

Quote, Unquote

"... families are undergoing constant change, due to numerous factors, including the quest for equality between men and women and widening opportunities for women as well as shifts in values, particularly those supporting individualism... Social roles are being redefined and we have been witnessing the reorganization of family forms. All these changes in social life and in the roles ascribed to men and women have brought with them fundamental transformation of lifestyles and personal aspirations... Social policy should seek to educate and inform family behaviour to eliminate anti-social or detrimental practices. It should foster equality between women and men, including equality in their roles as spouses and parents; it should encourage a more equitable distribution of family resources and a more flexible sharing of household and parental responsibilities in order to create greater opportunities for women within and outside the family."

(Women and the Family, London, Zed Books 1994 preface vii)

"Although the internationally recommended minimum age for work is 15 years... and the number of child workers under the age of ten is far from negligible, almost all the data available on child labour concerns the 10-to-14 age group... more than 73 million children in that age group alone were economically active in 1995, representing 13.2 per cent of all 10-to 14 year olds around the world... No reliable figures on workers under 10 are available though their numbers, we know, are significant. The same is true of children between 14 and 15 on whom few reports exist. If all of these could be counted and if proper account were taken of the domestic work performed full-time by girls, the total number of child workers around the world today might well be in the hundreds of millions."

(World of Work #16 June/July 1996 p.12)

"... political rape and honor rape are inextricably linked. In this context, honor, izzat, is intimately tied in with the sense of a male 'natural' right to possess and control womenfolk... Women cannot possess honor in the same way as men. They represent honor; they symbolize honor; they are honor. Objectified into manipulable possessions, symbolic or otherwise, women lose a sense of individuality in the eyes of the community. Raping a woman robs a man of his most prized possession, his honor, but it obliterates a woman's whole being. Once a man's honor is violated, all he can do, all he is expected to do, all he should do is to seek revenge. As for the raped woman, no one

cares or dares to care, she doesn't exist as an individual."

(Faith and Freedom, New York, Syracuse University Press, 1995 p.169)

"Feminists are not against women having children. But motherhood should not be considered to be every woman's destiny nor should womanhood be equated with motherhood. Feminists believe that every woman should have the choice of whether or not to have children... Although only woman can bear a child, anyone can bring it up or mother it. Motherhood means looking after, nurturing and caring for another human being. It means helping another person develop physically, emotionally and mentally. Such mothering can be done by anyone, even by a man. The ability and capacity to mother is not biologically determined. Besides, if the world really considered motherhood to be the most noble of activities - if that is what you get Nobel prizes for - men would not have allowed women to monopolize it. For all their praise of such an activity, men are averse to practicing it themselves. Feminists believe that children would grow up better if they get the best from both their parents. Mothering would then - and only then - become truly creative, joyous and fun for everyone concerned."

(Women in Action, 3/95 pp. 44-45)

Women have real reasons to fear feminism, and we do young women no service if we suggest to them that feminism itself is safe. It is not. To stand opposed to your culture, to be critical of institutions, behaviors, discourses - when it is so clearly not in your immediate interest to do so - asks a lot of a young person, of any person. At its best, the feminist challenging of individualism, of narrow notions of freedom, is transformative, exhilarating, empowering. When we do our best work in selling feminism to the unconverted, we make clear not only its necessity, but also its pleasures: the joys of intellectual and political work, the moral power of living in consequences, the surprises of coalition, the rewards of doing what is difficult. Feminism offers an arena for selfhood beyond personal relationships but not disconnected from them. It offers - and requires - courage, intelligence, boldness, sensitivity, relationality, complexity, a sense of purpose, and, lest we forget, a sense of humor as well. Of course young women are afraid of feminism - shouldn't they be?

(Ms. Magazine vol. V, #3 November/December 1994 p. 21)