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THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT : A TWO-HUNDRED YEAR SYNOPSIS

"I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, Sir,"
said Alice, "because I'm not myself, you see."

Lewis Carroll¹

It is not an understatement to say that we do not know ourselves. However, any woman who undertakes the study of the women's movement in Judæo-Christian societies over the last two hundred years, is faced with a self-revelation. If the struggle of women to be heard went on for millennia without success under 'patriarchal' rule, many reasons can now be enumerated, not the least of which is the fact that, in their political isolation from each other, they did not gather or record their history and, thus, had no social sense of their own communion and continuity.

The most significant factor, perhaps, is that for three millennia, more or less, they did not share in the religious or political law-making processes of their societies. As a logical consequence of this, each generation of women had to begin, anew, the struggle for human equality, social participation, and a legitimate share of status and authority with their male counterparts.

The obvious absence of women in official history books can be traced to such simple facts as that of the male historian's going no farther than the church parish records of births, marriages and deaths, to establish women's part in history.² Of course, even men would have no history from such records. Thus, women scholars have begun to piece together the incidents and events in the lives of their foremothers

1. Carroll, Lewis, *Alice In Wonderland*, (New York: The Library of Favorite Children's Classics, Capricorn Press, 1984), p. 40.
2. Fauré, Christine, "Absent from History" (L'Absente), tr. by Lillian S. Robinson, *Signs, Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 1, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Autumn 1981), p. 75.

and to collect all available data; everything from unrecognized literary masterpieces, memoirs, old records, letters, diaries, to forgotten documents in old archives or those which might be part of family heirlooms. They also examine any allusion to women in the abundant records of male struggles for supremacy.

When we speak of the Women's Movement, we mean group efforts for recognition and rights that go back to such important events as, for example, the French Revolution of 1789 against royal and ecclesiastical hierarchies which had oppressed the nations' citizens, and that had the women of France fighting for freedom alongside the men, fired by the same principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity that Jean-Jacques Rousseau had expounded in his philosophical treatises. It mattered not one whit to the women that Rousseau was aiming his reflections only at the men.³

In 1790, Mlle Jodin stated in her booklet, "Legislative Views for Women ("Vues législatives pour les femmes), "we, too, are citizens."⁴ while Olympe de Gouge, later guillotined by Robespierre and Marat, had written a constitution called "A Declaration of the Rights of Women as Citizens," ("Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne"), the first article of which affirmed: "woman is born free and remains man's equal in regard to rights. Social differences can only be based on what is useful to both."⁵ And Théroigne de Méricourt, with plumed hat and sword, served as a feminine military model, fighting in the army, and participating in debates for feminine citizenship at the "Club for friends of the Law" (Le Club des amis de la loi).⁶

Alas, any gains for the women were to be very hard-earned ones. There were to be not one but three revolutions and a civil war with ninety years of suffering before the Women's Movement would mature in France.⁷

3. Rousseau said something quite other for women in "Sophie" Book V of *Emile* (London: J.M. Dent, Everyman's Library, no date available), Rousseau's advice for women was, "If woman is made to please man and to be in subjection to man, she ought to make herself pleasing in his eyes and not provoke him to anger; . . ." p. 2.

4. Albistur, Maité, and Armogathe, Daniel, *Le Grief des femmes, anthologies de textes féministes*, (France: éd. Hier et Demain, 1978), p. 179.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

The year 1804 brought the inevitable reactionary tide which follows attempts to bring a too rapid social change. The "Emperor" Napoleon imposed his *Code civil* reinforcing laws and policies whereby women remained the property of fathers and husbands with no authority over their children, no right to money, land, sizeable inheritance, or to their own salaries if they worked;⁸ laws which affected French colonies such as Québec and Louisiana.

From an economic standpoint, only in 1907 were women allowed to open savings accounts when France as a State realized that the mother of a family was the thriftiest member of society and that the collective savings of mothers, modest as each one might be, helped boost the national economy.⁹ (Similar conditions existed in England and in North America under British Common Law, and the British North America Act.)

