

# *THE PRIVILEGED SEX*



By

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# **BERSERKER**

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## **BOOKS**

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## The Privileged Sex

Mothers differentiate between bringing up children from the age of 2. As they grow up, little girls are expected to master the art of getting things from others in exchange for nothing.

Esther Vilar, *The Subjugated Man*

With all the men working frantically to acquire the resources they need to spend time with the bodies of the women they like, they don't have a minute to help each other.

Esther Vilar, *The Subjugated Man*

Whatever men do to impose themselves on women, in the world of women, they don't count for anything. In the world of women, only other women count.

Esther Vilar, *The Manipulated Man*

Absurd as it may seem, today's men need feminism far more than their women do. Indeed, feminists are the last to describe men as they like to see themselves: self-centred, power-obsessed, ruthless and uninhibited when it comes to satisfying their instincts. As a result, the most aggressive Liberals find themselves strangely in the difficult position of doing more than anyone else to maintain the status quo. Without their arrogant accusations, macho would no longer exist, except perhaps in the movies. If the press didn't portray men, who are in fact the sacrificial lambs of this 'society of men', as rapacious wolves, the men themselves would no longer crowd so obediently into the factories.

Esther Vilar, *The Manipulated Man*

Martin van Creveld, Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is one of the world's leading experts on military history and strategy. Born in the Netherlands and educated in Israel and the UK, van Creveld has taught and lectured at virtually every major institute of higher strategic education,

both military and civilian. He is the author of several hundred newspaper and magazine articles and has appeared on radio and television in many countries. He is also the author of twenty-five books. Most of these deal with military history and strategy, but he has also written on political history, women's history, US history, Israeli history, the history of consciousness and the history of equality. His works have been published in twenty different languages.

In the United States, he is best known for his authoritative works on military history and strategy: *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (1980) is, along with Sun Tzu's *Treatise on War* and Clausewitz's *On War*, the only book written by a non-American on the US Army's list of recommended reading for officers; with *Technology and War: From 2000 BC to the Present* (1991), he is also on the reading lists of the Canadian Army and the Royal Australian Navy.

In Germany, he is best known for his studies of the Wehrmacht, including *Kampfkraft: Militrische Organisation und militrische Leistung 1939-1945* (1989) and *Hitler's Strategy, 1940-41, the Balkan Clue* (1973). In an interview with the German magazine *Focus*, he compared the Israeli army to the Wehrmacht (i) ; in the preface to the latest edition (2005) of *Fighting Power* (1989), he states that the Wehrmacht was involved in crimes and made crimes possible, but was not structurally criminal; all three of these judgements, coming from an Israeli, deserve to be reported.

Although most of his books go against the grain of established theories and opinions and have caused controversy, none has been more controversial than *Das bevorzugte Geschlecht* (2003); written in English around 1999-2000, it was not published in English, under the title *The Privileged Sex*, until 2013: by himself, because he had not found an Anglo-Saxon publisher, even though it had been published by such prestigious publishing houses as Cambridge University Press. As soon as he had finished the manuscript, he revealed its contents to some Israeli acquaintances, who themselves talked about it. "The result was a memorable telephone conversation with a well-known Israeli journalist. It was early in the morning and her call dragged me out of bed; I still have the photo my wife took of me while I was giving the interview, sitting naked on one of those little round Ikea stools right in front of a mirror! For my trouble, the lady, not to use the less flattering terms that spring to mind, produced one of the most hostile texts ever written about me. And it worked. At the start of the new academic year, a few weeks later, I had to call security to force my way through a crowd of around two hundred people who had come to protest against my 'macho' views" (ii). One hundred and fifty years after the invention, on the pretext of treating so-called female hysteria (iii), of a massage device in which parts were set in vibration by a clockwork movement, replaced three years later by an electric motor, we must face the facts: so-called hysteria, whether female or male, despite the many improvements that have been made to this apparatus over time and its use by an ever-increasing number of people, is still clearly not being cured.

Martin van Creveld's 'macho views' are that women are not oppressed by men and have never been oppressed by men. Women are in fact the privileged sex, always have been in the past and continue to be, probably more than ever. He has no more difficulty in demonstrating this than did Ernest Belfort Bax (1854 - 1926), the first to campaign for 'men's rights' and whose writings, including *The Legal Subjection of Men* (1890), produced in response to John Stuart Mill's essay on *The Subjection of Women* (1869), essentially set out to demonstrate the bias of English law in favour of women: "[the facts], he says, reveal a state of things in which, down to the minutest details of law and administration, civil and criminal, women are unjustly privileged at the expense of men" (iv). As a lawyer, he was well placed to know.

But haven't men long been unfairly privileged at the expense of women in the legal field?

Women, by virtue of the control they exercise over the womb, the cradle and the kitchen, and of the psychological, moral, intellectual and sexual immaturity of men (v), hold men under their supremacy, if counter-powers are not established; the law is one such counter-power; given that, in the struggle between the sexes, women are endowed, let us say by nature, with weapons far more terrible and effective than those available to men, it is justified that, in order to re-establish more or less the balance between them, women should not be equal to men, either before the law or before work (vi), including before pay (vii); otherwise the latter are totally at the mercy of the former. Like Bax, author of *The Fraud of Feminism* (1913), it goes without saying that van Creveld is radically opposed to feminism. Like all anti-feminist writers, he even tends to fixate on this movement, without seeing that it is, or was, only the tip of the iceberg. "Was": if feminism, according to some feminists, is moribund, it is because it no longer has any reason to exist, except as a museum fossil, having, contrary to what these same feminists claim with false modesty, achieved its objectives, which officially were the emancipation of women in all areas and the extension of their rights and role with a view to obtaining equal status with men. The hidden part is made up, in the so-called Western countries, of those millions of anonymous women who, without in the least recognising themselves in the feminist ideology, are united to each other by bonds as fusional as those found among blacks, by a Law perhaps even more exclusive, albeit unwritten, than the Torah, and driven by an esprit de corps possibly even stronger than that of a people as particularistic and exclusivist as the Chinese, are working more or less subconsciously, in the grey mediocrity of a routine as mechanical as the movement of an industrial mincer blade lined with velvet, with an almost immovable smile on their lips, to totally feminise society, mentally and professionally, by systematically demeaning any heretosexual white man worthy of the name and by just as systematically elevating any man or woman of colour, any female, homosexual, asexual or transsexual individual, etc., In short, anyone with whom they have an elective affinity, with the aim of establishing a theogynaecocracy that does not speak its name. Woman," Nietzsche rightly said on this subject, "has always

conspired with the types of decadence, with the priests, against the 'powerful', the 'strong', the men" (ix).

The myth of the oppressed woman is the cornerstone of this conspiracy.

## Introduction

Like most books, this one was born of curiosity. A long time ago, I read Simone de Beauvoir. According to her, the world has always belonged to men, without anyone ever having been able to explain it satisfactorily. Struck by this idea, I decided to find the reason; I, the man and the historian, would solve the enigma that she, the woman and the literary figure, had posed.

Born in 1946, I grew up in a world where everything revolved around the old myth of the oppression of women. According to legend, there was once a golden age when people lived in large families and tended their gardens. Both men and women worshipped the earth goddesses and spent their lives in blissful ignorance of fatherhood. Government was in the hands of the women and the men were happy, or at least satisfied, with this arrangement. Eventually, however, this Garden of Eden was destroyed. The benevolent reign of women came to an end and the reign of corrupt men began. With the defeat of women came materialism, competition, hierarchies, war and countless other evils, from venality to rape, from meat-eating to environmental destruction. For thousands of years, women groaned under patriarchy. But the dam broke and the tidal wave swept in. Modern feminism appeared in all its glory and the world changed forever: Long live the revolution!

