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SEVEN

WHY WE WOMEN, SLOPPY CREATURES THAT WE ARE, CAN NEVER FIND ANYTHING IN OUR POCKETBOOKS

from What Are We Fighting for?

Women have always worked, as an angry Mary Taylor wrote in the mid-1840s to her friend the novelist Charlotte Brontë.

Women have always been poor, wrote Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* in 1929.

Woman, said Matilda Joslyn Gage in 1873, *is the great unpaid laborer of the world.*[1]

Although Woolf may have been wrong in reading the female poverty of her own day into all of history, our three foresisters are right, not only for their own day but for ours as well. Women work and women are poor, both when we are paid for our work and when we are not. In fact, after reading the material from which I've drawn most of the information in this chapter, I began to think that women's poverty and women's work were absolutely the most important things there are to know about women. I will give you the information the way it hit me—although what I'm quoting here is a small part of what can be found (even in the same works) on the same subject. These are glimpses: portable, easily excerptable material, merely a sample of what exists. Nonetheless, I hope the following snippets will reproduce some of the effect of the original texts from which they come.[2]

What does it mean to say "Women are poor"? First of all, it means that women make up a disproportionate number of all the poor. Here are some figures:

> While 15 per cent of all families [in the United States] are headed by women, they account for half of all the poor families . . . and they include nearly one-quarter of all children aged 3 to 13.

> [In the United States] of the 22 million people receiving food stamps in 1982, 85 per cent were women and their children. In 1982 women and their children also made up 93 per cent of the four million people receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children.[3]

Second, it means that old women are more often poor than young ones: "Women predominate among the elderly . . . [which] is a group especially prone to . . . poverty."[4]

They are also more often poor than are old men—

> Among those over 65 [in the U.S.] two-and-a-half times as many women as men live in poverty, according to Geraldine Ferraro, 1984 Democratic vice-presidential candidate. The rate for all elderly women is 20 per cent.[5]

while in the United States, Black women are more likely to be poor than White ones—

> As many as 41 per cent of all black families are supported by women alone and 54 per cent of these families are officially poor compared to 27 per cent of all white families maintained by women, 16 per cent of families headed by black men and 6 per cent of those headed by white men.[6]

especially if they are old—

> . . . one-half of black older women [in the United States] are poor.
>
> Forty-one per cent of black women aged 65 or over lived in poverty [in the United States] in 1977 while 8% of white men in this age group were poor.[7]

and unconnected to men. Most women unconnected to men are poor: "Eighty-five per cent of all old women [in the United States] who are single or widowed live near or below the poverty line."[8]

Meanwhile, figures from Britain reveal a similar picture. Ann Oakley, quoting research published in 1979, writes:

> Women constitute a majority of the poor. . . . "More than half the poor were women and girls. . . . Women were at a disad-

> vantage at most . . . ages. The proportion of women in poverty was higher than that of men at all ages except under fifteen. . . ." [In 1982] one of the findings reported by the Finer Committee on One-Parent Families was that . . . 50 per cent of fatherless families depended on supplementary benefits as against 10 per cent of motherless families.[9]

Why are women so poor? Perhaps it has something to do with women's wages. All the figures I have been able to find certainly support this idea. For example:

> In 1956 . . . [in the United States] the median earnings of women working full-time and year-round came to 63 per cent of men's earnings. By 1970 . . . women's earnings had tumbled to 59 per cent of men's. By 1974 . . . women's portion was down to 57 per cent. . . . In 1950 the median income of families headed by women had been 56 per cent of those with a husband as sole earner. By 1974 the income of the female-headed family had plummeted to 47 per cent of the modest bundle the male earner was taking home.
>
> In the U.S. in 1980 half the women of working age were in the labor force but only about half of them earned more than the minimum necessary to keep a family of two above the poverty line. This means that some 75 per cent of all American women aged 16 to 64 would be dependent on resources other than their own earned income if they had to support themselves and one other person.[10]

Nor are such figures anything but conservative. The official poverty line itself, Hilda Scott notes, is extremely low and is based on antiquated spending patterns. As she says:

> People in the US don't believe that a family of four can get along on an income of $9800, the 1982 poverty line for a family that size; they put the minimum at an average of $15,400, according to a Gallup Poll inquiry in January 1983 . . . this is almost exactly the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' . . . "lower standard of living" threshold. By this standard not 34.4 million people but 55–60 million people in the US can be considered poor.[11]

Nor do other countries than ours present a cheerier picture:

> [In Britain] 10 per cent of men and 23 per cent of women earn below the 'decency' threshold.
>
> The average hourly industrial wage of women in Sweden has risen to 90 per cent of men's. In white-collar employment, however, women's salaries average only 70 per cent of what men are paid. In the OECD countries women's pay for *full-time, year-round* work ranges from an average of 57 per cent of men's in the US to 81 per cent in Sweden. It is 77 per cent in the Netherlands, 74 per cent in Austria, 73 per cent in France, 66 per cent in Canada, and 65 per cent in the UK.
>
> In Israel as a whole, women's average hourly wages are 20 per cent lower than men's.
>
> For the [then] Soviet Union . . . although female employment rates are exceptionally high, with almost all able-bodied women of working age in the workforce . . . where whole professions have become feminized, as teaching and medicine, they have lost status and the pay compares unfavorably with that of a skilled worker.
>
> In 20 per cent of Hungarian families the woman's earnings are the main or only income. Yet 53 percent of women earn less than sufficient to maintain two people at the official subsistence level compared to 14 per cent of men.
>
> In the iron ore mines [in India] women get 67 percent less than men in their minimum total pay packet. Women are . . . paid less than men for doing the same jobs.
>
> It has been estimated that in India, among agricultural laborers, women are generally paid 40% to 60% of the male wage while they perform much more labor intensive tasks than men. . . . The disparity between the daily earnings of men and women belonging to agricultural labour households increased by approximately 50% between 1964–65 and 1974–75. The grading of certain jobs as "skilled" and therefore better paid is based . . . merely on the assumption that jobs performed by women are, by virtue of that fact alone, low value jobs.[12]

The above discrepancies can be explained only partly by pointing to pay inequities existing between *men* and *women* working at the same kind of job. Equally important are the pay inequities between women's *jobs* and

men's *jobs*, what some call the "ghettoization" of women's jobs. My sources put it this way:

> [There is a] division of labor [by sex] within occupations.
>
> [There is a] female ghetto . . . of poorly paid work. . . . [In Britain and the United States] 80 per cent of women work in twenty-five job categories.[13]

Unfortunately for women's financial health as a sex-class, women's jobs pay considerably worse than men's. Hence the recent fights for women's entry into "nontraditional" jobs. Unfortunately this attack on "tradition" may itself be a tradition:

> In 1900 . . . most women in the paid labor force [in the United States] were in occupations disproportionately filled by women. Still true today.
>
> In 1900 . . . one occupation . . . accounted for nearly a third of the female labor force. Domestic service. Today there is one occupation that accounts for over a third. Clerical work.
>
> In 1900 most members of the female labor force could be found in agricultural, manufacturing or domestic service jobs. Today nearly two-thirds can be found in clerical, service or sales jobs. . . . The rate of occupational segregation by sex is exactly as great today. . . . as it was at the turn of the century, if not a little greater. . . . well over half of all women were in occupations in which at least two-thirds of the work force were female. Equally true right now.
>
> And that somewhere between 30 and 48 per cent were consistently employed in occupations in which *80 per cent or more* were female. Exactly the case right now.[14]