The incessant activity, the strong appeals, the debates, newsletters, newspapers and pamphlets published by women in nineteenth century France, deportations, guillotining, did not earn women a place in men's national records. This is how the use of the word 'man,' generically, has been misleading. For instance, early twentieth century historian Charles Seignobos writing about 'universal suffrage' stated that in 1848 everyone was eligible to vote. What he meant by 'everyone' was *every man* rather than just those men who owned property.¹⁰ This is a significant misstatement. Women were actively fighting for rights even as he wrote his version of history, and would not vote for almost a century after 'universal suffrage.'

Now, backtracking to 1789, as the women and men of France fought to overthrow their oppressors, Mary Wollestonecraft, from Britain, who had been inspired by the debates on liberty, equality, and fraternity during a stay in France, and who had observed and written about the events of the Revolution from her hiding place in Paris, returned to England, to write and publish her most important book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in 1792, based on the three all-important principles. The first edition of her book was quickly sold out and the book reprinted by a second publisher.

8. Dhavernas, Odile, *Droit des femmes, Pouvoir des hommes*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1978).

9. *Ibid.*

10. Fauré, Christine, "Absent . . .", p. 73.

It was not that women's rights were not already a lively issue in England, but that through Mary Wollstonecraft, there was a working document which stimulated debate in North America, as well, and the issue of legal and social rights for women was becoming more than just a local issue in each country.

Many elements were helpful to the women of England along with their struggle on many fronts: the writings of women such as Barbara Leigh Smith on Laws in regard to women;¹¹ movements for reform with Leigh Smith, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Mary Howitt, et al.; the trials of prominent women like Catherine Norton; the independent and positive action of people like Florence Nightingale, etc.; and of course, the intellectual alliance of Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill.

Writings and ideas about women when supported by men were more readily absorbed into the mainstream of the written philosophical tradition; thus John Stuart Mill's *On the Subjection Women* would appear to have been a way of piercing the patriarchal armour, internationally, where women's writings (a language unfamiliar to male expression, thought and experience) might be dismissed as foreign, irrelevant, and trivial.

We may think that women would have had an easier time in the United States, a young, democratic nation filled with idealism, that enshrined in its constitution the lofty principle that "all men are created equal" and whose War of Independence had been inspirational throughout the eighteenth-century world. However, the *intent* of that principle had never been inclusive of women any more than it had of Black or Native men.

Ironically enough, when women took up the cause of abolishing slavery for the Blacks, they found that they, themselves, were not free or welcome in their own society. They were told to return to their homes, even though they were speaking to growing audiences of concerned citizens requiring more and more public space and ever larger halls.

The story of Eve and ancient laws returned unabated to haunt women building a new life in a new land: ". . .and he shall rule over you"

11. Holcombe, Lee, *Wives and Property*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

(Gen. 3:16). The press and the pulpit reminded women of words by the Apostle Paul: "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve;" (I Tim. 2:12,13), and "the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home" (I Cor. 14:34,35) These sentiments had quite automatically been extended to government, law-courts, universities, and all other social institutions.

Consequently, the first women to speak in public in the United States around the 1830's, e.g., the Grimké sisters, were attacked in church sermons, pastoral letters, newspaper editorials, and sometimes faced angry mobs that pelted them with eggs or tomatoes. Nevertheless, they still drew audiences. And since one of the first women to speak in public, had been Frances Wright, an educated Scotswoman of independent means, other women who dared speak were derisively called "Fanny Wrightists." Yet all Frances Wright had counselled was inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge:

All I say is, examine; enquire. Look into the nature of things. Search out the ground of your opinions, the for and the against. Know why you believe, understand what you believe, and possess a reason for the faith that is in you.¹²