If this fairy tale were true, when, where and why exactly, I asked myself, was the matriarchy overthrown? How did the oppression of women begin and how did it develop? How have men, who make up fifty per cent of humanity, been able to impose their will on the other fifty per cent, everywhere and at all times, ever since? As I searched the literature for answers, I quickly came to the conclusion that there was an important continuity. Almost every author accepts the oppression of women as a fact and is content to illuminate the details, string together horrific examples and piggyback on the evidence provided by others of the triumph of patriarchy. Very few ask when and where it came into being and, even more remarkably, how it has lasted from the earliest times to the present day.

Among those who have asked this question are two twentieth-century authors: John Stuart Mill and Friedrich Engels. For Mill, the "subjugation" of women was the result of their "inferior muscular

strength", which in turn gave rise to customs and laws that discriminated against them. For Engels, the invention of agriculture and private property excluded women from the production process, confined them to the home and caused the transition to monogamy, the only way to identify legitimate heirs.

Neither of them could really prove their theory; Mill didn't even make a serious attempt to do so. To this day, despite all the attempts that have been made to link this transition with the so-called 'Mesolithic Revolution', no one has been able to explain how matriarchy, assuming it ever existed (a), was overthrown and how patriarchy came into being. What's more, these answers miss the real point. In the past, people have often postulated the spiritual and intellectual inferiority of women and described them as irrational, hot-headed, emotional and dependent. Many of these claims have been refuted by modern science; studies of men and women carefully divided into test groups under (supposedly) laboratory conditions have shown that these assumptions have little basis in fact. Some authors even call women's 'tenderness' a 'myth' and claim that, if men had let them train properly, female limbs would have developed muscles and endurance similar to those of men. But these assertions, far from answering the riddle posed by de Beauvoir, only make things more complicated. If it is true that women are physically, mentally, emotionally and intellectually equal to men, how could men have oppressed them for so long? And if women are oppressed, isn't that proof that they are not equal to men?

Many, starting with Karen Horney in the 1920s, have tried to square the circle by comparing the position of women to that of an oppressed minority who, although discriminated against, aspire to the privileges enjoyed by their oppressors. But even ignoring the fact that women are the only minority representing a majority, the analogy is flawed on two counts.

Firstly, it is recognised that members of a minority often outperform the majority; this is the case, for example, of German Jews, who were vastly over-represented in the fields of medicine, law, banking and culture. Secondly, the relationship between the sexes is, to a certain extent, regulated by supply and demand. There is no doubt that men desire women and cannot live without them. Consequently, if women had been a minority, they would not have had an inferior status, but a superior one; to the point where each of them could have married and led several men around.

Even more surprising: if women are oppressed and rebellion against patriarchy is the solution, why do so many women indulge in the "illusions of post-feminism" and so few respond to feminism's call to arms? [1] Why is it that one in three women in the United States is a feminist, while many others have an extremely negative view of feminism? b) Why, from Florence Nightingale to Simone de Beauvoir, have many well-known women claimed never to have suffered the discrimination that would be the fate of their sex? [2] Why do surveys of women of different nationalities show that most of them do not feel



discriminated against? [3] Why do only twenty per cent of all European women who do not have children - and only ten per cent of those who do - think that the best thing that can happen to a woman is to work? And, perhaps more fundamentally, given that women have rebelled with all their might, why has their rebellion gone nowhere and why is the 'best society' nowhere in sight? (c)

In fact, the vast majority of modern feminists have accepted that feminism has not achieved its aims. Some activists speak of a "golden cage we now call feminism" and wonder why so many women have turned their backs on their movement. Others deplore the "death" of feminism. Even in the most advanced Western countries, the least that can be said is that the doctrine of gender equality has been formally applied and most of the legal obstacles to women's participation in public life have been removed. But even in these countries, an institution, a profession or a professional field is only conquered by women when the prestige enjoyed by these sectors among people of both sexes begins to decline, as do payments. Neither oppression nor discrimination can explain this; other mechanisms are apparently at work here.

So many questions and contradictions had built up in me since I had started work on this book a few months earlier that they gradually began to affect my mental equilibrium; seeing me in this state, my wife recommended a long walk. As soon as I was in the street, I realised that I had been asking myself the wrong questions, that all the problems I had encountered in my research would be solved, if only I could admit that my hypotheses were wrong. If women are not oppressed, this would explain why there is no convincing account of the origins and perpetuation of their so-called oppression. If women are in fact the privileged sex, it would explain why most of them are apparently more or less content with their lot and why more women haven't thrown away their beauty products and burnt their bras to don overalls and take up male jobs like those in the waste industry.

Above all, this reversal would explain why the vast majority of women, instead of fighting their oppressors, still do everything they can to seduce them: why they attract them, marry them, sleep with them (not necessarily in that order) and have their children. Certainly, the assumption that women are content with their privileges is more convincing than the claim, made by at least one feminist and arguably more insulting to women than any made about them by themselves or by men, that generations of them have been "mistaken about truth, morality, or even their own interests." [4]

When I say 'privileged sex', I don't mean to deny that nature has in some ways made women's lot harder than men's, by endowing them with weaker, less robust bodies and making them bear the burden of menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. Nor does this mean that society has always done its best to help them bear this burden, or that it has made their lives a paradise. This book simply aims

to highlight the fact that even this medal has two sides - that women are compensated for the disadvantages they suffer by privileges that offset or even outweigh them. The authors, determined to see oppression everywhere, are no more eager to mention these privileges than are the writers, guilt-ridden as they are by their female collaborators. And yet, if we ignore these privileges, much of the relationship between men and women becomes incomprehensible. My aim here is to clarify them.

The broad outlines of this book are as follows. Chapter 1 sets the scene, first by examining the basic elements of the myth of the oppression of women in various times and places, and then by demonstrating the falsity of this myth. Chapter 2 discusses the different paths to masculinity and femininity respectively, and shows how nature and society have conspired to make it much more difficult to become and be a man than a woman. Chapter 3 examines the privileges that women have always enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, in relation to work. Chapter 4 explains how, because women traditionally work less and perform easier tasks than men, different societies, at different times and in different places, have sought to ensure women's economic well-being by making men responsible for providing everything necessary for their subsistence. Chapter 5 examines the position of women in relation to crime and the law, and shows that laws are often specifically written and applied in favour of women. Chapter 6 looks at women's exemption from war and attempts to protect them from its horrors. Chapter 7 looks at the consequences of granting women a privileged status, namely the possibility of leading a more comfortable life, receiving more social benefits and living longer. Chapter 8 looks at why women, despite their many privileges, continue to bemoan their lot in life. Finally, Chapter 9 presents my conclusions.

When I embarked on this project, I initially feared that finding evidence of women's privilege would be as difficult as extracting a few ounces of gold from tons of rock. Not only did my fears prove unfounded, but it soon became clear that the problem was not that there wasn't enough documentation, but that there was almost unbelievably too much. To gather, sort, index, evaluate, digest, classify and prepare all this documentation, I would have had to live a hundred times older than Methuselah. I can only ask the indulgence of readers for having undertaken this gigantic task and hope that the many gaps in my research will be filled by others, more qualified than myself.