Louise Howe lists the 303 separate occupations in the 1900 United States Census, noting that women were reported employed in all but nine. Some of the jobs were: trapper, police officer, firefighter, detective, engineer, barber, chemist, accountant, teamster, steamfitter, undertaker, blacksmith, miner, tilemaker, and steelworker. There were many more.[15] And:

> In 1976 [in the United States] 60% of working women—up from 52% in 1962—were segregated into just four occupations: clerks, saleswomen, waitresses, and hairdressers.
>
> Married women [in the United States] in the eight elite professions (architect, college teacher, computer systems analyst, doctor, engineer, lawyer, mathematician, scientist) represented less than 1 per cent of all employed wives in 1979. Only "tiny numbers of women" reach upper levels of management.[16]

Nor is the picture substantially different in many other countries:

> [In Britain] in 1977 only 13 per cent of employed women were skilled manual workers or held professional or managerial positions.
>
> In 1968 the Swedish government announced the goal of sex-role equality. . . . Occupational segregation was first among the barriers between the sexes that were to come tumbling down. Yet fifteen years and much legislative activity later, with a record 75 per cent of women between 16 and 64 in the workforce, Sweden has one of the most segregated labor forces in Europe. Eighty per cent of women work in thirty job categories.
>
> [Swedish men] have entered women's (paid) jobs in greater numbers than the reverse—the result being that women are deprived of work in a previously "female-intensive" labor category but still are unable to break the gender barrier in more rewarded employment areas.
>
> In the strongly pro-equality [then] German Democratic Republic [women's] educational and training opportunities are far in advance of those . . . in the neighboring Federal Republic [with] accommodation [in day care] for 50 per cent of children under 3 and 90 per cent of those between 3 and 6. . . . In both Germanies women were grossly underrepresented in manufacturing (except in the conventionally female industries) in transportation and communications, and even more so in construction. . . . The concentration of women learning to be office workers, sales personnel, hairdressers and textile workers in the GDR approaches 100 per cent saturation [even though] the industrial workforce has been expanding [and] between 1955 and 1975 the male workforce grew by more than half a million.[17]

Such ghettoization is unfortunate for women's wages, because

> [Where] women form the bulk of the labor force . . . pay is usually low. Unionization is usually nil or weak and . . . equal-

pay-for-equal work laws are of little or no meaning since if women are competing with anyone for these jobs, they are competing with other women.

> [Women's jobs] are labor-intensive. . . . What work in a typing pool and on an electronic components assembly line have in common is . . . [that] these operations require a relatively large number of people . . . [they are] difficult or expensive to mechanize. . . . Since productivity is low [per worker], labor costs must be kept low. . . . Labor-intensive jobs are reserved for women . . . just because women can be paid less.
>
> [Thus] the ranks of construction tradeswomen [in the United States] shrank 24% last year [1982] . . . while the industry's total blue collar employment dropped just 4%. . . . job segregation will increase and opportunities for women diminish [because of] the introduction of the microchip into office work, which is overwhelmingly female. . . . Today office workers represent some kind of a new proletariat, with wages far lower than those in industry and few of the fringe benefits.
>
> Claire, the supervisor, was demonstrating the new word-processing machines [in 1977]. . . .
>
> "It's really something, isn't it?" Claire marveled.
>
> In parallel rows young women, about half of them black, sat silently typing away. . . .
>
> "How many do you have working here?" . . .
>
> "As of this month, we're down to ten."
>
> "And just a few years ago there were how many?" . . .
>
> "Twenty-three."
>
> "And I bet you're getting out as much work as before."
>
> "Oh, yes. Probably more."
>
> The potential reduction in clerical employment [1981] . . . [is] one-half or more. . . . [In a study made in Britain in 1980 one observer held that] the "protection" against unemployment that women "enjoyed" as a result of their willingness to work for low pay is evaporating, since it is just those low-level, repetitive jobs that can be computerized. Over a three-year period at American Telephone & Telegraph, 22,000 women lost jobs because of automation, while 13,000 new positions were obtained by men.[18]

"Ghettoized" in low-paying jobs, paid less than men for the same jobs, women are also more vulnerable than men to unemployment:

> Women are . . . the hardest hit by unemployment . . . even with the present pattern of lay-offs in the traditional male industries like steel, autos and engineering. During the world recession in the mid-1970s, women were reported to be 60 per cent of the unemployed in Italy, although less than one-quarter of the workforce. In Sweden, Belgium, France, West Germany, Austria and the US over half the unemployed were women [in 1979]. . . . Swedish female unemployment rates averaged 35 per cent higher than male for . . . 1963–1981. Official unemployment in the UK between 1974 and 1978 increased three times as fast for women as for men. . . . Everywhere youth unemployment figures are double or triple those of adults and young women are reported particularly likely to give up the search.[19]

And then there are the women who are poor because they must work part-time, usually because they are caring for children. Not only do fewer hours of work bring in less pay, the kinds of jobs that can be done part-time don't usually include jobs that pay well by the hour. As Howe puts it, very few jobs are available for "part-time managers . . . pilots, butchers [and] machinists."[20] Here are comments on the relation of motherhood to jobs:

> The social reality women have had to face is that motherhood and paid employment are objectively incompatible. . . . [In 1979 in Britain] 33% of new mothers interviewed returned to work, but of these only 4% returned to full-time work and 29% worked occasionally and/or on a part-time basis. . . .
>
> [In the US and Britain] mothers can't earn enough to support themselves and their children—or they can't get jobs compatible with child-rearing. Their longer dependence on inadequate state benefits penalizes them financially for motherhood.[21]

Part-time work is itself a problem: "Of Swedish women [in 1981] . . . more and more women work, fewer and fewer are able to support themselves, due to part-time work and lower pay."[22]

Nor is part-time work always as genuinely part-time as the use of that phrase would lead us to believe. Worth pondering are phenomena like the following:

> In Britain *when overtime was included* [italics added] 54 per cent . . . [of] women [employed part-time] were classified as "low-paid" in 1980. . . .
>
> [Women who work part-time] are women who are too old, too untrained or too burdened with childcare to get other work. They often put in a full working week but they do so at a time, in a place, and for the kind of rates that lead their jobs to be dismissed as "casual" part-time work.
>
> Hiring on a temporary or casual basis is one of the oldest means used by employers [in India] to evade laws which protect the interest of labourers. Fifty-six per cent of all woman workers in the mining industry are temporary, as against 21% of men. A large number of these women are still "temporary" after five years of service and some are "casual" workers after ten years of continuous service. . . . [Often] not a single women holds permanent status.[23]

(Of course such tactics are not used only in India. As I write this, hospitals in the city in which I live and work in the United States have been listing as "part-time" jobs that take thirty or even thirty-five hours a week—so that they can avoid paying benefits like health insurance or pensions to the employees who do them.)