Important as it was to abolish slavery as the greatest injustice in the Judæo-Christian society of the time, there was another rallying point for women in that first movement for equality, autonomy, and legal and political voice. The effect of being legally owned by husbands and fathers, and of having all the money and property in the hands of the men, was to leave many women and children in extreme and life-long penury if a man drank away his salary or inheritance, and who, furthermore, was legally empowered to drink away his wife's moneys, or even to pawn the clothes on his children's back. There was no legal recourse for women or their children. This particular social blight directed

12. Flexner, Eleanor, *Century of Struggle, The Women's Rights Movement in the United States*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Balknap Press, The Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 27.

women to actively support the religious temperance movements which attempted to ban alcohol from society altogether in the misguided belief that the absence of alcohol could restore harmony to afflicted families.¹³

An important event for the entire feminine world perhaps the world over, occurred in July 1848, when a handful of women sat down together in Seneca Falls, New York, to write a women's "Declaration of Independence," and to call the first women's convention. The seeds for it had been sown eight years earlier at a World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, England (1840), where the American women delegates had not been allowed to sit and speak with their male colleagues, after an entire day spent by the men debating the issue of a woman's right to speak, with clergymen brandishing their Bibles at the feminine menace:¹⁴ Lucretia Mott, delegate, and the new bride of Henry Stanton.

The women were finally relegated to a curtained gallery, which, nevertheless, became the focus of attention when William Lloyd Garrison, a staunch abolitionist, arriving late from New York, elected to sit with the women and then drew attention to the gallery through his lively participation in the debates.¹⁵

So it was, that eight years later, Elizabeth Cady Stanton began her "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" with the words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. . ."¹⁶ Bold as that statement was for the time, Elizabeth went so far with her declaration as to ask for the vote for women, and this made the document controversial even among sympathizers, who feared that in asking too much, they would lose all.

The document had been prepared for, and was presented at, the very first convention on women's rights that was to be held one week later, and was advertised in the newspapers of all the nearby towns. Three hundred people, including 40 men, had come in carriages and wagons on the first of the two-day convention, July 19, 1848:

13. Gurko, Miriam, *The Ladies of Seneca Falls, The Birth of the Women's Rights Movement*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), pp. 48-51.

14. *Ibid.*, 48-51.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

Some had come out of curiosity, but many had been impelled by the same need as Charlotte Woodward. She was one of the large number of women employed by the glove industry of Seneca Falls. Since it was considered unfitting for women to work outside their homes, they did piecework in the seclusion of their own bedrooms. The money they earned was collected – and kept – by their husbands or fathers. "Most women," she wrote, "accepted this condition of society as normal and God-ordained and therefore changeless . . ."17

What makes Charlotte Woodward particularly noteworthy, is that she would be the only one, of some 100 people to sign the Declaration at that first convention, who would still be alive to cast her vote 72 years later when women finally obtained that right and privilege.

However, the first women's rights convention and their "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" were not well received by the general public or the clergy of the period. The convention was called "the most shocking and unnatural incident ever recorded . . ." and it was said that it would prove "a monstrous injury to mankind."18

Only one editor, Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune, was able to give a somewhat impartial statement, "however unwise and mistaken the demand, it is but the assertion of a natural right and as such must be conceded."19 Nevertheless, many women withdrew their names from the list in the onslaught of criticism and ridicule, church condemnations and derision from their families which followed the newspaper attacks.

It is worthy of notice that many of the women affirming equality and rights for women in the United States were Quakers (just as their British counterparts had been Unitarian) and had not been socialized or indoctrinated into subordination: Lucretia Mott, a minister and preacher, Martha Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, the Grimké sisters, Abigail Bush, and perhaps the hardest pioneer of the whole lot, Susan B. Anthony. The pacifist beliefs of the Quakers took nothing away from the stamina, strength, and persistence these women showed in seeking to redress social wrongs and dealing with practical matters.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

Education also loomed large. All of them had some degree of higher education as in the case of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, writer, lecturer and spokeswoman for almost 50 years. She had been tutored in Greek and Latin by the Presbyterian minister next door, and had gone on to be the only girl in the Johnstown Academy, Upper New York, pursuing Greek, Latin and Mathematics with the boys, and winning the second prize for Greek. Still, she was not permitted to follow the boys to Union College at Schenectady.²⁰

Also, Elizabeth had been the daughter of a judge, and she had sat in her father's office, as a child, hearing the financial difficulties of women who came to seek her father's legal counsel and seeing her father give money from his own pocket in the more desperate cases.²¹ She was thus aware very early in life of the discrepancy between the life of real women and the idealized stereotypes presented by tradition and custom.

