification,”
he explains, and "the qualifications for most tasks is a complicated matter of balance of different abilities, some of which may be tied to fundamental characteristics and many of which may not be" (p.12). Thus, even if it were proven that women always have greater dexterity than men doesn’t mean they will be better typists, or brain surgeons. Grim’s conclusion, as Alper’s, is that such scientific evidence of biological differences in the abilities of men and women are worthless for justifying gender discrimination. "In light of the deep difficulties of attempting any satisfactory test, in light of the social dangers of a test gone wrong, in light of the inconclusiveness of the best of data for any social purposes, and given the variety of genuinely pressing demands on our social energies, I see little reason for continuing such testing" (p. 16).

Whether women are essentially different or merely socialized to be so is also the focus of Digerser’s (1994) study on essentialism and performativity. He argues against one anti-essentialist stance that gender, sex and self are not part of our natures but merely "results of socially governed performances" (p. 655). Contrary to the concept of performativity and of essentialism, he maintains that there exist both a constant, internal self and a dynamic self that is not
constrained by external factors. His in-depth and quite philosophical analysis of the nature of self and how it is constructed concludes that, although there are some constants and some dynamics to the construct of self, "a specific politics does not follow from a given ontology" (p. 672).

All these studies of the many different views on whether women’s and men’s differences are innate or social seem to conclude that, regardless of whether a trait is genetic or learned, part of an essential nature or created by social conditioning, stereotypes serve only to hamper everyone’s personal development. What many feminists have feared is that continued studies into these differences will cause those differences that women posses to be undervalued. The message from most of the men in this section is that the merits of studies on male/female differences in brain function are dubious and the conclusions unsupported. They emphasize that it is especially crucial that no social or political restrictions on any group should follow from the results of such studies. Diversity among individuals must be celebrated without attributing that individual’s qualities to other members of the same group. Stereotyping serves only to hamper everyone’s personal expression.
Academics and Education

Much recent attention has been focused on how the educational system has encouraged and promoted gender stereotypes and has guided women into traditionally female fields of study such as liberal arts while guiding men into traditionally male areas such as math and sciences. Historically women were discouraged from entering college and receiving advanced degrees. Men have participated in the battles against the various restrictions women face in education. As one nineteenth century poet wrote:

Ye fusty old fogies, Professors by name,
A deed you've been doing, of sorrow and shame:
Though placed in your chairs to spread knowledge abroad,
Against half of mankind you would shut up the road.
The fair sex from science you seek to withdraw
By enforcing against them a strict Salic law:
Is it fear? is it envy? or what can it be?
And why should a woman not get a degree?

(Quoted in Kimmel & Mosmiller, p. 20).
Although women are permitted into all fields of study today, barriers still exist in the form of early stereotypes. In his study of subtle sexism in science classes, Peltz (1990) discovered many impediments to girls in science. Cultural biases, which children learn quite early "have been found to have a great impact on women’s performance in science" (p. 44). There is little difference between pre-school boys and girls in their interest and exploration of the natural world. Yet boys are encouraged to tinker with mechanical and scientific projects while young girls are guided into more domestic projects. In classrooms boys are more likely to assume control of lab equipment, especially if there is not enough to go around, and the girls do not challenge them for it. Class projects also tend to use objects with which boys are more familiar, such as car batteries. Finally, "[t]eachers have been observed to ask a question of the class and then look at a male student, as if a female would not be expected to provide the answer" (p. 48). Boys are called on more frequently, are asked more complex questions, and "given more extensive feedback" (p. 48). Peltz concludes his study with a list of recommendations for teachers and schools generally to implement that would encourage young girls.
in science, and which could also be applied in other classroom situations.

Stereotyping can enter into classroom teaching in many other forms than teachers’ expectations of their students. Kellermeier (1994) reported on how the data used in teaching statistics courses can encourage stereotyping. An instructor used vocational stereotypes in teaching two sections of the same elementary statistics class. In the first class the examples used reinforced traditional vocational roles, in the second the genders were reversed in the examples so that they challenged those stereotypes. The students then took a test designed to measure how much they each agreed with traditional vocational stereotypes. Students in the first class were more prejudiced about roles than in the second class, and the reinforcement of stereotyping was more successful than was the challenge to it.