If women's jobs are ghettoized and women's wages so low, why not choose marriage, or marriage *and* a paid job, as a career instead? In fact many women do, and it's not hard to find feminist statements to the effect that for most women marriage is still their best career option. But this career, The Woman Job, has other disadvantages besides the effect of compulsory heterosexuality. Although it does provide many women with the space and funding to bear and raise children, continuing to care for the children pays a woman little or nothing if her "employer" "fires" her or if she "quits." Take a look at only a few comments. Here is Scott's:

> [A] slippery downward slope . . . awaits the nominally middle-class woman when she loses her husband through separation or divorce.

And Chesler's:

> In 1983, the United States Census Bureau reported that in 1981, of 4 million mothers supposed to receive child support payments, only 47 percent did; that mothers who received court-ordered payments received about 55 percent of the amount due . . . and that paternal child-support payments averaged $2,110 a year. . . . child support payments accounted for 13 percent of the average income of fathers. . . . Fifteen percent of 17 million divorced or separated women were awarded alimony. . . . 43 percent received the amount owed. The mean alimony payment in 1981 was $3,000.[24]

Delphy says:

> In a study I was involved in, we found in one provincial [French] court that the ex-wife was awarded a *mean* of £10 per month per child. In general, courts in France [in the 1970s] will never instruct the ex-husband to pay more than one-third of his income to his ex-wife and children.[25]

Such statistics lead Delphy to argue that the situation existing for women in the labor market "constitutes an objective incentive to marry," and so it does. Women's wages are less than men's, even in nonghettoized jobs, and many women are limited to part-time jobs (sometimes with full-time job hours). Of course, there are many women whose jobs are necessary for their own support or because they are the heads of families (their numbers are increasing) or because their wages are necessary for a family in which they are one of two wage-earners, but even when her man earns enough to support a family, surely there is every incentive for a woman not to look for work in a job market that is in every way less rewarding to her than it is to him. But if she marries and does not "work" (a misnomer, as we will see), she then faces other constraints and other problems. This "fourth (26.7 percent) of adult women [in the United States] who have no income of their own" may find that they are poorer than their husbands. The reasons? According to Scott:

> Many people who are 'indirectly' *not* in poverty by virtue of the chief breadwinner's status *are* poor in the sense that their own access to resources is limited."[26]

That is, says Jessie Bernard:

> Many nonemployed housewives at all income levels have felt especially degraded by the unilateral control of their monetary resources. There is a whole body of female lore dealing with when is the best time to ask for money; how to finagle bills and

charge accounts to disguise expenditures; how to save secretly out of household allowances.

Oakley states:

> Family-budget enquiries, especially among working-class couples, persistently show that many wives are kept in ignorance of their husbands' earnings [1973, 1971]. British husbands are notably less generous in this respect than others: 70 per cent of British husbands in one study did not tell their wives what they earned, compared with 40 per cent in West Germany and 1 per cent in the United States [1975]. . . . half of one sample of working wives had received no increase in their housekeeping money even though their husbands were earning more [1974]. In other words, mothers and children can be in poverty while husbands are not. . . . Less than half the pay rises men get [in middle-class marriages] are passed on to wives [Britain, 1977]. . . . "Sharing" one's income (via a joint bank account and joint cheque books) may fit the middle-class ethic of companionate marriage, but it, too, renders wives crucially dependent on husband's economic resources.

Smith notes:

> If he chooses to drink his wage with his buddies after work, it may jeopardize everything she's trying to keep going, but it's his wage. If he makes a down payment on a car they can't afford, or buys into a power boat with his friends, it may throw off all her careful calculations for next winter's clothing, but it's his wage. If his union calls a strike, she's going to pick up the tab in work she has to put in to make up what she can't use money to buy at the store, but it's his job and his wage, and it's not her business. It's not her business if his politics get him first fired and then blacklisted even if everything she's worked for, the kid's security, the household furnishings . . . go down the drain.

And here's Rubin:

> Observers . . . often point to the fact that so many women handle the family finances [in the United States] as evidence that they wield a great deal of power and influence in the family. . . . However . . . among [my] professional middle-class families, for example, where median income is at $22,000—a level that allows for substantial discretionary spending—the figures flip over almost perfectly; the *men* manage the money in three-quarters of the families. Moreover, among those working-class families where some discretion in spending exists, almost always the husband handles the money, or the wife pays the bills while he makes the decisions. Conversely, in the few professional families where the women manage the money, almost invariably they are families [in which] . . . incomes are still quite low and the choices around spending are very limited. . . . Men manage the money when there is enough of it so that the task involves some real decision-making. Only then is the job worth their while.[27]

Note, please, that inequality in marriage is not a monopoly of the working class.[28] Rubin also notes:

> Middle-class marriages [are not] so much more egalitarian [than those of the working class] but the *ideology* of equality is more strongly *asserted* there . . . [and] an ideology so strongly asserted tends to obscure the reality, leaving middle-class women even more mystified than their working-class sisters about how power is distributed in their marriages.[29]

Middle-class wives—or rather, the wives of middle-class men—also perform different tasks from those performed by working-class wives.[30] Such differences in the job description do not necessarily imply more freedom. Indeed, the necessity of presenting a certain sort of social image, for example, may require the kind of psychological self-manipulation not needed for the working-class wife's more concrete job. Woolf, writing in the 1930s about the economic dependency central to the life and education of young Edwardian English ladies of well-to-do families (her own situation as a girl), finds the "higher" class position quite intolerable. Speaking of how "the daughters of educated men" rushed into war work when Britain entered World War I, she wrote, "So profound was her unconscious loathing for the education of the private house with its poverty, its hypocrisy, its immorality, its inanity, that she would undertake any task . . . that enabled her to escape." Rubin's description of the working-class women she interviewed is strikingly similar:

> There is, perhaps, no greater testimony to the deadening and deadly quality of the tasks of the housewife than the fact that so many women find pleasure in working at jobs that by almost any definition would be called alienated labor—low-status, low-paying, dead-end work made up of dull, routine tasks; work that often is considered too menial for men who are less-educated than these women.[31]

Moreover, whether women wish to enter the paid workforce or not, and whether they prefer marriage to paid work or not, an increasing number of women in the United States and England (and, I suspect, in all industrialized countries) *must* work for wages.[32] All my sources agree that this century has seen a steady increase in the number of women in the U.S. workforce. Obviously, 1940 was a watershed year; in that year (say most), U.S. women's participation in the labor force skyrocketed. But Jessie Bernard notes that female participation in the U.S. labor force rose "phenomenally after 1940" and adds that it rose "from 29.9 to almost 60 per cent, 59.61[,] in 1978." Paula Giddings states:

> Even in the woman-idealizing [U.S.] South, seven out of eight married women were working by 1940; the national proportion of such workers was six out of seven. The Women's Bureau under Mary Anderson conducted studies which showed that the great majority of women who worked in factories contributed at least 50 per cent to their families' income. Furthermore, more than half of all married women were employed in domestic and personal service or low-paying factory work.[33]

In Great Britain, according to Ann Oakley, the proportion of women in the labor force

> only began to rise dramatically in the late 1940s. . . . The jobs women took—whether new or old—tended to be those at the bottom of every scale: low paid, low status, unskilled. . . . In 1911, one in ten married women had a job; in 1951 one in five; in 1976, one in two. Two out of three employed women are now married.[34]

In Peggy Morton's words: "We are not talking about a group of workers that are peripheral to the economy, but a group which are central to the maintenance of labor-intensive manufacturing, and service and state sectors where low wages are a priority." For example, she adds that 75 percent of

all U.S. clothing workers are women, 65 percent of workers in knitting mills, and 51 percent in leather products.[35] From the 1950s onward, women no longer formed only a reserve army of labor in the United States, i.e., workers pulled into paid jobs when there's a shortage of male workers and forced out when no longer needed.