I would like to express my gratitude to those who have helped me in my work on 'Privileged Sex'. My gratitude goes to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which funded my stay in Potsdam during the first year of my research. I would also like to thank the Margaret and Axel Johnson Foundation and its director, Mr Kurt Almqvist, who provided me with money to buy books. Last but not least, I would like to thank those who helped me find documentation, those who listened to me discuss my research and those who reviewed my manuscript and helped me avoid countless errors and misinterpretations. In alphabetical order: Ms Kate Aspy, Dr Yuval Harari, Ms Margalit Israeli, Dr Chaim Kahana, Dr Martina Kayser, Dr Jonathan Lewy, Dr Miriam Liepsma, Mr Amit Perl, Professor Israel Shatzman, Ms Ella

Shofman, Mr Paul Spier, Ms Varda Schramm and Professor Ben Ami Shillony. I don't know what I would have done without you; thank you, thank you, thank you all.

Finally, special thanks to Professor Benjamin ("Beni") Z. Kedar. Although he is a medievalist by training, I have very often drawn on the advice of this man who seems to know everything and who, in a way, knows everything. Having known my theories for a long time, he was sceptical at first. I don't know whether I managed to convince him or not. However, his doubts didn't stop him from providing me with everything I've come to expect from him over the last three decades. His conversation, encouragement and criticism are the very definition of friendship, and for that I express my sincere gratitude.

Martin van Creveld, *Das bevorzugte Geschlecht*, Gerling-Akad-Verlag, 2003, translated from the German by B. K.

(i) "From the point of view of organisation, doctrine and relations between the three branches of the armed forces, no army of the twentieth century more closely resembled the Wehrmacht than the Israeli army" (Michael Lkonovsky, *Ans Hakenkreuz geschlagen*, 11 April 2015 [https://www.focus.de/magazin/archiv/serie-und150-teil-vi-ans-hakenkreuz-geschlagen\\_aid\\_212248.html](https://www.focus.de/magazin/archiv/serie-und150-teil-vi-ans-hakenkreuz-geschlagen_aid_212248.html)); "no army of the twentieth century was more like the Wehrmacht than the Israeli" (whose creation dates back to the 1920s) and not "no army of the twentieth century was more like the Israeli than the Wehrmacht"; for those able to grasp the nuance.

(ii) Quoted in <http://www.martin-van-creveld.com/tag/the-privileged-sex/>. It cost Esther Vilar (\*) even more to clean out the Augias Stables when, more than twenty-five years after publishing *Der dressierte Mann* (1971), she wrote in the preface to the second English edition of the book (1998): "I had [...] not fully appreciated the isolation I would find myself in after writing this book. Nor had I considered the consequences it would have for my writing and even for my private life - I still receive violent threats"; she repeated this ten years later, in the third edition.

(\*) Esther Vilar, whose maiden name is Esther Margareta Katzen, is a writer of German origin and nationality, born in Argentina in 1935. After studying medicine, psychology and sociology and practising medicine, she devoted herself entirely to writing. She is best known for a trilogy that includes *Der dressierte Mann* (1971), published in English as *The Manipulated Man* (Abelard-Schuman, London, 1972; Pinter & Martin, London, 1998, 2008) and in French under the title *L'homme Subjugué* (Stock, 1972), then *L'Homme Manipulé* (Omnia Veritas, 2017), led to her being labelled not only "sexist, but also fascist" (Im Clinch, *Der Spiegel*, 10 February 1975); *Das polygame Geschlecht* (1974) (*Polygamous Sex: ou, Le droit de l'homme à plusieurs femmes*, A. Michel, 1976) and *Das Ende der Dressur: Modell für eine neue Männlichkeit* (1977) (*For a new virility*, A. Michel, 1977).

The first book shows how men are manipulated by women; the second explains why this manipulation is possible; the third, which is much less realistic, suggests ways of remedying it. To return to *L'Homme Manipulé*, which anticipates van Creveld's thesis, it asserts and shows that women are not oppressed by men, but that they control men in a relationship which, without most men being aware of it, is to their advantage. Like *Anatomy of Female Power: A Male Dissection of Matriarchy*, it identifies gender ("Men," she writes, "have been trained and conditioned by women, much as Pavlov conditioned his dogs, to become their slaves. As compensation for their labour, men are allowed to periodically use a woman's vagina"), flattery, emotional blackmail, marriage and children as some of the main tactics women use to achieve their ends.

(iii) Rachel P. Maines, *Technologies of orgasm: The vibrator, 'hysteria' and women's sexual satisfaction*, Payot, 2009; see also <https://fordham.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.5422/fordham/9780823255962.001.0001/ups-o-9780823255962-chapter-4> as well as Heinz Duthel, *Global Prostitution Data: Facts and details of global prostitution*, ePub, 2018.

(iv) Quoted in Tim Browne, *Classics of Men's Rights: Shaw Alphabet Edition*, 2013, p. 22.

(v) See <https://elementsdeducationraciale.wordpress.com/2017/12/10/postface-a-anatomie-du-pouvoir-feminin>.

(vi) For the fundamental reasons set out above, it would be a mistake to call for legal equality between the sexes, as almost all those who campaign for "men's rights" do; while men would be equal to women before the law, they would still be subject to women's psychological and sexual ascendancy.

(vii) In the current state of affairs, where (, since 1919,) women unfortunately have access to all professions, it is perfectly legitimate for a man's salary to be higher than a woman's for equal work, firstly because men, whether married or not, spend a greater or lesser proportion of the money they earn on satisfying the whims of the women they date, and secondly because women receive more social benefits than men. However, the belief that there is a pay gap between men and women for equal work and equal 'competence' is a myth, and there is no need to explain why it complements the myth of the oppression of women by men. In the United States, it has been exposed by various authors, including Diana Furchtgott-Roth (*The Gender Wage Gap is a Myth*, in Noël Merino (ed.), *The Wage Gap*, Greenhaven Press, 2014; see also, for a summary, id., *The Gender Wage Gap is a Myth*, 26 July 2012

<https://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/gender-wage-gap-myth-3786.html> or <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-gender-wage-gap-is-a-myth-2012-07-26>; the subtitle of the article, 'Bad comparisons make for bad data', sums up the problem. In France, the fact that the so-called pay gap between men and women is calculated by a body like INSEE, mainly on the basis of the sum of all net salaries received annually, regardless of working hours, means that the statistics in this area cannot be taken seriously in any case.

(viii) See <https://ernestbelfortbax.com>.

(ix) Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, translation by Henri Albert, *Œuvres complètes de Frédéric Nietzsche*, vol. 13, vol. 2, Mercure de France, 1903, p. 195.

[1] See Vicki Coppock et al, *The Illusions of 'Post Feminism': New Women, Old Myths*, Taylor & Francis, London, 1995, chap. 1; Sherrye Henry, *The Deep Divide: Why American Women Resist Equality*, MacMillan, New York, 1994 [p. 1-36]; Jean J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the Era*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986.

[2] On Florence Nightingale, see Gertrudee Himmelfarb, *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values*, Vintage Books, New York, 1994, p. 102; on Simone de Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin, 1968, p. 199 [original ed.: *La Force des choses*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 1963]; Carly Fiorina, Sherianne Shulerr, 'Breaking Through the Glass Ceiling Without Breaking a Nail. Women Executives in Fortune Magazine's 'Power 50' List. In *American Communication Journal*, December 2003, vol. 6, no. 2, <http://ac-journal.org/journal/vol6/iss2/articles/shuler.htm>.

[3] For the United States, see Dahlia Moore, *Labor Market Segmentation and its Implications: Inequality, Deprivation and Entitlement*, Garland, New York, 1992, pp. 145-67; for Germany, *Das Rattenrennen nicht Mitmachen*, *Der Spiegel*, October 1998, p. 112; for Ukraine, Solomea Pavlychko, *Conservative Faces of Women in the Ukraine*. In Mary Buckley (ed.), *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 226.

[4] Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Rowman & Littlefield, Totowa, NJ, 1983, p. 44.