We could say that, generally, women used the slower methods of education, information and persuasion as they gathered at rallies, held congresses, wrote articles, treatises and books, signed petitions and declarations, and so on. However, by the end of the 19th century, the women in Britain began to realize that if women were to attract the attention of the males, it would have to be on male terms. Emmeline Pankhurst touring Canada in 1911, after the fact, explained their actions saying, "men were more concerned with property than they were with people, so only by destroying property would the women be able to strike at men where it hurts the most."²²

Thus, before the turn of the century, British women had used men's tactics, destroying property, threatening the life of the Prime Minister, serving jail sentences, going on hunger strikes, and making front page headlines in the newspapers, all of which challenged the laws and the principles under which the men operated; the armies and policemen with which they enforced their law-system; and the reputations and fortunes they sought to establish and to preserve through the legal and political systems.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

22. James, Donna, *Emily Murphy*, The Canadian Series, (Don Mills, Ontario : Fitzhenry and Whiteside Ltd., 1977), p. 38.

There did not appear to be a dividing line when it came to injustice towards women. The struggle of women for legal and educational rights was the same, to some degree, in all Judaeo-Christian societies because the laws had the same pious basis. There can be little doubt that the struggle of women in larger, older, or more influential nations, such as France, Britain, and the United States, helped the women of smaller countries and that the successes of the Northern nations who had retained some of their indigenous customs, such as Sweden and Norway²³ could also influence those nations whose laws were entrenched in the Judaeo-Greco and Roman stream.

Unfortunately, women's fights for legal, economic, political, educational, religious and any other rights, were not recorded in the official history books that were studied by children in schools, so that a major part of the human struggle was not incorporated into our cumulative knowledge or the systematic dispensation of it. This gave girls nothing to prize or value as *historical* womanhood; nor did it sensitize boys.

Among the more spectacular incidents in Canadian history, for example, is what has become known as the "person's case." In 1916, Emily Murphy became the centre of that very special historical event for women, when she became the first woman judge in the entire British Commonwealth. She had been named magistrate to a family court in Edmonton that was to deal with the offenses of women and children. Up until that time, these had been tried and sentenced exclusively by men.

Records show that on her first day in court, a frustrated lawyer flung at Murphy the accusation that she was "not even a person."²⁴ This became the standard invective levelled at her by disgruntled attorneys. A resulting investigation found that under the *British North America Act* of 1867, women, along with children, criminals, and the insane, were not categorized as persons under the law. Further, there was even a report that a judge in Great Britain, sentencing a woman for voting in 1876, had stated that women were "equal in matters of pain and penalties, but not in matters of rights and privileges."²⁵ In other words, women

23. Havel, Jean, *La Condition de la femme*, (France: Librairie Armand Collin, 1961), p. 62.

24. James, Donna, *Ibid.*, p. 38.

25. Benham, Mary Lile, *Nellie McClung*, The Canadian Series, (Don Mills, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Ltd., 1975) p. 45.

could be persons when it suited a particular purpose. This meant that varying interpretations of a law, with the discretionary power of a judge, could allow a hefty wedge of bias to enter court decisions and judgments.

Accordingly, a long struggle ensued for Canadian women from the accusations of 'non-person' against Emily Murphy until the attainment of the legal status of 'persons' for all. The Supreme Court of Canada issued its final verdict in 1928 (twelve years later) that women were *not* persons and could *not* serve in an official position such as that of Senator.