Female labor is also what Louise Howe calls "quality labor at a low price," as employers can hire women who are "relatively well-educated . . . for much less than men who have received a comparable education."[36]

In short, women's poverty is highly attractive to women's employers and even more worth preserving than the poverty of poor men—which is why women tend to be so strongly located in labor-intensive work. Where there is "a very high degree of monopolisation and automation" and "huge investments in plant or equipment," there is also a small one in labor; thus "the need to control wages is not an absolute." In "labor-intensive" businesses, labor is a big cost; these are the industries in which women usually work. Peggy Morton writes that equal wages in *this* sector would make necessary "a transformation of the industry."[37]

Thus employers pay "women's jobs" less than "men's jobs"; thus men defend "men's jobs" against entry by women; thus women are given a strong economic motivation to marry and stay married, are punished economically for divorce, and as mothers are punished economically for bearing and raising children who are everybody's indispensable future. Thus husbands subsidize not only their wives' domestic activities (as most of them think) but also their wives' employers' activities, under the mistaken impression that they are protecting their own jobs and their own earning power. Strictly in terms of family income, it would be to most men's economic advantage to maximize their wives' earnings. Employers would not like such a change—it would cost them a good deal. Husbands should—but often don't. Why?

Because paid work is not the only work that women do.

"The dinners," wrote Woolf in 1929, "are cooked, the plates and cups are washed; the children sent to school and gone out in the world. Nothing remains at all. All has vanished. No biography or history has a word to say about it."[38] But some voices from the past do find their way into the present. In 1739, Mary Collier, an English working woman, described her fellows' labor in the field with a vivid picture of what feminists now call the *second shift* or *the double workday*:[39]

> *When Harvest comes, into the Field we go,*
> *And help to reap the wheat as well as you;*
> *Or else we go the Ears of Corn to glean;*
> *No Labour scorning, be it e'er so mean. . . .*

To get a Living we so willing are,
Our tender Babes unto the Field we bear,
And wrap them in our Cloaths to keep them warm,
While round about we gather up the Corn. . . .

When Night comes on, unto our Home we go,
Our Corn we carry, and our infant too;
Weary indeed! but 'tis not worth our while
Once to complain or rest at ev'ry Stile;
We must make haste, for when we home are come,
We find again our Work but just begun;
So many things for our Attendance call,
Had we ten Hands, we could employ them all.
Our Children put to Bed with greatest Care. . . .
You sup and go to Bed without Delay,
And rest yourselves till the ensuing Day;
While we, alas! but little sleep can have,
Because our froward Children cry and rave;
Yet without fail, soon as Day-light doth spring,
We in the Field again our work begin
. . . .

The poet goes on to describe working women's labor in the wintertime ("Hard labour we most chearfully pursue") with its laundress work, its dishwashing, its polishing of iron and brass, and its brewing. At one point Collier sarcastically addresses working men:

Those mighty Troubles which perplex your Mind
(Thistles before and Females come behind)
Would vanish soon and quickly disappear
Were you, like us, encumber'd thus with Care.

She then asks the working men what on earth they want of women—aren't the women working hard enough?[40]

The double workday was always a problem for women—if not for ladies—but in the last two generations or so, having been "democratized" in the industrial countries, it has become a problem for many ladies too, which may be why there's been so much feminist comment on it. Howe, writing of the United States in the mid-1970s, speaks of "young mothers slicing themselves into five pieces to get everything done," while Oakley tells us that a " 'good woman' in the 1970s is one who has two careers: one as a wage/salary earner, and one as a home-provider, which includes up-to-date

knowledge of the techniques of child-rearing, meal-provision and sexual satisfaction."[41] Dale Spender maintains that women's work in the home produces men's leisure, and Scott calls the double workday "a high-wire balancing act."[42] Sanford and Donovan emphasize "the never-ending nature of women's work in the home" and how hard it is to tell when and whether such work is done. Smith notes the way men take such work for granted. Lee Comer even asserts that one of a wife's functions is to serve as "the container for the male worker's dehumanization. . . . A worker can punch his wife but not his boss!" (This is exactly Chesler's view of male violence against women.) Oakley, interviewing forty housewives in 1971, stressed the monotony of housework, its fragmentation, the time limits set on tasks by other tasks, its isolation, its structurelessness, and the contradictions of caring for house *and* children (who are neither clean nor tidy in their natural state). Jan Williams, Hazel Twort, and Ann Bachelli also speak of the housewife, the physical and emotional "crowding" in on her of her family's demands, the lack of time alone, the feeling of futility caused by the "compulsive circle" of maintenance work without closure or standards for people with whom one is leading a personal, not a "work," life.[43] After all, as Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James notice, "If you are not paid by the hour, within certain limits, nobody cares how long it takes you to do your work" or how much work you have to do.[44] All this and a paid job into the bargain!

Here are some more voices, these from the anthology *Women and Disability:* "Ninety percent of women alcoholics are left by their husbands; 20 percent of men alcoholics are left by their wives (National Council on Alcoholism, 1980)." In one study, when men became disabled, their wives "helped them manage instrumentally and affectively their personal and professional endeavors. . . . Disabled women . . . have no wives."[45]

Barbara Macdonald and Cynthia Rich write:

> Dr. Monica Blumenthal, a geriatric psychiatrist . . . explained that right now there are a million Americans who require twenty-four-hour care. . . . It's a myth, she explained, that the aged are being cared for by their families. "It's almost always a girl, a female child. And my impression is that the family nominates one person. . . . The family usually abandons this one person and doesn't lend a hand any more." So the problem of the aged falls on the daughters—and the daughters-in-law.[46]

In a support group for disabled women that I have attended, one-third of the members were the only people available to care for other disabled spouses or parents. A woman who had multiple sclerosis, a disease subject

to erratic recurrences, was caring for a husband who had just had a heart attack. Such situations are doubly stressful and many find a parallel in the situations of many women who belong to groups that are oppressed for reasons other than sex.

Here is Black psychotherapist Eleanor Johnson, describing a typical client of hers:

> She's come in to turn in her Mammy-badge after having allowed everyone to feed off her. Is that why she's so tired? Will she guard herself against me for fear of one more ounce of bottomless giving? Or will she fight me for caring since that's *her* lot, taking care of everyone but herself?[47]

Leghorn and Parker give examples of women's work:

> Women also produce a higher standard of living for their families. They make goods which in effect serve as luxury goods for families who would not be able to afford them if they had to buy them. . . . [thus they] bring the family's standard of living up . . . to the culturally defined minimum—that which is required either to meet social expectations (such as fashionable clothing or home decorations) or that which is required to survive economically within the cultural context (i.e. a car to get to work in Los Angeles, a bicycle for an African man working in a big town).
>
> Women everywhere also try to make ends meet by cutting down on expenses, which usually involves increasing domestic work. In industrialized countries comparison shopping must be done to counteract the effects of inflation. Women spend more time mending and washing clothes, and learning 16 new ways to make hamburgers. . . .