(a) To be meaningful, the question of whether matriarchy existed must be coupled with the question of where and when it existed. A study of the customs, law and religion of certain coloured peoples clearly shows that, in their social organisation, women in ancient times held power in the family and played a predominant political role (<https://elementsdeducationraciale.wordpress.com/2016/08/19/isis-1/>), and it is clear that the type of society currently emerging in so-called Western countries is fundamentally gynaeocratic.

(<https://elementsdeducationraciale.wordpress.com/2017/12/10/postface-a-anatomie-du-pouvoir-feminin/>) [Translator's note].

(b) These questions were answered in the last lines of our introduction to this preface. [Translator's note].

(c) "Women's 'rebellion' didn't get very far"? The author himself admits a little further on that "[e]ven in the most advanced Western countries, the least that can be said is that the doctrine of equality between the sexes has been formally applied and that most of the legal obstacles to women's participation in

public life have been removed", so that, from the woman's point of view, "the best of societies" is well in sight, while for the man worthy of the name, it constitutes a veritable hell. [Translator's note].

2

The three myths

### 1. The myth of oppression

This chapter aims to demolish several of the myths concerning the oppression of women by men. These myths begin with the claim that men in developing countries shorten women's lives by depriving them of food and medical care. In fact, in almost all countries (developing and developed), women live longer than men. These myths also include the belief that the reason there are so few women in 'difficult' professions such as engineering is that men 'block the way'; [5] in fact, even Stalin failed to force female students into technological fields [6] Some myths about the oppression of women are simply nonsense; Such as the claim that the QWERTY keyboard, invented over a century ago, continues to be used because it makes life more difficult for female typists [7]. Others are downright grotesque. Such is the argument that doctors who, at the turn of the twentieth century, persuaded mothers to breastfeed their babies and so reduce infant mortality rates were guilty of "male imperialism towards women" [8].

In this chapter, I will focus on three case studies. I have chosen them because they have led to some of the most vehement denunciations. The first is the claim that, in ancient Greece, men confined women to the home and rarely allowed them to leave their rooms. The second is the claim that the European misogynists who engaged in witch-hunts, arresting, torturing and executing countless women, did so simply to preserve the rights of the patriarchy. The third is that the National Socialists persecuted women almost as much as they persecuted homosexuals, gypsies, Jews and others.

### 2. Did Greek women live in confinement?

The debate about the situation of women in ancient Greece, and particularly in Athens, is even more topical today than it was two centuries ago. Some, like Rousseau, saw the Greek attitude to women as a model. Others rejected this model, claiming that it oppressed women and was intrinsically bad. Although the seclusion of women was only one of the many misdeeds of which Greek men were

accused, this accusation played a crucial role in the attack on patriarchy. In the words of one historian, for women to be oppressed, it was first necessary to ensure that they "almost never left their flats". If women "rarely crossed the threshold of their homes" [9], it was because they had to be oppressed.

The argument that has just been recalled is made up of two propositions. The first is that women were confined to their own flats inside the house; the second is that they were forbidden to leave them. However, if women were in fact allowed to appear in public, it would not have made much sense to confine them to certain rooms in the house. The main source 'proving' that Greek women did not leave their homes is generally considered to be Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*. The work, which is more an exercise in rhetoric than a description of real life, sets out to explain how an ideal wife should look after the house while her husband goes about his business. The second source is a passage from Euripides in which a woman declares that "a woman, whether innocent or guilty, is exposed [to slander by the very fact that she does not stay at home: I forbade myself even the desire to leave, and shut myself up in my house, without admitting into my homes the flattering talks of women" [10].

Greek literature also contains numerous references to this issue. "Most of the time he lives shut up in his house like a woman, envying the citizens who travel outside," says Plato. In the "Funeral Oration given by Pericles in memory of the Athenians who died in battle in the first year of the Peloponnesian War", the Greek statesman declares that the best woman is the one "of whom there is the least talk, good or bad" [11]. However, these statements should be understood as the expression of a cultural ideal, rather than as a simple description of the reality of the time. Similarly, the Jewish proverb that "all the honour of a king's daughter is indoors" does not prove that Hasidic women were confined to their homes.

To begin with, in mythology it is clear that women do not live in confinement [12]. In a passage from the *Iliad*, Zeus, in order to help the Greeks, confines the deities to Olympus. Although this measure applied to goddesses and gods alike, his wife, Hera, took no notice of it. After making love to Zeus, she escaped from Olympus to help the Trojans. The goddess of the sea, Thetis, had no difficulty in visiting her son Achilles and acting as his messenger on several occasions. The same goddess left Achilles' father, Peleus, because he didn't find him attractive enough. She does not appear to have been particularly kidnapped. In the *Odyssey*, Aphrodite escaped to have an adulterous affair with Ares. Athena helped Achilles outside the gates of Troy and welcomed Odysseus back home. The goddesses, including Daphne, Persephone and Persephone's powerful mother Demeter, used to stroll through the fields. Artemis haunted the forests and mountains and was never confined to a house.

The same is true of the human heroines of the Greek epics. During the siege of Troy, Helen watched from the city walls as her two husbands, Menelaus and Paris, fought. Far from reprimanding her, Priam, her father-in-law, had himself invited her to do so [14]. Andromache met her husband outside the gates of Troy and often visited her friends in the city. Hector's mother Hecuba and her ladies-in-waiting also witnessed the final duel between Hector and Achilles from the walls of Troy. In the *Odyssey*, Nausicaa and her maids went to the river to wash their clothes. When Ulysses recounted his adventures in the hall of King Alcinoos, both his wife and daughter were present. In the absence of her husband, Penelope preferred to stay at home. However, there was nothing to stop her appearing in public whenever she wanted. Greek tragedies are also full of cases of this kind; if Greek women had really been kidnapped, the vast majority of Greek myths would have been meaningless.

What's more, goddesses belonged, by definition, to the upper classes, just like the ladies of mythology, who were related to powerful men. Although many of them spun and wove, none were expected to work outside the home. For this reason, and also because they had servants of both sexes whom they could send on errands, they lived more at home than ordinary women. Most people belonged to the middle or lower classes and could only afford a few slaves at best. They did not live in cities but in the countryside, where they worked in agriculture. In fact, there is abundant evidence that women worked outside the home [15]. Greek women went to the fountain to fetch water or wash their clothes.

Others worked as nurses or midwives or as courtesans, acrobats and prostitutes. Others were agricultural workers. Women even worked as shop assistants, as is clear from the fact that, in Athens, it was an offence to reproach a citizen, male or female, for selling at the market [16]. Aristotle wrote that it was both impossible and unjust to prevent poor women from leaving their homes. After all, he noted, they had no slaves to do their shopping or accompany them to the market [17].

Women also left their homes, as the literature of the time shows, to visit their favourite soothsayer [18], take part in certain public ceremonies [19], admire works of art on the Acropolis [20], visit prisoners [21], plead their case with arbitrators [22] and visit courtrooms to arouse the judges' sympathy for their male relatives [23]. Women also listened to public speeches; one of them, Elpinice, criticised Pericles for giving a speech in honour of the Athenians killed in the war against Samos [24]. Plato says that refined women preferred tragedy to comedy; from this and two other passages by the same author, it is clear that women frequented theatres [25]. Not only did women attend the funerals of their loved ones, but, in their absence, these funerals could not take place. Women took an active part in religious affairs [26]. They could become priestesses, and some priesthoods were reserved exclusively for women. Some of the religious rites in which women took part were performed on a daily basis, while others were performed at festivals held on fixed dates. Some festivals were mixed, while others were reserved for women. None of them could have taken place if the women had been confined to their homes. Not to



mention the festival of Dionysus, when women left not only their homes, but also their towns, to travel to the mountains where the festival was held.