Feminists have challenged many of the biases inherent in the design of course curriculum, methods of teaching, and the whole educational system. Many claim that traditional pedagogy has taken a patriarchal and hierarchical approach where the instructor stands at the head of the class and lectures to students. Feminist pedagogy, on the other hand, “is different from male-oriented, traditional pedagogies, as it aims to involve
students in discussion, teaching them that knowledge incorporates an awareness of the self and the political and social milieu ... " (Robertson, 1994, p. 11) Such an approach to teaching and what has been included in the curriculum is challenged by many feminists. Shrewsbury (1993) believes that "[F]eminist pedagogy begins with a vision of what education might be like but frequently is not. This is a vision of the classroom as a liberatory environment in which we, teacher-student and student-teacher, act as subjects, not objects" (p. 8). Feminist pedagogy has questioned not only whose history, research, and literature is taught, and whose point of view is expressed and whose silenced, but how knowledge and information is shared or transmitted.

One claim made by feminists such as Harding (1991) is that science and scientific research are androcentric and sexist because of the politics that inform the objectives of scientific inquiry and because of the masculine cognitive style and assumptions of science. Feminists feel that scientists ignore contextual values in science and falsely believe science to be purely objective. Feminists also criticize the masculinist language of science which, feminists claim, is rife with metaphors about sex and power, even rape, as scientists dominate and conquer nature and penetrate secrets of the
universe. As Sandra Harding wrote in a letter to the New York Times, "If we put it in the most blatant terms used today, we’d talk about marital rape, the husband as scientist forcing nature to his wishes (Quoted in Soble, 1995).

However, Soble (1995) disputes accusations that science is masculinist. He finds such claims to be mostly unfounded, and fears that the association of science with rape "is unfortunate, not only for the reputations of those who engage in or extol science, but also for our understanding of its history" (p. 193). Some men also debate the idea that feminism has anything new to offer science. In his evaluation, Gross (1994) claims that feminists say only that a feminist science would be different, but do not state exactly how. "Like all utopians these feminist are short on specifics and we are never told what such a science as science would look like..." (p. 434). Grint and Woolgar (1995) take a similar view in their critique of feminism in the research and development of technology. They claim that even if technology is politically hierarchical or masculinist, as in military applications, doesn’t insure that it must be so. They question if "some women’s organizations develop a rigid hierarchical chain of command, does this mean that they too are coerced by a
political technology or by a masculine technology? In either case, this poses problems in trying to account for some counterexamples" (p. 294). Like Gross, they find no validity in feminist claims that feminism truly has something new to offer science.

On the other hand some men have recognized the value of feminist theory in science and research. Campbell (1994) explains that a feminist construction of empiricism when it is properly conceived, presents a conception of social knowledge that combines the ideal of realist objectivity with the virtues of being politically subversive, alive to the relevance of contextual values, diversely motivated, and able to view its own methodology as the product of social construction and hence subject to empirical inquiry and revision (p. 90). His assessment seems to demonstrate that how people conceive of science is a product of social conditioning, and that feminism can offer a new way to acquire and reevaluate knowledge. He explains that a feminist approach to science recognizes the interconnectedness between the scientist and what is studied.

The men who have considered and assessed women's role in education seem to agree that education is a
critical part of socialization, both in what is taught and how. Some have shown that women have been disadvantaged by the educational system, or that feminism has much to offer formal education and the entire realm of epistemology. Men, especially men in educational fields, have a responsibility to understand feminism and feminist concerns in education. The many men who write and speak about issues in that field have here demonstrated it can be done.

Communication

Feminist communication considerations include analyses of language and how it is gendered, forms of interpersonal communication, and how women are depicted or referred to in the media. Much human understanding and self-definition comes from the images heard, read, or seen, and often these images create sexual stereotypes. Sexual stereotyping begins in early infancy with how baby girls and boys are treated. Such stereotyping is evident in children’s stories through the classical literature and philosophy people study in high school and college. It pervades the mass and electronic media; how women are portrayed on television, in films, and in books, newspapers, and magazines.
Much of this gender stereotyping is based in language. Language not only allows people to transmit messages and ideas, it also helps form individuals’ concepts of reality and self. Burke (1989) determined that “even if a given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature it is a selection of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a deflection of reality” (p. 115). The reality that language creates can encourage or discourage, empower or disable. Bate (1992) explained, “Words do in fact harm people. They may not leave bruises, but they leave marks on human spirits ...” (p. 76).