Fortunately for the five women who petitioned the case, the final authority, at that time, rested in Great Britain, rather than in the Canadian capital. The women, including suffrage champion Nellie McClung, had the alternative of going to a higher authority, which they did. The case was taken to the Privy Council in London, England, in June 1929. In October of the same year, it was ruled by the Privy Council that parts of the *British North America Act* had become obsolete, and that women were indeed persons. The case lent itself well to sensational headlines in the newspapers: "Privy Council Declares that Women are Persons."²⁶

Only one case had demanded more persistence than the 'person's case' and that was obtaining the vote for the women in the Province of Quebec, where women like Thérèse Casgrain though spurned at every session of the Provincial Legislative Assembly as "the same old faces every year," held on tenaciously in order to gain political equality for women 20 years after the Federal, and every other Provincial Government, had granted it to the other Canadian women.²⁷

One of the many early twentieth century thinkers most frequently referred to by women, is Virginia Woolfe who wrote *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938). In the former, she explains the impossibility of developing any creativity without a minimum of independence and personal space. She argues that if young men were encouraged to leave home and go out to fend for themselves and carve a niche in the world, even as prime inheritors of the family fortune, women as servants and possessions with much stricter socialization even by their mothers, and without space or time to call their own, were not in a

26. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

27. Casgrain, Thérèse *Une Femme chez les hommes*, (Montreal: Editions du Jour, 1971).

position to write down their thoughts even if they had some chance at the minimal education accorded them.

In mid-century, Simone de Beauvoir published *Le Deuxième sexe* (*The Second Sex*, 1949) which was the product of long, careful, thorough and painstaking research within the context of the French and European tradition, and intellectual argument. De Beauvoir's entire life, furthermore, was an affirmation of her independence, her autonomy, and her rights as an individual within her own society.

The Second Sex made no vague accusations. Every argument was supported and documented. It penetrated the philosophical fortress constructed of exclusive language, reason and logic that had been supporting male power and pride. It showed quite clearly that the problems and the poor image of women arose from what had been emphasized in a literate tradition constantly feeding on its own past, oblivious to growth, development, outside cultures, or to the talents and opportunities in its own living population. The flurry of refutations provoked by her book was soon to die down leaving her work as a classical exposé and as a foundation for an intellectual defense of women and their right to a different experience.

The next woman of widespread influence was Betty Friedan in the United States, who published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. This time, the approach was sociological rather than philosophical, with Friedan going from door-to-door to meet the housewives, isolated in their urban apartments and homes, attempting to make their houses into the shining models held on soap and floor-wax commercials.

The Feminine Mystique revealed real women living up to the traditional, stereotypical role-playing. Once again, there was a discrepancy between the mythopoetic embellishments we perpetuate and day-to-day life. Friedan spoke of 'the problem' in women's lives: a problem unnamed, and not yet articulated, but shared and immediately understood among women.²⁸ The problem, however, was to become more and more clearly defined in the succeeding years and decades.

Four years after Friedan, and taking stock of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Mary Daly wrote *The Church and the Second Sex* (1967)

28. Spender, Dale, *For the Record, The Making and Meaning of Feminist Knowledge*, (London: The Women's Press, 1985), pp. 9/10.

which explored de Beauvoir's claims in relation to the religious tradition, but which also sought ways of having the presence of women acknowledged and validated by a male and celibate Church government (a position she would later repudiate as unpracticable). The result was that Daly was "promptly dismissed from her teaching job at Boston College" and it was her students, demonstrating on her behalf, who eventually had her reinstated in the name of 'academic freedom.'²⁹

The next decade saw a change in the tone of women's writings. Five major books were published in or close to 1970.³⁰ All of them were angry. A new field of debate was being cleared for a new decade, and a larger part of the feminine collective felt it had been pushed to its limit. All areas of human endeavour had served to stimulate fury in the better-informed women beginning with theology, which demeaned women in order to elevate men; history, which had left them out; massacres such as the European witch-hunt, which had been swept under the rug; pseudo-scientific explanations of feminine inferiority, dating back to the nineteenth century; Freud's theory of penis-envy, as a basis for a women's psychology; lower wages in the market place; and ever new studies and arguments invading the printed word. As Elaine Morgan put it in *The Descent of Woman*, "It's just as hard for man to break the habit of thinking himself as central to the species as it was to break the habit of thinking of himself as central to the universe."³¹