In short, as Rosalind Petchesky states, women thus "take over the state's job, smoothing the rough edges of the [economic] crisis and making it humanly endurable."[48]

As far as I can tell (although my knowledge is inadequate here), things do not seem to be fundamentally different outside the industrialized countries. Thus Robin Morgan writes, "The "two-job" burden is deplored by contributors from societies so different as China, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, Pakistan, Rumania, the Soviet Union, and the United States, to mention only a few."[49]

Thus, the editorial for the inaugural issue of the Indian feminist journal *Manushi* stated (among many other things) that "the burden of housework and childcare falls upon us. . . . And this heavy labour goes unacknowledged by society, even women themselves. When we ask a woman what she does, how often is the answer—'Oh, nothing—I'm just a housewife.' Why are we taught to trivialize ourselves and our labour?"[50] Admittedly my sources are few, but *Manushi*'s sources are not, nor is the resemblance between nations, I suspect, that far-fetched.

There are resemblances back through time too, including Florence Nightingale's complaint that anyone and everyone felt free to break in on women's privacy and women's time. And here is an early feminist book, reprinted by Virago only recently, originally published in 1825 and written—or so the volume tells us—by one William Thompson. In it, not only is a woman's work rendered invisible (against Thompson's wishes), but the reason for the invisibility turns out to be surprisingly familiar. In *Appeal to One Half of the Human Race,* Thompson's introduction states unequivocally that the ideas in the book are not his but those of his associate, Anna Wheeler. He merely "endeavored to arrange" them, he says, and why? Because she herself had not the leisure to do so![51]

Rosario Morales recalls her 1950s marriage, in which, she says, her husband was supposed to take care of her:

> Take care of me? Stuff! I did the taking care of. Trust nobody to see that though. That kind of thing is real invisible, especially in the fifties. That kind of work wasn't even *there,* except you stop doing it and boy, you'd get noticed, all right. Not just shopping and cooking and dishwashing and laundry and beds and floors and bathrooms but feelings and, you know . . . mothering.[52]

In 1976 Phyllis Chesler and Emily Jane Goodman invented an advertisement:

> HELP WANTED
>
> REQUIREMENTS. Intelligence, good health, energy, patience, sociability. Skills: at least 12 different occupations. HOURS: 99.6 per week. SALARY: None. HOLIDAYS. None (will be required to remain on stand-by 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.) OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT: None (limited transferability of skills acquired on the job). JOB SECURITY. None (trend is toward more layoffs, particularly as employee ap-

> proaches middle age. Severance pay will depend on the discretion of the employer). FRINGE BENEFITS. Food, clothing and shelter generally provided, but any additional bonuses will depend on the financial standing and good nature of employer. No health, medical or accident insurance; no Social Security or pension plan.

They add, "Absurd? But true. This is a fairly accurate summary of the job of a full-time housewife."[53]

Giddings quotes from a Ph.D. dissertation, "The Negro Woman's College Education," written by Jeanne L. Nobel for Columbia University in 1956, in which one of Nobel's respondents wrote:

> Even though she [the Negro woman] may have a professional job, the Negro man expects her to be a buffer for him—to work eight hours a day and come home and keep house. I am sure the Negro woman feels incapable of doing this adequately. For this reason she feels that somebody has let her down. She wants college to give her information on how she can do the impossible.[54]

Such voices could go on and on, from the many countries that have no definition of unpaid family worker or statistics about such workers, the vast majority of whom are women, to the lack of recognition that such work exists at all, to the industrialized nations in which research into such work is almost nonexistent.[55]

There is some of it, though, and what there is, is a shock. According to Howe, U.S. homemakers with outside jobs worked four to eight hours a day in their homes while the time spent by full-time homemakers ranged from five to twelve hours a day. Husbands' housework, both for those women who worked outside their homes and those who did not, averaged less than an hour and a half a day. (The time judged as housework did not include coffee breaks, talking to a friend on the phone, or "waiting for the kids to come home or lying in bed listening for a sick baby's cry.") The typical total workweek of employed wives (i.e., those earning money outside the home) varied from sixty-six hours to seventy-five. The total work of these women, waged and unwaged, averaged fifteen hours more per week than their husbands'. Howe comments: "Almost two ordinary work days." According to Scott, who is citing work done in 1981, recent time-use studies made in the United States find that on the average wives do "70 per cent of work in the home, husbands 15 per cent and children the rest." That is, in terms of the time involved, "a *minimum* of forty hours a week" for a

woman who does not work at a paid job outside her home (the italics are Scott's) and thirty hours if the woman does work outside the home. The "husband's contribution remains about the same whatever the family size and does not increase very much if his wife takes a job outside the home."[56]

Nor have these figures changed much over time; Jansen-Jurreit quotes figures for the United States that put the full-time housewife's workweek at fifty-two hours in 1924 and fifty-five hours in 1970. Between 1952 and 1967–68, the daily housework of gainfully employed women in the United States rose from 3.8 to 4.5 hours. According to Henley, U.S. women who worked only in the home spent about as much time on housework fifty years ago as they do now: fifty-one to fifty-six hours a week. Ehrenreich and English, using the same study as Scott does, note that "labor-saving devices," although they might make housework easier, were not in fact saving anybody time. Jansen-Jurreit mentions the growth of do-it-yourself repair in this connection and more time spent on shopping, while Scott notes that "capitalism is shifting onto the housewife work that was formerly done by paid personnel." Her description of the process: "instead of . . . phoning in her order, dropping off a shopping list, sending one of the children, or having a sales clerk explain the merchandise," the shopper must locate the goods herself, determine the price (difficult with the new scanning machines and the elimination of price tags), unload the goods herself, transport them to bus or car, travel long distances, unload them again, and store them. And, as Jansen-Jurreit notes, the more leisure time other members of the family have, the greater the tasks the housewife must perform. Oakley notes that the time men spend on work in the home is "relatively insensitive" to wives' employment for wages and that "men often say they do more in the home than they actually do."[57]

Nor do matters change strikingly as we look at other countries. Scott states that the time spent by women on housework in England has not altered during the past fifty years. In Moscow and Leningrad, says Jansen-Jurreit, there was some, but little, change from 1924 to 1965, with gainfully employed women spending 4.47 hours per workday in 1924, 3.87 hours in 1959, and 3.6 hours in 1965. (Figures do not include child care or the care of the old or ill.)[58] Here are some other figures:

Full-time housewives in twelve industrialized countries had 25 percent less leisure time than men. Women employed outside the home as well as inside it had less than that.[59]

The workday of a rural Indian woman begins "hours before the men's"; she fetches water for the family, in droughts walking as much as one to three kilometers to find it; she gathers food with "long hours of backbreaking labour"; she may "walk miles daily" to gather firewood.[60]

According to Scott, rural women in what she calls the "Third World"

"gather wood, carry water, garden, store crops, process food, and work directly in crop production"—all without wages. They are listed on the official records, "if at all," as unpaid family workers.[61]

A French study puts the time expended in housework in 1975 at 30 percent more than that expended by the entire nation in paid work.[62]

In Poland the "women work in 'two shifts.' " When the women working in the textile industry in Lodz were studied in the early 1950s, they said that most of their heavy labor took place at home.[63]