Thousands of works of art show women performing all kinds of activities: dressing, putting on jewellery, weaving or eating at the table, playing jacks, looking after children or spinning. While some of these activities could certainly have been performed indoors, others could have been carried out either indoors or outdoors. This even applies to sexual intercourse; one vase shows a woman masturbating near a fountain, watched by another woman and a man. In the cases where we see them meeting a satyr, carrying water, playing ball, making a sacrifice or dancing ecstatically, the scene could only have taken place outdoors. If art had been the only evidence we had of ancient Greece, any speculation about the claim that Greek women were closeted would have quickly ceased.

Other accounts are obviously available. Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* is without doubt the most important account of Athenian life in the early fourth century BC. This treatise, it should be noted, was part of a series of works whose aim was to present reality as it should have been rather than as it was. One of the characters, Ischomachus, explains that human children are fragile and need shelter. To ensure that young children grow up at home, the gods have made sure that women love them more than men. As for men, they are fit for "travel and military campaigns". Human laws reflect those prescribed by the gods. Men and women are praised or blamed according to whether or not they follow their respective natures. Ischomachus compared his wife's work to that of the queen bee and declared that if she deserted the household, it would collapse [27]. The fact that he assigns her mainly domestic duties does not mean that he forbids her to leave the house. To draw such a conclusion from *Oeconomicus* is as wrong as to claim that, since it was considered shameful for a man to spend too much time indoors, they lived outside like beasts.

If women were free to leave the home, it obviously made no sense to lock them in, and even less sense to lock them in their flats. On the other hand, a closer look at the sources that contain references to women's flats reveals that most of them were in fact those of female slaves. Female slaves, says Ischomachus, occupied separate flats so that their master could control their reproduction. It is true that it was considered unseemly for a stranger to enter the inner rooms of a house uninvited. In one case, the intruder was assaulted and prosecuted [28]. Yet it was perfectly acceptable for a man to visit a friend and talk to his wife [29]. Even today, many otherwise modern people would not like their guests to peek into their bedrooms, and no one would dare claim that this proves that they are locking their wives in there. At most, there is evidence that Greek women were more likely to be at home than away [30]. There might also be evidence that it was out of modesty that Greek women left the dining room and retired to the inner rooms when their husbands had guests.

Faced with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, some modern historians have used casuistry to argue that women in ancient Greece lived in confinement. If ancient Greek beds were narrower than American beds today, it is obviously because men and women did not sleep together and women occupied separate flats that men rarely visited [31]. The fact that Ischomachus' wife ran the household was only because Xenophon "challenged the traditional role of the Athenian woman" [32]. If countless paintings show women engaged in all sorts of outdoor activities, it is obviously because these women must have been either courtesans or slaves. If, in myth and in theatre, most women move about as they please, this proves that imaginary women did what real women could not [33]. The reason there is so much evidence of women appearing in public in the decades following the Peloponnesian War is because of the vast and completely undocumented social revolution that the war brought about.

In truth, the question facing modern historians is not whether Greek women lived in confinement. Rather, they need to know how to account for their stubborn refusal to face the facts.

### 3. The great witch-hunt

Over the last four decades, an enormous amount of material has been published on witch-hunting in modern Europe (1500-1650). In English-speaking countries, interest in the subject was aroused by Keith Thomas's *Magic and The Decline of Religion* (1971). He proposed new interpretations and established new methods of analysis in this field. According to Thomas, "the idea that the witch trials reflected a war between the sexes can be dismissed" [34]. This assertion has not, however, prevented other researchers from claiming that the witch-hunts had their origins in male hatred of women. One scholar even went so far as to assert that the phenomenon, "far from being simply a reflection of an age-old stereotype, the by-product of a patriarchal society [...] [was] part of and an example of the permanent mechanism of social control of women" [35]. However, it is not easy to explain how and why patriarchy would have led to the organisation of a witch-hunt at that particular time. Instead of trying to answer this question, I shall endeavour to show that the witch-hunt was not the work of misogynists determined to imagine the most horrible crimes in order to burn certain women and put others in their place. First of all, it should be emphasised that contemporary men and women firmly believed in witchcraft [36]. The existence of witches was no more in doubt than the existence of a God or the rotation of the sun around the earth [36bis]. Contemporaries would have scoffed at the idea that witchcraft was "a crime without criminals", as some modern historians have called it. The mythology of witchcraft, built up over several centuries, was virtually complete by 1480. Some witches formally swore allegiance to the devil or were possessed. Some witches were visited by the devil in their own homes, while others rode on broomsticks and flew off to orgies known as sabbats. At these orgies, held in secret and reserved for initiates, witches ate, drank and danced in promiscuity. In exchange for the devil's promise to give them powers, they renounced Christianity and desecrated its symbols. Witches were guilty of evil spells or deeds. These evil deeds were considered a real threat, both to individuals and to society. Maleficia did not aim simply to

harm, but to destroy and kill. Some witches caused natural disasters such as storms, hailstorms and floods. Others killed people and livestock and caused various diseases, many of which were previously unknown, such as a woman giving birth to rabbits. Some witches prepared love potions to seduce new lovers and make those who had been unfaithful return to them. They could also render men impotent. Thanks to their alliance with the devil, witches were able to do things that were beyond the reach of ordinary criminals [37]. Society therefore had as much, if not more, reason to oppose witchcraft as it did to fight crime in general.

There have always been witches and sorcerers in history. In his 1484 bull against witchcraft, Pope Innocent VIII explicitly stated that it was practised by "many people of both sexes". In 1572, the Elector of Saxony decreed that "witches, whether male or female, shall be put to the sword" [38]. Even in England, where the percentage of women among the accused was abnormally high, the laws against witchcraft always referred to "persons". Representations of Sabbaths regularly showed the Devil being served by men as well as women. The Puritan clergyman William Perkins went so far as to blame Moses for commanding: "Thou shalt not suffer the witch to live" [39]. In truth, he said, the Bible "does not exempt man". Many other experts agreed with him [40]. Contemporaries were so embarrassed by the 'fact' that most witches were women that they constantly wondered why this was so. King James I of England himself felt obliged to give the matter some thought [41]. Precisely because witchcraft was considered real and not an invention of society, the reason had to be sought in the very nature of women. Most experts agreed that women were more wicked than men. Their natures were weaker and their minds were not as clear, so the devil could trick them "without a fight" [42]. Women writers who addressed the issue tended to agree with their male colleagues [43]. The authors of the most famous witch-hunting manual, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, claim that the word "feminine" itself derives from "feminicus", "less of faith". This did not prevent them from including ten pages on witches [44].

The crime of murder offers an instructive analogy to that of witchcraft. While both men and women commit crimes, over 80% of convicted murderers are men. When we look for an explanation for this fact, we are not saying that murder was invented by a misandrist society to execute men or put them behind bars. On the contrary, we look for the reasons in the qualities that are innate in men: for example, the fact that they have much higher levels of testosterone than women makes them more aggressive than women. In short, it is not necessarily true that those whose job it was to hunt down and judge witches hated women - any more than it is necessarily true that those who claim that violence is a defining male characteristic hate men. All the witch-hunters were trying to do what criminologists, sociologists and psychologists of both sexes are doing today - to explain a social phenomenon that left them baffled.