The English language is sexist in much of its construction and use. A prime example is the use of the generic “he” to connote any person, and the use of “man” to mean humanity. Some researchers do not fully grasp the impact of such language, as Dusseau (1994) in his criticism of “fuddyduddy feminism” and feminists’ insistence on eliminating sexism in language. He complained that the changes that “newly aroused feminism” (p. 497) requests are nonsensical and unnecessary. Such changes may also alter the meaning of the sentence. He uses as an example when an editor changed his sentence “The increasingly sophisticated and disillusioned life of Western man” to “Western peoples.”
He wrote "this is an emendation up with which I will not put, for it changes the idea intended" (p. 497). And indeed it might change the idea intended. He might not have intended to include women in his statement.

Women have been invisible in research, in history, and they are often invisible in language. An example Baker (1984) uses to highlight this fact is his comment that "it is something of a truism to say that 'man is a rational animal,' while 'woman is a rational animal' is quite debatable" (p. 50). He closed his article with the proposal that "contemporary feminists should advocate the utilization of neutral proper names and the elimination of gender from our language [...] and they should vigorously protest any utilization of the third-person pronouns 'he' and 'she' as examples of sexist discrimination" (p. 63).

Various studies have demonstrated the women do not feel included in comments about the generic "he." Bate (1992) stresses the fact that "Words are tools for creating ideas, poems, and plans; they are also weapons for controlling, misleading, or otherwise harming human beings" (p. 76). She goes on to explain how women feel invisible in language, that they see themselves only as some subset of "man," and how confusing the generic male language can be. She described an instance of young
girls bringing blank permission slips back to school because the notes read "your child should bring his permission slip to school," and the girls didn't believe that meant them as well (p. 79).

How language is constructed and used dictates a great deal of how people conceive of the idea being discussed, as Baker (1984) demonstrated in his article about how men and women talk about each other. He explains that language not only communicates ideas of others, but helps to create them. And, he points out, "the conception of women embedded in our language is male chauvinistic" (p. 45). For instance the slang or colloquial words we use to talk about women create images of sexual playthings or animals that men use or hunt, such as doll, chick, or fox.

Baker further demonstrates that the language people use to talk about sex and sexuality also demonstrate a negative concept. For instance those really mean and nasty terms people use to wish harm upon someone, such as "fuck you" or "screw you," are also terms used to describe sexual intercourse. The idea that a sexual acts are cruel or harmful is embedded in such language, and the concepts thus communicated influence people's view of sexuality. Baker points out that it may become psychologically difficult for a woman to separate the
idea that a man may want to have sexual relations from the idea that he wants to harm her. He writes:

Passive constructions of “fucked,” “screwed,” and “had” indicate a female role. They can also be used to indicate being harmed as “I’ve been screwed” (“fucked,” “had,” “taken,” and so on) when we have been sold shoddy merchandise, or conned out of valuables. [...] Hence we conceive of a person who plays the female sexual role as someone who is being harmed. (p. 48-49).

He continues to give examples of how language not only reflects but constructs reality, and concludes with the comment, “The limits of our language are the limits of our world” (p. 63).

The limits created by language are reinforced by the limits imposed by the stereotyping in literature. Science fiction author Isaac Asimov (1969) commented that Shakespeare, who was lauded for capturing human nature at its truest and most naked, portrayed his heroines as “much superior to his heroes in intelligence, character and moral strength” (p. 434). Shakespeare is an exception, Asimov explains, as most literature teaches women that they are not those things, that they are inferior to men, and that their inferiority is an inevitable part of being female.
The inferiority of women is evident in much of the literature people read. Children’s literature begins to teach children about women’s inferiority while they are still very young. Studies of children’s stories have demonstrated that male characters have more interesting and diverse roles than do female characters. One researcher noted, "the majority show females as caretakers: mothers, princesses, helpers in the kitchen, teachers, nurses. The males act in the larger sphere, as fighters, explorers, adventurers of various sorts" (Temple, 1993, p. 90). Another researcher into children’s stories noted that “the attributes and functions frequently assigned to the feminine role are less highly valued than those attributed to the masculine role” (McDonald, 1989, p. 390). These studies do not show what effect such role stereotyping may have on children’s development, however, as McDonald also cautioned that “long-term effects of the type of literature a child is exposed to on his or her later sex role orientation have yet to be established.” Yet, he concludes, “Children need to see opportunities and expectations that reflect a new reality, for many of the rigid boundaries that once defined the sexes are no longer valid” (p. 398, 400).
Such gender stereotyping as is found in children's literature may also be found in the literature that older children and adults read throughout their lives. For instance Thomas (1991) described the sexist ideology that Jean-Jacques Rousseau presented in his writings. As Thomas explained, Rousseau claimed that only women and cripples were suited to certain tasks because they might soften or emasculate men. Another writer of Rousseau's era, Mary Wollenstonecraft, "was quick to see the connection between Rousseau's sexual politics and other aspects of his political theory to recognize the danger to women posed by the popularity of Rousseau's writings" (p. 196). Writings by historical figures such as Rousseau are common fare for high school and college students.