A multinational study in 1975 concluded that in all countries included in the study, gainfully employed wives worked an average of 5.7 hours for house and family on their days off. On working days they devoted 3.3 hours to housework, while men contributed 1 hour. In a Czech city, "the husbands did scarcely a quarter of the housework of their wives, while in Poland, the United States and France the men's . . . time varied between 12 and 17 per cent."[64]

Another study, published in 1973, found that the husbands who offered *no* help at all to wives who worked outside the home for pay were 49 percent in Italy, 39 percent in Luxembourg, 32 percent in West Germany, 31 percent in France, 26 percent in Belgium, and a mere 24 percent in Holland (which may have something to do with Holland's shorter working hours and larger number of kindergartens and preschools than other countries, as well as the small number of Dutch women who worked outside the home at that time).[65]

Time spent on housework where household machinery was available in quantity, for example, West Germany, was not less than time so spent where it was unavailable, as in the Soviet Union.[66]

In Swedish families in which husband and wife were both gainfully employed, 67 percent of wives did all the cooking, 80 percent all the laundry, and 53 percent all the cleaning (1982 figures). According to a 1983 report by the Swedish Ministry of Labor, women spent 35 hours weekly on housework, men 7 to 8.[67]

Chinese husbands "in many agricultural communes" enjoy leisure time during their lunch hours; their wives, also workers, do food preparation and child care during this time.[68]

As for child care—certainly a very important part of The Woman Job—let us note first that the very word "father" *did not even occur* in that standard work in the professional literature of the United States, the *Manual of Child Psychology,* for 1954. Although things have certainly changed since then, in 1973 Urie Bronfenbrenner, specialist in child development, "cited research reporting that [U.S.] fathers spent on an average less than a minute to twenty minutes a day with infants of either sex." Chesler reports a 1974 study that gives the figure as 37.7 seconds to 10 minutes and 26 seconds daily, while

another 1974 study estimated fathers' contacts with one-year-olds to be, on average, 15 to 20 minutes a day, and 16 minutes daily for children aged six to sixteen; and a study in 1976 reported that fathers spent an average of 15 minutes a day feeding their babies while mothers spent an average of 1.5 hours a day doing so. Nearly half these fathers never changed a diaper.[69]

In twelve European countries, "fathers scarcely took part at all" in "tasks involved in the care of small children—feeding, bathing, dressing, etc." And although there were crèches in India, Kishwar calls them "a farce"—far from workplace or residences, with neglected, ill-treated children cared for by untrained people.[70]

It's hardly surprising, looking at the above figures, to find Oakley flatly declaring that "free time" is a vacuous concept when applied to the lives of most women. She adds: "In the 1970s and 1980s, women are doing more of 'his' work than they used to, but men have made few inroads on 'hers.' This applies both to 'feminine' types of paid work and to feminine work in the home."[71]

Nor is it surprising, in light of the above, to hear that 59 percent of women surveyed in the United States, so often described by its politicians as the wealthiest country in the world, said *they had no leisure whatsoever.* The leisure of other family members, it seems, does not guarantee that of the housewife herself. As Malos puts it, "it is her work which provides the basis of other people's leisure."[72]

Not only does domestic work take large amounts of time; if paid for, it would cost a very great deal. Bernard calls "the operation and maintenance of the household" nothing less than *the largest industry in the United States* "in terms of the numbers engaged in it both as 'producers' and 'consumers.' " Oakley says the same thing about Britain's "largest industry." Estimating the cost of such an industry in hard cash, Scott quotes the Chase National Bank's 1972 figures for the United States—$275.53 a week at then-prevalent rates—and comments: "If all unpaid housework had been paid at that rate, it would have cost the country twice the national budget." Elsewhere in the same chapter she estimates that the tab for domestic labor, if financed by the U.S. government (so that the "average working man" could afford it) "would put the U.S. budget deficit to shame." Oakley sets the cost of such work for Britain as 39 percent of the British Gross National Product.[73]

As Debra Connors puts it, at such prices only the elite can afford to pay someone to "shop, transport children, cook, launder, clean or provide other consumer service." Without wives, "enormous and profit-handicapping resources would have to be devoted to catering for these . . . needs." Wives, Oakley says, take the place of servants in the modern industrial state.[74]

Or, as Scott herself sums up her chapter on women's unpaid labor: "The

work women do 'in exchange for' food and lodging and sometimes pin money could not be purchased by any man." This is certainly surprising enough, but Scott goes further: "Women's unpaid labor . . . supplies services and products that no economy is prepared to pay for." And further still:

> [According to International Labor Organization data] women do two-thirds of the world's work and receive 10 percent of the world's income. When I accepted a redefinition of work that included unpaid work and assumed that all income was payment for work done, I realized that men were getting paid at a rate eighteen times that of women.[75]

Writing in the early women's liberation movement, Shulamith Firestone asked who would do women's domestic work if women were "drafted . . . into the . . . commodity economy." Our current answer is simple: women will. Women will work for pay and will do their domestic work for no pay, no regular time off, no night out that can be counted on, and (if economically dependent) she has, says Rubin, "no way, short of years of nagging or divorce, to defy her husband's authority . . . about what she may or may not do." And very likely, whether the marriage is one of the working-class ones Rubin investigated or a middle-income one, there remains the work without which children and households perish, The Woman Job. The working conditions are terrible (all my sources agree about that) and yet the job is, globally, all but inescapable. It results in longer hours and comparative poverty for those drafted into it,[76] although it is not generally considered work at all. Feminists have made women's work visible in the last two decades by some very hard political work of their own, but the problem remains: Why must this work be loaded on to women? Why can't it, for example, be shared between the sexes?

I think the answer is simple.

Who on earth would be willing to cut his income by two-thirds and double his workday? This is what men as a sex-class would have to do to relieve women of women's double workday and poverty worldwide. Perhaps more to the point, *who on earth would be willing to cut his income by 40 percent and add two hours or more to his workday?* That is roughly what the sex-class of men would have to do to make the sexes in the industrialized countries (on the average) equally rich and equally poor. Is it any wonder that most cultures on this planet regard marriage, with its unsalaried work, as the goal of a woman's life? Or that women all over the world work longer hours and are poorer than men, or that domestic work is not even considered work?[77]

Many, many feminists have maintained that women are generally underpaid at waged work because marriage has been considered a woman's "real" job. Many have also noted that women's work within the institution of marriage and the family has been made invisible by considering it part of women's nature—and so not work at all. The conclusion most of these social critics come to is that "people" must be educated to perceive that domestic work is work, that it is not natural, and that is it not necessarily women's work. That is, they assume the root of the problem to be the *ideas* that most people have about marriage and domestic work and see the solution to lie in *changing people's ideas.*

I would like to turn these causal arrows around.