Some historians have claimed that, by persecuting witches, men were trying to repress women's sexuality [45]. This is absurd. As Shakespeare might have said, "t'is mighty strange" that most of the

accused were old women. Some were even very old. The eldest, Isabeau Blary, had celebrated her hundredth birthday. Under interrogation, Blary "confessed" that she had been sodomised by the devil [46]. Needless to say, the above argument makes no sense, any more than the fact that single young men are over-represented among violent criminals proves that society is committed to preventing single young men from secreting testosterone. All it means is that these men are more likely to break the law and less afraid of the consequences than are older men or women.

In Italy, ecclesiastics were perhaps even more likely to be accused of witchcraft than women. In Germany, where the aim was often to force a witch to identify her accomplices in order to seize their property, prominent men were among those accused. This was also the case in Sussex [47]. Most often, persecution began at village or neighbourhood level, usually after the suspect had acquired a bad reputation. The breaking point came when he asked for a favour, such as food, a helping hand or a small loan. When rejected, not always politely, he might retaliate by uttering a curse or threat. Once the threat or curse seemed to have come true, the news was peddled and the authorities got involved. It was often up to the authorities, who were men, to put a stop to local outbreaks of witch-hunting. In 1597, James VI of Scotland, as he was then known, abolished the general commission against witchcraft, which he himself had appointed, precisely because people were using it to settle their scores [48]. In the second half of the seventeenth century, as belief in witchcraft began to decline among the elite and the common people persisted in making such accusations, many trials ended in acquittal [49].

It is true that few women among the intellectual elite wrote on the subject of witchcraft and held trials. On the other hand, women in power were just as likely as men in power to persecute witches. In the Netherlands, persecution peaked in the first half of the sixteenth century, when the country was ruled successively by three women appointed by Charles V: Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary and Margaret of Parma [50]. When William the Silent later came to power, the persecutions diminished. Similarly, in France, persecution reached its peak towards the end of the sixteenth century, during the reign of Catherine de Médicis.

The Scottish witchcraft laws were enacted during the reign of Mary, Queen of Scots. In 1547, the 9-year-old King Edward VI of England, acting on the advice of his male entourage, abolished all penalties for witchcraft. Sixteen years later, Elizabeth allowed Parliament to reinstate them in an even more terrible form. The reign of "Good Queen Bess" marked the height of persecution. Under her male heir, the number of cases and the conviction rate fell [51]. These facts hardly support the claim that the purpose of witch-hunting was to restore patriarchy.

Women took part in witch hunts at least as much as men. Most curses were cast by women on other women [52]. It was mainly women who accused women of breaking the usual rules of conduct and insisted that the husbands or male relatives of women suspected of witchcraft take action against them [53]. It was mainly women bewitched by other women who suffered convulsions and fainting spells. It was mainly women bewitched by other women who claimed to vomit pins, needles and toads to the competent officials, who believed them or not [54]. Elizabeth Lowys, the first Englishwoman to be tried for witchcraft by the Elizabethan courts, was accused of this crime mainly by women [55]. The last English witch to stand trial, Jane Wenham, was not only accused by another woman, she also accused three other women. All were acquitted. Wenham was convicted by the jury, but was quickly pardoned by a sceptical judge. Unable to return home, she found refuge on the property of a landowner [56].

Women also played an important role in cases that went beyond the level of neighbourhood rivalries and were referred to the courts. Some women sued other women. And since prostitutes, who were not allowed to testify in court, were allowed to testify in witchcraft cases, women may have been over-represented among the witnesses. In addition, just as police forces today employ women to deal with female offenders, women of the time were often employed as jailers when it came to guarding women suspected of witchcraft. While there were prickers [56bis], professionals responsible for probing with an awl the marks made by the devil on the body of his victims to check whether they were actually bleeding, there were also women prickers. One of them, a Scotswoman, practised disguised as a man, under the assumed name of Mr Paterson [56ter] [57]. Whether because of personal animosities or because they were being tortured, the accused cooperated, incriminating other women. Women who were jealous of women whom the devil had preferred to them accused them of witchcraft [58]. As there were no women among the judges, if the accusations of witchcraft against women had really been the result of men's hatred of women, more women than men would have been condemned for witchcraft. But this was not the case. In Scotland, a higher proportion of women were executed, but a higher proportion of women suspected of witchcraft were acquitted. In Geneva, the opposite was true. In Italy, the vast majority of witches handed over to the Inquisition, an all-male institution, received very light sentences or were acquitted. Only in England was it possible to detect a clear bias against women - in the sense that fewer were acquitted and more were executed - in the trials heard by the district courts [59]; however, there were relatively few executions, and not all of those that were ordered were carried out by district courts.

Contrary to a common misconception today, witchcraft was not a stand-alone problem. It was part of a much wider set of "spiritual" offences, such as heresy, apostasy and blasphemy. All were considered crimes against God and religion and all deserved to be punished as severely as witchcraft.

As a result, witchcraft represented only a small fraction of the cases brought before the Supreme Court of the Inquisition. In Venice, the figure was just over 20 per cent, and the vast majority of those involved

were given very light sentences, if at all [60]. But while most of those accused of witchcraft were women, most of those accused of other spiritual offences were men.

So while the fact that women were considered less intelligent explains why they were disproportionately charged with witchcraft, it also explains why they were not often held responsible for related crimes. This is one of the reasons why women accounted for only 10 per cent of all those executed during the period in question. Indeed, far fewer women were executed for witchcraft than for the two archetypal female crimes of infanticide and poisoning [61].

In describing the witch hunts, most historians have made the mistake of concentrating on the period from 1500 to 1650. Before 1350, nearly three times as many men as women were tried for witchcraft [62]. In northern France, between 1351 and 1400, there were almost as many male defendants as female defendants. In Europe as a whole, between 1300 and 1499, the number of men accused of witchcraft was roughly the same as the number of women accused of the same crime [64].

In the Netherlands, "before the persecution of witches was in full swing, some authorities had already begun to punish men suspected of trading with the devil" [65]. In Finland too, the oldest indigenous traditions generally regarded witches as men [66]. In the British Isles, men accounted for 59% of defendants at the same time. In the Swiss canton of Neuchâtel, they accounted for 80%, in Valais for 78% and in Switzerland as a whole for almost half [67]. Because we concentrated on the period from 1500 to 1650, we did not realise that, later on, in Germany, the stereotype was reversed. Those accused of witchcraft were no longer mainly older women, but mostly young men [68].

To sum up, it can be said that if historians had associated witchcraft with other 'spiritual' crimes, as contemporaries did, they would have realised that they had been mistaken about the proportion of men and women accused of witchcraft or executed for it. Women believed in witchcraft just as much as men. Their contribution to the witch-hunt was just as important as that of the men. In some respects, even more so. Very often, it was women who decided that a particular person should be accused of witchcraft, it was women who provided the evidence and it was women who made the accusations of witchcraft.

In fact, it seems that the less the male authority in charge of witch-hunting judged cases of neighbourhood conflict, and therefore the fewer the women involved, the fairer the treatment of witches was likely to be [69]. In short, any more than the fact that today most people who commit murder are men proves that men are hunted by the patriarchy, the fact that most people accused of

witchcraft in early modern times were women does not prove that the patriarchy targeted women as women. All it proves is that contemporaries were genuinely determined to hunt down and eradicate witches of both sexes.