Women's portrayal and presence in the print media extends beyond literature into popular magazines and newspapers. A content analysis over a five-year period demonstrated that women are greatly underrepresented in newspapers stories. The study found that, in front-page items, 85 percent of the individuals referred to or solicited for comment were men, and that 66 percent of the authors of front-page stories were men (Gersh, 1993).
Sexism is prevalent not only in the print media but in other forms of media as well. Images of women in the electronic media are frequently stereotyped by both the roles they play and how they interact with the male characters. Butler (1993) demonstrated how even those television programs intended for viewing by women are still sexist and reinforce patriarchal attitudes. In his evaluation of the program Designing Women, he noted that when star Delta Burke was fired from the show the popular press concluded that it was because she had gained too much weight. He concluded that her weight became a symbol of her unwillingness to conform, “a sign, virtually and index, of her unmanageable character” and that she had “shed the masquerade of femininity that women must preserve if they wish to remain visible and powerful in patriarchal culture” (p. 15).

Jhally (1994a) also studied messages presented by television and film, particularly music videos and commercials. He found the women to be portrayed as objects of men’s sexual interest rather than individuals in their own right. He explained that the story of women’s sexuality as told by the media is a story of men’s fantasies. Men are the producers and writers of these stories, and it is their fantasies that are being
displayed for the purpose of selling commercial commodities, mostly to a young male audience, although many women have bought into the story. The stories are about older men with younger women; women who want to be dominated; women who are willing, ready, and eager to have sex at any time; or women who are composed only of assorted body parts. These women have no self, no subject. They are only objects of male fantasy. He remarked at the end of the analysis that a survey of adolescent boys found that most (over 60%) agreed that some women deserved to be raped, and that some women wanted to be raped (Jhally, 1994a).

Television and film media often portray women as victims, a role that reinforces women's perception of themselves as victims and dictates that they will continue to be victims. In his research of the impact of violence in television and films, Gerbner (In Jhally, 1994b) found that the portrayal of women and minorities as victims reinforces the perception by women and minorities, as well as by white males, that such is the real position of these groups.

In another study of violence against women, researchers found that individuals become desensitized to violence by the amount of exposure, and become more likely to judge the victim of a sexual assault more
harshly. The research showed that subjects (63 males) were less affected by violence on the last day of viewing sexually violent films than on the first day, and that they had less sympathy and concern for the victims (Linz, D., Donnerstein, E., & Adams, S., 1989). These studies demonstrate that media portrayals of women as victims of violence and sexual abuse may have far-reaching consequences.

Such sexual images, communications, and interactions are at the core of much feminist discourse, and often the most problematic issue of feminism for men to confront. Social constructs of masculinity define "man" by his sexuality and include ideals of male sexual domination of women (May & Strikwerda, 1994). Much interpersonal interaction involves an awareness of another's gender and sexuality. What feminism asks of men in the realm of sexuality may be the most difficult for them to achieve. It asks that men treat women first and foremost as people, that their femaleness should have no importance, should not even be a factor, until and unless a sexual/romantic relationship becomes part of the interaction.

Part of the problem in women's interpersonal relations is that, socially, much of their concept of self-worth is based on their physical appeal to men.
Women are told in various, subtle ways by society that most of their worth is in their appearance, and to have value they must be physically attractive to men (Wolf, 1991). Yet they are also told that if they make themselves too attractive, they are responsible for the sexual attention and harassment they may experience. It becomes a very difficult balancing act to be attractive but not too sexy, or to be sexy and very cautious. Women have a collective experience of being targets for unwelcome sexual advances and sexual violence. Two in three women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime; one in four will be raped (Jhally, 1994). “Few, if any, women can walk comfortable down a city street without fear of verbal harassment or even physical assault” (May and Strikwerda, 1994, p. 135). The experience most women have of being the target of unwanted attention is often very difficult for a man to understand.