Be that as it may, it was in 1970 that Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* alerted women to the fact that no matter how many legal, educational or political rights they might have gained, it would be of no use to them unless they could overcome their childhood conditioning and acculturation, because these were the sources of quiescence which kept them inoperative rather than actively redressing the imbalances and the injustices in their societies; Kate Millett, at the same time, demonstrated from the writings of some male authors, how they perceived human sexuality as being a tool to assert supremacy and power over women rather than as a

29. *Horizons, A Women's News Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (Winnipeg, June-July 1984), p. 23.

30. Spender, Dale, *For the Record*, pp. 19 ff.

31. Elaine Morgan is quoted by Ruth Hubbard in "The Emperor Doesn't Wear Any Clothes: The Impact of Feminism on Biology," *Men's Studies Modified*, editor Dale Spender, (London: Pergamon Press, 1981), p. 224.

means of integration between the sexes; Eva Figes showed how all-pervasive were the patriarchal attitudes which women received as 'heritage,' and how solidly these attitudes were based on male privilege; Robin Morgan tried to break the stereotypical imagery of women as hostile and competitive toward each other, and to rally them together in a great sisterhood that would foster such basic political action as the gathering of small groups of women together to improve their lives; Shulamith Firestone, who seemed to be the most deeply disturbed at women's oppression, took the extreme position that man was the enemy and went so far as to suggest artificial insemination, test-tube babies, and a total separation of the sexes.³²

Through the steady raising of Western awareness, women stumbled on less obvious but even graver consequences resulting from the subversive imagery of Eve and an ideology of domination. One woman in ten, in the official statistics,³³ is beaten, wounded and sometimes killed by her husband or mate, in all levels and classes of society. And these are the *known* cases. Almost equivalent to wife-battering is the psychological bruising of women by the billion-dollar industry of pornography, smearing the image of womanhood in affluent Western society with an economic base that fuels it and a legal system powerless to stop it.³⁴ Pornography and violence against women underline an inherent contempt for sexuality (perhaps even fear of its life-giving force) and the alienation that is rooted in sexual difference.

Yet, there are also subtle ways of removing power and self-confidence in the human person. The much-discussed Broverman Report of the early 1970's, on human mental health, with its thirty-six qualities for men and *eleven* for women, proved to be the proverbial last straw instrumental in causing some women to put aside the studies about women written by men. The Report's presumption that "only men are mentally healthy"³⁵ proved to be a lever which would pry many a woman away from her dependency on male authority.

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32. Dale Spender gleans the central message of each of the five authors in *For the Record*.
 33. Lederer, Laura, "Then and Now: An Interview with a Former Pornography Model," *Take Back the Night*, ed. Laura Lederer, New York: William Morrow and Co. Inc., 1980), pp. 57-70.
 34. Chester, Phyllis, *Women and Madness*, (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 67.
 35. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Women detected in psychiatry the same agency of domination and subordination which patterned all the institutions of Judaeo-Christian societies, from the Church, to the family, to the law-courts, to the work-place. An all-knowing male therapist, or male-trained therapist, was likely to be the superior and to treat a 'deviant' woman, cast in the role of an inferior. Treatment consisted in re-educating, re-aligning, and re-adjusting the patient to her stereotypical and traditional 'role' even if that was what was making her 'ill'. In fact, as Phyllis Chesler points out in *Women and Madness*, mental illness is "defined by our masculine cultural ethic,"³⁶ and she tells of women like writer Zelda Fitzgerald and poet Sylvia Plath who were locked up for life in mental institutions because they would not accept the limits imposed on their talents and abilities by roles, functions or traditions.