#### 4. The National Socialists' attitude to women

The idea of presenting the National Socialists as the oppressors of women par excellence goes back to Betty Friedan. In 1959, she attended a meeting of magazine editors, all men, who were discussing issues of interest to American women. What she heard them say did not please her. "One of the German phrases they said rang in my head - 'Kinder, Küche, Kirche'. This phrase meant that the Nazis had decreed that women should once again be confined to their biological role [70]." Friedan's accusation against the National Socialists was echoed by some of the most important pioneers of modern feminism, including Kate Millett, Germaine Greer, Susan Brownmiller and Andrea Dworkin; Friedan herself mentioned it in her memoirs [71]. These feminist researchers set out to prove that the National Socialists had persecuted women almost as much as homosexuals, Gypsies, Jews and other "inferior" people. Others claimed that the National Socialist idea of femininity represented a form of "secondary racism" [72]. Still others argued that anti-feminism was as fundamental a part of National Socialism as anti-Semitism, except that it caused no deaths [73]. The fact that the National Socialists had constructed "polarised identities for men and women" and had not accepted the feminist dogma that men and women were alike in all respects was considered to be one of their worst misdeeds. One researcher even claimed that the roots of the genocide lay in the National Socialists' attitude towards women [74].

What was the real position of women in National Socialist Germany? The best way to answer this question is to begin by examining German feminism before Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933.

There was a wide variety of feminist groups in the country at the time: a Catholic Frauenbund, a Protestant Frauenbund, as well as a conservative, a liberal, a socialist, a communist, a colonial and a Jewish one, to name just a few of the 230 or so women's organisations in operation. Some were in favour of equal rights for women. Others were opposed on the grounds of maternity and criticised the Weimar Republic for emancipating women. Some were in favour of the right to abortion, others opposed it and still others advocated the compulsory sterilisation of "unfit" people [75]. Over time, the socialist and liberal women's movements, which demanded equal rights for women, lost power and membership, while those defending maternity gained momentum. By the last years of the Weimar Republic, the label "feminist" itself had become anathema to many women [76].

The organisation that claimed to speak for all the others was the Bund Deutscher Frauen (BDF), an informal confederation of numerous groups. It was led by Gertrude Bäumer, a seasoned campaigner for women's rights [77]. Before 1914, she had opposed both abortion and contraception. In 1919, she helped rewrite the BDF's programme, injecting it with right-wing nationalist ideology. By 1932, the organisation was advocating the abolition of democracy and the establishment of a corporate state modelled on fascist Italy. It called on women to reverse the consequences of the Great War, as the First World War was then known, by having as many children as possible. Conversely, the social ills allegedly associated with the Weimar Republic - sexual libertarianism, pornography, abortion and venereal disease - were to be fought and defeated.

Much of what the BDF had to say resonated with Hitler. The aim of the National Socialists was to save women from the debauchery into which they were being dragged by Jews, modernists, internationalists and other enemies of Germany [77bis]. Sound values were to be restored and women judged primarily by the number of children they had given to the Reich. The aim of educating girls was to "prepare them for motherhood". Marriage was merely a means of "multiplying and maintaining the race". Women (and men) without children were considered harmful to the Volk, although in the end the only measure taken against them was higher taxation [78]. "By nature", a man was destined for the world, for society. "By nature", a woman was destined for her husband, her family, her children and her home [79]. Intellectual women were, in the eyes of their contemporaries, a pain in the ass. Like most people at the time, Hitler believed that women who did not have children would eventually become mentally ill [80]. His closest collaborators, including Arthur Rosenberg, Robert Ley, Gregor Strasser and Gottfried Feder, agreed with him on this point. Women's main task was motherhood and they had to be protected from having to work outside the home.

Were the National Socialists' views on the place of women in society shared by German women?

The answer, which may come as a surprise, is that they were increasingly so. From its inception, the party succeeded in attracting women. Most were matrons who loved its feisty young leader. One of them, the Countess von Reventlov, called Hitler "the Messiah to come". Others gave him rich gifts. As if to prove Nietzsche right, it was up to the woman who gave him the most elaborate whip. It was a woman, whose name has not gone down in history, who sketched the design for the swastika flag [81]. Another woman, Gertrude von Seydlitz, raised the money needed to turn *Der Völkischer Beobachter* into a daily newspaper. Other women financed Hitler's putsch in November 1923. After the failure, it was the wife of a friend, Helene Hanfstaengl, who prevented Hitler from committing suicide, by snatching his gun from his hand and sternly reminding him that his duty was to live for Germany. During his thirteen months in prison, he was visited by many women. As Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, during this difficult period, it was the women who prevented the National Socialist Party from disintegrating.



Indeed, even the paper on which Rudolf Hess wrote the Führer's autobiography was supplied by a woman, Winifred Wagner, the famous composer's daughter-in-law.

The National Socialists were determined to seize power, if not by violence, at least by "conquering the streets". As a result, National Socialist women were probably less tied to the traditional female role than in most other societies of the time. They demonstrated, held meetings, raised funds, distributed leaflets and dealt with troublemakers. Others sewed uniforms for the men of the SA, dressed their wounds and organised soup kitchens for them. In the decisive elections of 1930, 45% of NSDAP voters were women. This percentage increased still further in subsequent elections. Observers of National Socialist rallies noted that women were always in the front ranks [82] [82bis]. Hitler's fundamental belief was that women were governed by emotion rather than intellect and that they had the greatest admiration for strong men. And he knew exactly how to talk to them. They, in turn, cheered him as loudly as the men did, often without being able to stop themselves from crying.

The cult of women for Hitler intensified after 1933. The crowds that followed him wherever he went were made up in part of women. Other women made the pilgrimage to Berchtesgaden to give him the National Socialist salute or have their children touch him. For his birthday, the women would send him acres of scarves, pillowcases and blankets, all embroidered with swastikas of every size, colour and variety. He was careful not to disillusion them. He once rhetorically asked a crowd of women what he had given them, then answered his own question with "the Man" [83]. It was for their own good that he remained celibate and kept secret the fact that he had a mistress. Nothing was to disturb the love affair between the German women and their Führer. In fact, until the fall of Hitler and the Third Reich, nothing disturbed it.

After the National Socialists came to power, the number of women's organisations increased. In 1933 alone, 800,000 new members joined the Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft (NSF). Membership of the Women's League eventually reached 3.5 million. It included some groups that had previously been excluded, such as domestic servants, and had been reinstated against the wishes of "respectable" women. The NSF, like almost all the other organisations of the totalitarian National Socialist state, had little real power. However, it received huge subsidies and had a great deal of leeway in its own areas of activity. The NSF's main focus was on women's welfare and education, particularly the kind of education needed to improve the "racial quality" of the German people. State support for the NSF enabled it to implement its programme on a scale that no women's organisation had previously imagined possible. Forty years later, the leader of the Frauenschaft, Gertrude Scholz-Klink, was still proud of the way she and her assistants had caught the "feminists" at their own game, doing what they wanted without interference from men [84].

Women who opposed the regime were often treated with suspicion. At the beginning of the Third Reich, only one woman was killed, the Social Democrat Reichstag deputy Minna Cammens. Of the 150 or so concentration camps built before the Second World War, only one, Möringen, housed women. It was not until 1938 that the regime carried out the first "legal" execution of a woman, the socialist Lieselotte Hermann. Accused of passing classified information to the headquarters of the German Communist Party in Switzerland, she was convicted of treason and guillotined along with three of her male accomplices. Life at Ravensbrück, the main concentration camp for women, was certainly no picnic. Yet conditions there were not as harsh as in some other camps. In fact, some women were transferred from Auschwitz to Ravensbrück precisely because the mortality rate there was deemed too high. Until the beginning of 1945, when deteriorating living conditions led to severe malnutrition and epidemics of infectious diseases, "only" around 3% of the women in Ravensbrück died each year [85].