Many men seem to have a great deal of difficulty with the concept of not treating women as a focus of sexual attention but as individual humans. In his criticism of the precepts of the feminists movement, Eisenman (1994) seems to ask the old question “what do women want, anyway?” He writes:
The emphasis on sexual harassment is a way to attack males for sexual behavior which is often normal, especially for men. Since, in our society, men usually make the overt sexual and romantic advances and women are more passive or indirect, the male is often at risk for being charged with sexually harassing behavior even if it something most women would enjoy, such as a compliment on how they look. Those in the feminist movement seem to object when men appreciate women's bodies. Ironically, the majority of women in the United States probably do want men to appreciate their appearance and often dress accordingly. (p. 201).

Eisenman's perspective is much the same as the construction worker who whistles or catcalls at a woman and is shocked when she isn't complimented. What he and others who take a similar view miss in such an analysis is that of course women dress and act to appeal to men, that is what they are taught from infancy that their value is vested in. Yet such a focus on women's appearance reinforces the idea that a woman's role is that of object of men's approval.

The role of women as the focus of men's approval is described in a theory advanced by two male authors concerning the collective responsibility of men for
rape. The perspective presented by May and Strikwerda (1994) argues that rape is not a despicable private act but one that is a result of shared experiences of men in groups, especially young adult men. They argue that men contribute to the prevalence of rape by socialized attitudes about women and sexuality. "Most men do very little at all to oppose rape in their societies.; does this make them something like co-conspirators with the men who do rape?" (p. 135). The answer they find in their analysis is "yes, it does." They concentrate on the forms of socialization young men experience; how they learn to speak about, think about, and act toward women. They point out that rape is an act of violence perpetrated against one particular group, women, and that it makes women dependent on other men for protection from rapists. Such dependence benefits all men and creates a motive for perpetuating a rape culture.

Men receive mixed messages about women, sexuality, and how they must act to be a man. May & Strikwerda point out that "misbehavior, especially sexual misbehavior of males toward females is, however mixed the messages, something that many men condone" (p. 137). The authors argue that rapists are not loners or social outlaws, but rather men who have merely taken acceptable
social behavior one step too far. They conclude that, although not all men everywhere are responsible for rape, that "rape is deeply embedded in a wider culture of male socialization. Those who have the most to do with sustaining that culture must also recognize that they are responsible for the harmful aspects of that culture" (p. 148).

Violence and sexuality are linked in many strange and interesting ways in Western culture. One rather unorthodox article authored by a man was an assessment of the "sex war" debates between radical feminists and lesbian feminist sadomasochists. Hopkins (1994) claims that his interest in the area of sadomasochism, especially lesbian sadomasochism, is based on his personal pleasure and political hope from any form of gender subversion. In the article, he makes a "distinction between simulation and replication of patriarchal dominant/submissive activities" (p. 117) and determines that radical feminists should reassess their disdain of lesbian sadomasochists. Radical feminist criticism of sadomasochism is based on the idea that one's deriving pleasure from causing a woman pain is "reproducing the implicit values of patriarchal cultures" (p. 118), even if the one deriving pleasure is also a woman. He presents and interprets some of the
dialectic that has gone on between feminists over the issue, and concludes:

[The explicitly contractual and negotiative aspect of SM may represent a kind of postmodern democratic urge in which sex is treated as both a mutual contracting for sexual/emotional services and a self-conscious performance. I think that many non-SM sexual activities could use this kind of democracy, honesty, and negotiation (p. 135).

Certainly democracy, honesty, and negotiation are important not just in sexual relations, but in all human communication. As the writings contained in this section have shown, the ideas shared and the messages sent by various forms of communication help create people's perceptions of reality. When those messages limit people's aspirations, they are not democratic. When they create stereotypes, they are not honest. When people do not try to understand how those messages may affect others, they are not negotiated. Men can and have made great contributions to reassessing those messages, as has been demonstrated by their exploration of communication and feminism.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The efforts examined in this study clearly
demonstrate that men can understand the issues and
support the cause of eliminating women’s oppression.
There are many possible motivations for men to undertake
to understand and become involved in feminist issues.
Some men may decide to support the women’s movement
because they recognize gender bias as being harmful to
both men and women. Although Kimmel (1994) discovered
that “[m]ost men have regarded the women’s movement with
bemused indifference,” he also found that “some men
support feminism, in the belief that equal opportunity
is a right, not a privilege.” He concluded “Pro-
feminist men believe the changes feminism has brought to
women’s lives are positive for men as well ...” (p. 30).