When American women, in the sixties, started taking matters into their own hands, forming self-help groups that met in 'consciousness-raising' sessions through the National Organization of Women (NOW), they were drawn out of the isolation in the 'private sphere' of their homes, and into the problem-sharing and problem-solving networks of the greater feminine sphere. Traditional hierarchy was eliminated as a basis for therapy, in these sessions, and was replaced by parity and exchange between human beings with diverse growing and learning experiences.³⁷ This was one more major step forward.

As women scholars developed their proficiency in every discipline, from anthropology to zoology, and as their numbers grew, the feminine perspective and experience, and the feminine questions and answers began to take shape. While women in the first decades of the twentieth century had been gradually allowed into the patriarchal system of education, it had become evident in the latter part of the century, that the system was drawn up in a male consensus of what knowledge is and what education should be. It had to broaden its scope beyond the male sphere if women were to be fully included.³⁸

In many ways women scholars threatened the established institutions of learning by showing lapses in organization and logic. Research by

36. Corbeil, Christine, et. al., *Intervention Feministe, l'alternative des femmes au sexisme en thérapie*, (Montreal: Editions coopératives A. Martin, 1983).

37. Spender, Dale, "The Patriarchal Paradigm and the Response to Feminism," *Men's Studies Modified*, p. 166.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 162/163.

women on women's issues would at first be considered 'non-data' in most university subjects³⁹ and women's writings were said to be biased, even though there had never been any question of a male bias in the male premises of any academic discipline.⁴⁰ One of the reasons for not including women in the official curriculum given by a team of male researchers in Britain was "that they had not been included in past studies."⁴¹ In one London institution the study of women was included under 'Studies in Deviancy.'⁴²

Women found that in education, as in politics, law, economics, or any form of what had previously been a male endeavour, the male's competitive drive seemed to make him more concerned with bolstering the bright student and screening out failures than with actually transmitting knowledge. One woman-philosopher went so far as to compare the presentation of an academic paper to a 'hunt' where the person reading his treatise might be a 'quarry' while the listeners were the hunters "waiting for a weak point."⁴³

Women discerned a major difference in the way women communicate with each other from that of men with men :

Since early reports from consciousness-raising groups, feminists have focused on the social interaction of women in small groups as offering a different model of human communication (Jenkins & Kramer '78). Out of this a paradigm is emerging which emphasizes co-operation rather than competition, a dialogue of complementary alternatives rather than a dialectic of opposing forces.⁴⁴

This may be a clue to future improvements on the social and national scales where the full inclusion of women and of the feminine mode of cooperation and conciliation could potentially bring an equilibrium to a competitive, military and one-sided masculine imbalance that presently dominates the public and even the international spheres.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

42. Ruth, Sheila, "Methodocracy, Misogyny and Bad Faith: The Response to Philosophy," *Men's Studies Modified*, p. 48.

43. Spender, Dale, Introduction, *Men's Studies Modified*, p. 13.

44. Spender, Dale, "The Patriarchal Paradigm . . ." *Men's Studies Modified*, p. 166.

Thus, the principal contribution of women's self-study, of the women's movement, and especially of women's scholarship, "has been to identify the closed circle, to insist that men's view of the world is partial and *if presented as the whole* is false."⁴⁵

In conclusion, patriarchal history, as we have seen it from the French Revolution until today, indicates to us that the onus for equality and autonomy rests with those who are oppressed. No man, holding the reigns of power, will relinquish them without first encountering resistance in the allegedly 'powerless'. And furthermore, men's perception of women has been distorted by legal, political and economic concerns and priorities.

In contrast, the women's movement has shown that silence, submission, self-denial, self-sacrifice, withdrawal from the world, and all the other negations, far from being social values which help *anyone*, man or woman, were a misuse of woman's flexibility and creativity, that actually helped give rise to tyranny and to sustain it. They were limitations to, and the disavowal of, women's considerable social skill and ability. If life is, in essence, a constant negotiation among many needs and views, especially between the male and female experiences of life, then there is not likely to be peace, democracy or justice without the full participation of women in all social spheres.

45. Author's emphasis.

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