I believe, like Delphy (whose ideas have been very important to me throughout this book), that it is the *objective necessity* of domestic work (that is, somebody must do it) that is the *cause of marriage.* Because domestic work must be done by somebody, and because men and nations cannot afford to pay decently for it in the paid marketplace, women must somehow be induced to perform it. Therefore, as Delphy says, we have discrimination in the labor market—low pay, ghettoized jobs, and higher unemployment—*because* such discrimination will function to "turn and return women to marriage precisely because marriage constitutes their objectively . . . least bad 'career.' " The fact that women who marry have made a *job choice* is concealed by the belief that marriage, with its attendant domestic work, is purely personal and somehow "natural" to women. This belief, of course, in and of itself constitutes part of the social pressure to marry, as do social sanctions against divorce, casual sexuality in women, celibacy, or homosexuality. If you add, as Dorothy Smith does, that "women cannot earn enough to support themselves and their children outside the marriage relationship," you can then see the nature of the circle, since "that is where the trap closes for women in marriage."[78]

After all, if very large numbers of women were to recognize that domestic work *is* work, that it was no more natural to them than it was to their husbands, if they could at the same time find a better economic deal elsewhere, they might very well refuse to enter the job of marriage at all, or refuse to stay in it, or they might demand better working conditions within it and better pay. The Wages for Housework Campaign, says Gloria Joseph, "argues that housework is free labor" and gives the figure for Canadian women's housework as "roughly one-third of the Gross National Product." She calls it (quoting the Wages for Housework Campaign) "the single largest industry in Canada."[79] So perhaps it *is* already happening. And why not provide those better working conditions and better pay?

Because—remember those estimates above—The Woman Job is a job

for which no country and no large group of men (except for a small number of very elite men) can pay.

To put it bluntly, in the world as it's run right now, *they can't afford us.*

NOTES

1. Helene Moglen, *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), 174. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Harcourt, 1929), 112. Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Women, Church, and State: The Original Exposé of Male Collaboration against the Female Sex* (Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1980), 195. Originally published 1873.

2. In this chapter, I have made extensive use of Hilda Scott's *Working Your Way to the Bottom: The Feminization of Poverty* (London: Pandora, 1984). Some reviewers have objected to Scott's book and the phrase "feminization of poverty" on the grounds that poverty is on the increase only among White women in the United States and that U.S. women of color have long been familiar with it. I agree, and I also find Scott's recommendations for action inadequate. Nonetheless, I believe the book to be valuable both for its wealth of statistics and because Scott emphatically places the blame for women's poverty in what she calls the "Third World" on European and United States imperialism.

3. Ibid., 19; Linda Tschirhart Sanford and Mary Ellen Donovan, *Women and Self-Esteem* (New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1984), 201.

4. Ann Oakley, *Subject Women* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 292.

5. Scott, *Working,* 19.

6. Ibid., 20.

7. Ibid., 19; Barbara Macdonald and Cynthia Rich, *Look Me in the Eye: Old Women, Aging, and Ageism* (San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1983), 105.

8. Macdonald and Rich, *Look Me,* 105.

9. Oakley, *Subject,* 292.

10. Louise Kapp Howe, *Pink Collar Workers: Inside the World of Women's Work* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 3–4; Scott, *Working,* 17. Scott adds that at the professional level the gap between men's and women's earnings is greater than it is in working-class families (33). That is, women's wages rise more slowly than men's as one crosses this class line.

11. Scott, *Working,* 8, 9.

12. Ibid., 29, 27, 26; Madhu Kishwar and Ruth Vanita, eds., *In Search of Answers: Indian Women's Voices from Manushi* (London: Zed Books, 1984), 65, 17.

13. Oakley, *Subject,* 153; Scott, *Working,* 27–28.

14. Howe, *Inside,* 6–7.

15. Ibid., 5.

16. Sanford and Donovan, *Women,* 209; Scott, *Working,* 32–33.

17. Scott, *Working,* 26, 27; Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology* (New York: Anchor, 1984), 17; Scott, *Working,* 28. In 1972 (I can't, unfortunately, find later figures), women's wages in Japan were 47.5 percent of men's. In the early 1970s, among the women in the United States whom she interviewed (women married to blue-collar men), Lillian Breslow Rubin found the median income for full-time, year-round work to be $6,000 (Rubin, *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family* [New York: Basic Books, 1976], 236).

18. Howe, *Inside,* 9; Scott, *Working,* 62–63, 34; Howe, *Inside,* 148; Scott, *Working,* 34–35.

19. Scott, *Working,* 30–31. Howe presents statistics to the effect that in the United States in 1975 Black teenage women had "the bleak distinction of . . . the highest rate of unemployment of any group (including Black teenage males) in the nation." The unemployment rate of White teenage women in the first quarter of 1975 was 18.1 percent. For Black teenage women, the rate was *43 percent.* (Howe finds it understandably necessary at this point to emphasize that the printed figure is not a typographical error.) "A year later," she writes, "[during] economic recovery, the rate for black teenagers had barely moved" (*Inside,* 3). These are dreadful figures and I see no reason to assume that things have improved as the total economic picture has gotten worse.

20. Howe, *Inside,* 256.

21. Gloria Joseph and Jill Lewis, *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives* (New York: Anchor, 1981), 129; Oakley, *Subject,* 293.

22. Scott, *Working,* 30.

23. Ibid., Oakley, *Subject,* 184, 185; Kishwar and Vanita, *In Search,* 66.

24. Scott, *Working,* 18; Phyllis Chesler, *Mothers on Trial: The Battle For Children and Custody* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), 90.

25. Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression,* translated by Diana Leonard (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 104. I apologize for the possible out-of-dateness of this statistic. The particular essay of Delphy's in which it appears is dated 1976. Here is another out-of-date but very interesting parallel to Delphy's figure: until 1918, the year some women got the vote in England, the Bastardy Act of 1872 fixed five shillings a week as the most a father, whatever his wealth, could be made to pay for the support of an illegitimate child (Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* [New York: Harcourt, 1966], 168–69). Changing this kind of law was one of the suffragists' aims in getting the vote.

26. Delphy, *Close to Home,* 20; Jessie Bernard, *The Female World* (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 208; Scott, *Working,* 14.

27. Bernard, *Female,* 208–9; Oakley *Subject,* 254–55; Barbara Smith, *Toward a Black Feminist Criticism* (Brooklyn, NY: Out and Out Books, 1977), 50; Rubin, *Worlds of Pain,* 107–8.

28. The point I wish to make here is the precariousness of an economic and

social status that depends entirely on someone else's income and position. As feminists used to say (before we entered the "postfeminist" era), *Every woman is one man away from welfare.* Insofar as a particular woman's only or major means of support is marriage, that saying is still accurate.

29. Rubin, *Worlds of Pain,* 97–98.

30. Rubin points out that wives of professional, middle-class men

> are expected to participate in their husbands' professional lives by cultivating an appropriate social circle, by being entertaining and charming hostesses and companions. . . . Husbands who require wives to perform such services must allow them to move more freely outside the home if they are to carry out their tasks properly. The working-class man has no need of such . . . accomplishments since his work life is almost wholly segregated from his family life (ibid., 98).

31. Woolf, *Three Guineas,* 39; Rubin, *Worlds of Pain,* 169.

32. Feminists have been saying for years that the majority of women work at paid jobs because they must. In the United States, for example, "one-half of all gainfully employed women are already either supporting themselves or are in sole support of a family and this is a pattern developing in all industrialized lands" (Scott, *Working,* 13). Moreover, in Britain, one-parent families increased 66 percent between 1971 and 1981, to 12.5 percent of all families (ibid., 22). In the great majority of cases, "single-parent" means actually single mother.