Other men discover feminism through personal
experience. Journalist Andrew Merton (1993) grew up
being a feminist. His feminist education began when his
first attempt to kiss a girl was rejected and he thought
the girl was just playing hard to get. A second attempt
left him humiliated and dejected, but he realized that

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“a kiss not voluntarily given is a kiss not worth having” (p. 205). In college he dropped out of his fraternity when the fellows showed him photos of all the young women on campus with remarks about their sexual availability written underneath. One of the photos was of a very good friend. She had “Bowwow” scribbled beneath her name. He was offended both for himself and because he knew how she would have felt. Merton read and understood The Feminine Mystique when it first came out. He recognized how men, especially men in groups, often hurt women. For a magazine article he interviewed women on college campuses and learned about date rape, gang rape, ostracism, stalking, and harassment. He soon became what he calls a “gut-level feminist” (p. 208).

Unlike the members of other oppressed groups, women are neither a numerical minority nor a geographically separate group from the dominant elite; the fraternity of white males. Every man has some personal contact or relationship with a woman; whether mother, sister, daughter, wife, lover, friend or co-worker. Men who have never before encountered feminism may some day have a daughter who asks why she can’t play little league baseball, a sister who is sexually assaulted and then cross-examined about her personal life by the court system, a wife who suddenly is unwilling to be
responsible for household maintenance, or a friend who questions why she should need a man to protect her from other men. How men deal with such encounters will depend to a great extent on their knowledge of the issues and their understanding of how women have been socialized. Some men will find ways to support and encourage the women in their lives, some will become frightened or antagonistic about changing beliefs and roles.

The fact is that many men truly want to transform both their beliefs and their relationships with women, but often don’t know how. “Most of us truly want the women in our lives to be happy. Many of us have come to realize this means they must have personal autonomy, including economic freedom. Some of us want to overcome our fear of female power. Some of us want relief from traditional masculine burdens. We therefore struggle to welcome change” (Astrachan, 1986, p. 200). The men who are represented in this study have led the way for others to become pro-feminist.

Certainly not all men who learn about feminism and feminist theories are going to agree on the issues, either with each other or with women, just as all feminist women do not agree. Diversity and tolerance are crucial elements of a feminist worldview. Although it is often difficult for a person to be tolerant of another’s
vastly different views and values, it requires just such tolerance for people to gain understanding and concern for others. Part of understanding requires that one view the world from the perspective of another, rather than merely analyze the other’s position through the filter of one’s own experience or viewpoint. It is a difficult but critical task.

Many men have dedicated themselves to just such a task of understanding. The National Organization for Men Against Sexism was founded in 1982. The organization is committed to four, equally important precepts:

1. to oppose sexism and support women’s full equality in the public and private sphere;
2. to oppose heterosexism and homophobia, and to support full equality for gay men and lesbians;
3. to support the struggle of minorities for full equality; and,
4. to oppose rigid definitions of masculinity and promote changes among men that will enable them to live richer and more fully expressive lives (in Kimmel, 1995, p. 31).

Connell (1992) also developed an agenda for men to follow in order to improve the lives of women and minorities, as well as their own. He prescribes seven
activities for achieving the goals of equality and personal fulfillment. These are:

1. Share the care of babies and young children equally between women and men. Change hours of work and policies of promotion to make this practical.
2. Work for equal opportunity, affirmative action, and the election of women, until women occupy at least 50 percent of decision-making positions in both public and private organizations.
3. Support women’s control over their own bodies, and contest the assertion of men’s ownership of “their” women. Actively challenge misogyny and homophobia in the media and popular culture, as well as sexual harassment in the workplace.
4. Work for pay equity and women’s employment rights, until women’s earnings are at least equal to men’s.
5. Support the redistribution of wealth and the creation of a universal social security system.
6. Talk among men to make domestic violence, gay bashing, and sexual assault discreditable. Work positively to create a culture that is safe for women and for gays and lesbians.
7. Organize political and economic support for battered women's shelters, rape crisis centers, and domestic violence intervention. (p. 36).

Although it will take time to make the changes suggested by such an agenda, they are worth implementing immediately. When the goals of these two similar plans are realized, and society no longer restricts political, economic, or social opportunities because of a person's gender, skin color, religious persuasion, age, or sexual preference, all people will be able to find personal fulfillment in whatever form it takes. It requires all people working together to eliminate oppression and prejudice wherever it is found.

**Meaning and Impact of Men's Contributions**

The overview of men's contributions to feminist rhetoric contained in this paper reveals that many men have dedicated time, effort, and thought to various aspects of feminist theory. They have participated with women in their efforts to gain access to the political system, and spoken out in favor of an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. They have viewed laws and political procedures from a feminist perspective and
Men have analyzed how economic policies affect women, and how feminist theory may affect economic policies. They have demonstrated how stereotypes and gender bias have kept women from entering certain fields and from finding ways to express their potentials. Some men have recognized just how pervasive are the societal restrictions and male domination of women. They have studied and written about the nature of women and how assumptions about female traits have kept women subordinate. Men have demonstrated through their writings and research that women are disadvantaged through barriers in education, employment, and social expectations. Men have illuminated how oppression and subordination are reinforced through language and in the media, and they have analyzed their own deepest feelings about women, feminism, and their responsibilities.

But what effect do all of these contributions have? Just what is the role of men in feminist discourse? Many women vehemently deny that men have any positive contributions to make toward feminism. Johnson (1987) sees the support of men serving to co-opt feminist goals by merely appearing to support or understand the issues. She writes that women should note "this extremely strong
male habit, the lie that slave-holders are anxious to share power with the slaves somehow remains one of the father’s favorite and most potent strategies with women” (p. 182). Or as Showalter (1987) queries “Is male feminism a form of critical cross-dressing, a fashion risk ... that is both radical chic and power play?” (p.120). Some men even question their place in feminist discourse. For example Connell (1993) wrote “[g]iven the record of men’s violence against women, abusive attitudes and speech, relentless sexism in high culture and the mass media, it’s hard not justify the notion that men have no place at all in the women’s movement” (p. 72).

One of the problems with understanding the impact men have had on the women’s movement is the fact that their influences may not always match their intentions. In his analysis of the outcomes of efforts to either damage or facilitate a movement, Marx (1977) noted “it is important to ask what the actual (rather than intended) consequences of such efforts are” (p. 117). He further explained that there are many factors which may lead to intervention in social movements having unintended consequences, including “the diffuse, noninstitutionalized collective-behavior character of much social movement activity” (p. 118). Because social
movements do not occur in a vacuum, but rather consist of an interplay among various social forces, each influence may have far reaching consequences.

There is no doubt that men’s contributions have had profound effects on the women’s movement, especially what they have said and written. Of the many forms of influencing social movements, the most common are rhetorical. Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen (1993) describe some of the forms that various responses to social movements may take. One internal response is where establishment leaders and decision makers demonstrate that their ability to manage, guide and direct is superior to that of the other group in order to maintain their power. Certainly this form of disempowering has been used frequently as a response to the women’s movement, as Faludi (1991) demonstrated in her book Backlash. She showed how feminists have been depicted and how their beliefs belittled, culminating with the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings. It is very easy to demonstrate that the established powers are more capable than any other when others are shown as incompetent, foolish, or part of a radical fringe.

In addition to internal reactions to social movement are external responses. These include such tactics as avoidance, suppression, and adjustment
(Bowers, J. W., et al., 1993). Each of these approaches has been used toward the women's movement at some time, yet this study is not an examination of the ways used to disempower the feminist movement. Furthermore, overt efforts at destroying the movement may not be as detrimental as supportive responses. Adjustment best describes the efforts of the men in this study, thus it is adjustment which serves as the lens through which to view the contributions by the authors in this study.

Adjustment is described as when institutions "adapt, modify, or alter their structures, their goals, and their personnel in response to an external ideological challenge" (Bowers, et al., 1993, p. 60). One critical element of such adjustment occurs when the institutions "incorporate parts of the dissident ideology," though such incorporation "may range from tokenism to a substantial merger" (p. 63). Where men's contributions to feminist rhetoric serve as adjustment, the result may actually co-opt the women's movement by demonstrating that it is men who define the standards of acceptance or rejection, and who chose to or not to implement the ideas. When men's comments on feminism reflect an attitude of smug condescension it reinforces the male prerogative of setting the standards of value. Even if contributions are aimed at furthering the
movement, they may effectively impede it by demonstrating that men are the authority on value judgments.