33. Bernard, *Female,* 109; Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Morrow, 1984), 231. The percentages of women working for money are actually somewhat higher than they look. One must not assume a male labor force participation figure of 100 percent, since not all men are in the labor force from ages sixteen to sixty-five. Howe quotes figures from the 1975 *Economic Report of the President* (of the United States) to the effect that in 1973 only 87 percent of men aged twenty-five to fifty-four were actually in the labor force full-time in the United States (Howe, *Inside,* 255.) Another warning: Women's gains in the professions (or anything else, for that matter) must be compared with similar statistics *for men* in order to mean anything. It may be, for example, that women's this or that has increased only because the population in general has increased, or it may be that women's increases are exceeded by men's, or it may be that whole professions or trades have increased in numbers or decreased. Thus Jansen-Jurreit quotes U.S. Labor Department figures to the effect that from 1950 to 1960 the number of professionally qualified women in the United States rose by 41 percent. This looks like progress—until you find that in the same decade the number of similarly qualified men rose by 51 percent. She also cites a sociologist who found in 1970 in the United States that the more women who entered a particular profession, the more the income of the practitioners dropped, and also that the more men who entered a profession, the more the income of its practitioners rose (Marie-louise Jansen-Jurreit, *Sexism: The Male Monopoly on History and Thought,* trans. Verne Moberg [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982], 182).

34. Oakley, *Subject,* 146–47.

35. In Ellen Malos, ed., *The Politics of Housework* (London: Alison and Busby, 1980), 153, 150.

36. Howe, *Inside,* 259.

37. In Malos, *Housework,* 149–50.

38. Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (New York: Harcourt, 1957), 93.

39. She was defending English agricultural working women against a poem written in 1736 by Stephen Duck, an English working man, which described such women as lazy and feckless (Moira Ferguson, ed., *First Feminists: British Women Writers, 1578–1799* [Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1985], 257).

40. Ibid., 260–61. Ferguson calls Mary Collier "the first known rural labouring woman to publish creative work." She died poor, in her own words, "in Piety, Purity, Peace and an Old Maid." Collier wrote "The Woman's Labour" in 1739. The poem ends with a complaint about working people's exploitation by the rich, whom she compares to "owners" reaping gains of honey from the bees' constant toil. Of herself, Collier wrote that she was taught to read and write by her parents when "very Young and took great delight in it; but my Mother dying, I lost my Education" (ibid., 257). That is painful reading, but we may, if we wish, find some solace in her integrity as a poet and her insistence upon her identity as a creator. Thus, she writes, of her retiring to "a Garret" in 1762, that it was ever "the poor *poet's* Fate" (ibid., italics added).

41. Howe, *Inside,* 257; Oakley, *Subject,* 16.

42. Dale Spender, *Man-Made Language* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1980), 115; Scott, *Working,* 65. Oakley states that research on the servant class in European history is also almost nonexistent and compares women and servants as "secret agents maintaining the all-important cultural boundary between personal and public life." She notes that servants, like wives, were defined as the dependents of property owners and that servants, like wives, "were the last social group to receive enfranchisement as citizens" (Oakley, *Subject,* 182).

43. Sanford and Donovan, *Women,* 221; Smith, *Toward,* 48; Lee Comer, *Wedlocked Women* (Leeds, England: Feminist Books, 1974), 237; Phyllis Chesler, *About Men* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978); Ann Oakley, *Woman's Work: The Housewife, Past and Present* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 91–104; Williams, Twort, and Rachelli in Malos, *Housework,* 114–15.

44. Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community,* 3d ed. (Bristol, England: Falling Wall Press, 1972), 28–30. There have been many feminist arguments to the effect that pay for child-care and domestic work is as low as it is—and it is notoriously low, even in the rich United States—precisely because so many women perform the same work for no

pay at all. That is, the very existence of unpaid housewives drags down the going rate for any women who perform the same tasks for money.

45. Mary Jo Deegan and Nancy A. Brooks, eds., *Women and Disability: The Double Handicap* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1985), 8, 14.

46. Macdonald and Rich, *Look Me,* 48–49.

47. In Barbara Smith, ed., *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1983), 321.

48. Lisa Leghorn and Katherine Parker, *Woman's Worth: Sexual Economics and the World of Women* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 185, 176–77; Petchesky in Zillah R. Eisenstein, ed., *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 381.

49. Morgan, *Sisterhood,* 16.

50. Kishwar and Vanita, *In Search,* 242.

51. William Thompson, *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the Other Half . . .* (London: Virago, 1983), xxi, xxiii.

52. In Alma Gómez et al., eds., *Cuentos: Stories by Latinas* (New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1983), 121.

53. Phyllis Chesler and Emily Jane Goodman, *Women, Money, and Power* (New York: Morrow, 1976), 102.

54. Giddings, *When and Where,* 251.

55. Morgan, *Sisterhood,* xix; Scott, *Working,* 40–52; Oakley, *Subject,* 183.

56. Howe, *Inside,* 188, 188–89; Scott, *Working,* 67–68.

57. Jansen-Jurreit, *Sexism,* 173; Nancy M. Henley, *Body Politics: Power, Sex, and Non-Verbal Communication* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 53; Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1979), 179; Scott, *Working,* 67; Ann Oakley, *Subject Women* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 246.

58. Scott, *Working,* 66; Jansen-Jurreit, *Sexism,* 173.

59. Leghorn and Parker, *Woman's Worth,* 193.

60. Kishwar and Vanita, *In Search,* 262.

61. Scott, *Working,* 68.

62. Ibid., 59.

63. Jansen-Jurreit, *Sexism,* 175.

64. Ibid., 172.

65. Ibid., 175.

66. Ibid., 172–73.

67. Scott, *Working,* 68.

68. Leghorn and Parker, *Woman's Worth,* 193–94.

69. Bernard, *Female,* 133; Chesler, *Mothers,* 499–500.

70. Jansen-Jurreit, *Sexism,* 174; Vanita and Kishwar, *In Search,* 67.

71. Oakley, *Subject,* 249.

72. Bernard, *Female,* 117; Malos, *Housework,* 116.

73. Bernard, *Female,* 257; Oakley, *Subject,* 163; Scott, Working, 60, 58; Oakley, *Subject,* 163.

74. Connors in Susan E. Browne et al., eds., *With the Power of Each Breath: A Disabled Woman's Anthology* (Pittsburgh: Cleis Press, 1985), 104; Oakley, *Subject,* 167. The economist J. K. Galbraith calls wives a "crypto-servant" class that is "democratically available" to the sex-class of men (ibid., 163).

75. Scott, *Working,* 57, 71–72, x.

76. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: Morrow, 1970), 207; Rubin, *Worlds of Pain,* 96; Morgan, *Sisterhood,* 9–10; Macdonald and Rich, *Look Me,* 43.

77. Morgan, *Sisterhood,* 9; Macdonald and Rich, *Look Me,* 43; Kishwar and Vanita, *In Search,* 13.

78. Delphy, *Close to Home,* 116; Dorothy E. Smith, *Feminism and Marxism: A Place to Begin, a Way to Go* (Vancouver: New Star, 1977), 41. If you think Delphy exaggerates, take a look at Scott's offhand quotation of Isabel Sawill of the Urban Institute: "Poor families are not the most likely to break up. *The higher a wife's earnings,* other things being equal, *the more likely it is that the couple will separate*" (Scott, *Working,* 20, italics added).

79. Joseph and Lewis, *Common Differences,* 35.