One form of adjustment is what Marx (1977) referred to as "pseudofacilitative" activity where the establishment "helps a movement (or segments of it) but not out of a desire to have it obtain its goals. Rather it can be a means of exercising partial control over it" (p. 107). Thus men may seek to control the women's movement by merely assuming a position of supremacy. As Astrachan (1986) commented "Our professions of acceptance are often disguises of denials of our hatred and refusal" (p. 200). Thus, whatever their intentions, men's responses may serve to hinder the women's movement even when they appear supportive.

By being critical and selective about feminist theories, men reinforce the standard social form of men defining or creating the basis for acceptable ideologies or definitions of truth and thus exercising their control. Anytime feminist theories are analyzed from a traditional masculinist perspective, the result may reinforce the belief that male forms of evaluation are the standard by which all else is measured. Those authors who attempt to analyze feminism from a traditional masculinist view therefore contribute to
enervating the women's movement, whether they intend to or not.
It therefore behooves men to consider, regardless of their intent, whether what they say and write about women and feminism is true, fair, and actually incorporates a feminist view. If men comment on feminism only from the masculine perspective of defining the standards of what is important, and of undervaluing women's different perspectives and responses, they serve only to reinforce patriarchal and condescending attitudes. Men must learn about the issues and honestly consider them from the perspective of a woman's experience. Only then will they be able to evaluate the worth of the feminist vision.

The impact of all men's contributions to feminist discourse may never be known, but it is clear that uninformed, condescending, self-serving, or patriarchal contributions are likely to have only negative influences. Certainly those analyses or theories which are antagonistic may have a devastating effect, yet even those that appear to be supportive yet are carelessly patriarchal may also have adverse effects. The men whose contributions constitute this study have shown that men can be sensitive to a feminist perspective, that they can be informed, empathetic, and pro-feminist, and that
their contributions may serve as well to advance the women's movement.

**Suggestions for Future Studies**

Clearly the articles and books mentioned in this paper are not at all comprehensive in terms of men's contributions to feminist theory. However, merely reviewing greater quantities of literature would probably prove counter-productive as it would become burdensome without generating any greater understanding of the purpose of men's contributions. A more valuable study might consist of an empirical analysis of how people respond to philosophical critiques of feminism by men and by women. Identical criticisms could be presented as authored by a man and by a woman, and reactions to the criticisms measured according to the gender of the respondents. Would men find male authored criticisms more valid than female authored criticisms? Would women find male authored criticisms more valid than female authored criticisms? The answers to these questions could truly help clarify if and how authority is gendered, even when it applies to a feminist theory.

A similar study with self-identified feminists and anti-feminists might also illuminate how different
individual perceive the gendering of authority. Would feminists find feminist literature written by a man to be more influential than the same literature written by a woman? Would anti-feminists have a different perception?

Another approach to understanding the impacts of male contributions to feminist theory would be to compare the impact of white participation and support in the Black Civil Rights Movement. As the dominant social power, whites involved in the Black Civil Rights Movement present a similar relation as men involved in the Women’s Movement. Insights into how whites have influenced that movement could be compared to how men have influenced the women’s movement. The similarities and differences could provide further understanding of how social movements generally are affected by establishment rhetoric.

Murphy (1992) analyzed the tactics used by the establishment with the Black Civil Rights movement, especially during the “Freedom Rides” into Alabama. He classified the rhetoric of the Kennedy administration to highlight forms of social control. Although many of the tactics he describes are similar to ones used with the women’s movement, many of his conclusions are not appropriate for the women’s movement. Certainly most
whites do not have as close a personal or social involvement with blacks as men generally do with women. Also, the roots of women's oppression go much deeper. Yet the distinctions in the interplay between these two sets of dominant and oppressed groups could provide a great understanding of social interaction between social elites and the less powerful.

Studies of men's participation in the women's movement could certainly take many forms, both rhetorical and empirical. Some might focus on the rhetoric itself, some on the impact, and some on the interplay between different forces. The most worthwhile of these would be the ones that support those men who have become involved, and that encourage other dominant groups to become informed enough to understand the lives and experiences of women and minorities.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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