The National Socialists began to realise their dream of creating a pure Aryan race by introducing a series of practical measures designed to encourage women to marry, stay at home and have children. Symbolic measures such as the institution of a Mother's Day and the awarding of medals to fertile women were aimed at the same goal. Some of these measures predated National Socialist Germany or were not specific to it. Others, such as family allowances and tax deductions for families with children, were part of the contemporary, almost universal move towards a welfare state. To help working mothers while reducing female unemployment, the system allowed taxpayers to deduct a certain amount of childcare costs from their taxes [86]. This privilege was not abolished when the Federal Republic of Germany was created in 1949. In the United States, on the other hand, it was not introduced into law until the Reagan administration.

The marriage loan is perhaps the best-known way in which the National Socialists encouraged mothers to start families. A similar measure was adopted in Social Democratic Sweden at the time. Provided that both mother and father were of Aryan descent, a German couple could receive a loan if the bride undertook not to engage in any paid employment for two years after her marriage. Later, the requirement that the wife not work was discreetly dropped, so that all mothers benefited.

There were also the Lebensborn Institutes, a unique type of National Socialist welfare organisation specifically for women. At the time and later, rumour had it that the institute was a stud farm where unmarried women were impregnated by SS men. SS chief Heinrich Himmler was in favour of life, provided it was Germanic and free of hereditary diseases. One of the aims of the Lebensborn institutes was to offer pregnant Aryan women a suitable alternative to abortion. Another aim, according to the S.S. leader, was to erase some of the stigma attached to German single mothers by "ridiculous fools". The association provided women with temporary shelter at extremely low prices. Expectant mothers spent the last weeks of their pregnancy in a Lebensborn, under medical supervision, then gave birth, recovered and received basic training in how to care for a baby.

Most of the National Socialist measures to help mothers proved immensely popular. The leader of the German Catholic Women's Association, Antoine Hoppman, described them as "an idea of genius" [87]. Less popular, but still acceptable to the vast majority of German women, were the aspects of Hitler's policies that were unfavourable to them. Like a considerable proportion of contemporary public opinion in Germany and abroad, the Führer regarded women as delicate creatures unsuited to the cruel and tumultuous world of politics [88]. He particularly disliked lawyers.

Even though he realised that he couldn't do without lawyers, he never stopped calling them "traitors", "idiots" and "absolute morons". The idea that women should be kept out of the sordid business of law and politics led to the dismissal of female politicians, the sacking of senior civil servants and magistrates and the sacking of some three hundred female lawyers.

These measures were supported both by the leader of the National Socialist Women's Association - who welcomed Hitler's promise to free women from work [89] - and by the grande dame of German feminism, Gertrude Bäumer [90]. In any case, they only affected around 1% of all working women. And most of those who lost their jobs, including headmistresses, were transferred. The rest received a full pension [91].

The National Socialists' views on women academics were shared by all their contemporaries in the developed world. They were based on the belief that women were by nature irrational creatures and, as such, less suited to academic life than men. It was also believed that female academics were far more likely than their male colleagues to fall prey to misfortune and madness. They were also much less likely to marry or have children than other women. While the first two beliefs could not be statistically proven, the third could certainly be [92]. In the absence of complete figures on the fate of women intellectuals under the Third Reich, those from the University of Hamburg are instructive. When the National Socialists came to power, 22 of the 330 members of the teaching staff at this university were women. Seven of them lost their jobs - but not because of their gender. Five of them lost their jobs because they were Jewish - a relative term, since four of them were able to leave the country. As for the other two, one committed suicide rather than accept a transfer and the other resigned rather than join the NSDAP. At most, one of these women may have been dismissed simply because she was a woman; the exact cause of her dismissal, however, is unclear [93]. The one and only measure taken by the National Socialists against female students was the introduction of a numerus clausus of 10 per cent women in December 1933. Once again, Bäumer supported the decree. At the beginning of her career, she had made a name for herself as one of the most zealous supporters of women's higher education in Germany [94]. She now felt that the decline in standards required a partial retreat. In any case, in February 1935, the decree was rescinded. The only students affected were those from the class of 1934.

However, those who had been enrolled at the university as "auditors" could obtain retroactive credit on simple request.

At the beginning of the Second World War, the policy of keeping women out of faculties which, like politics and social sciences, were considered unsuited to their nature had in fact led to a substantial increase in the proportion of female students in 'practical' fields such as pharmacy, physical education and journalism [95]. At that time, the government began paying a "childbirth allowance" of 50 Reichsmark to the students concerned, regardless of whether or not they were married. No other country had granted such a privilege before, and no other country has done so since. Between 1939 and 1944, the proportion of female students increased sevenfold, reaching 49.3% of all students. Many women at the time seized the opportunity to get involved in non-traditional fields. Women came to dominate the natural sciences, where they went from accounting for 10.8% of the total workforce to 63.5%. In engineering and technology, the percentage of women rose from 0.7% to 11.7%, while in medicine women's representation more than doubled to 35%. In law, it rose from 2.5% to 16.4% [96]. By the end of the war, medicine had become the favoured field of women. If there was one regime that never "steered" its female students towards the "more accessible" subjects that make up the humanities, it was National Socialism in the final years of the Second World War.

In 1933, far more German women were working than their American counterparts [97]. At the time, Germany, like the rest of the world, was suffering from the Great Depression. A widely adopted solution to the problem of unemployment was the dismissal of women whose husbands also had an income. Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United States all took or considered taking similar action. In Germany, the only bill of this type to be passed had not been introduced by Adolf Hitler, but by Chancellor Heinrich Brüning under Weimar. The law had little effect, and few women actually lost their jobs. Within a year of the National Socialists coming to power, attempts to implement it had come to an end.

By this time, any ideological reservations the National Socialists might have had about women in the workforce had disappeared. As early as 1932, Joseph Goebbels had noted that the Führer regarded women as men's "comrades" at work. "The man is the organiser of life, the woman his support and right hand" [98]. Later, he added that "we would be fools not to call upon women in the common task of nation-building" [99]. As the National Socialists' other measures against unemployment began to bear fruit, the number of women paying social insurance rose from 4.6 million in 1932 to 4.75 million in 1933 and 5.05 million in 1934 [100]. By the end of the 1930s, the percentage of German women in the workforce was higher than in any other European country except France [101]. As in other countries, the nature of women's participation in the labour market changed. They were increasingly attracted to white-collar occupations such as secretarial work, communications, commerce and the professions [102]

[102bis]. As has been said, "five years of Nazi rule in some ways did more to help professional women than a decade of feminist pressure under the Weimar Republic" [103].

As in other countries, German women under National Socialism earned less than their male colleagues. As in other countries, this was mainly due to the reluctance of their families to invest in their professional training, as well as their own tendency to interrupt their careers to give birth or face other family obligations. On the other hand, the authorities of the Third Reich tried to protect women more than their counterparts in other countries. One law prohibited employers from requiring women to work on pedal-powered machines. Others prohibited women from working underground, handling toxic materials or carrying heavy loads. Shift work and night work were also forbidden. At the end of the 1930s, however, a labour shortage forced German employers to court their female employees. As a result, their wages rose faster than those of men. Women began to receive wages equal to those of men in industries such as textiles, mining, metal, electronics and bricks. The Arbeitsfront, the National Socialist trade union, was very proud of this achievement [104]. There were also provisions designed to help working women, including special facilities for mothers, a "birth bonus" and a "breastfeeding bonus" as well as free nursing services, medical care and medicines.

Many of them proved to be so far ahead of their time that they remained part of German law long after 1945.

The man in charge of Germany's economic preparations for war was Hermann Göring. Among other measures, he drew up plans to register women for compulsory labour. This was to no avail, however, as hundreds of thousands of women found ways of avoiding it. From 1940 onwards, other key leaders in business and industry exerted pressure along the same lines. Once again, to no avail. As Hitler told his General Plenipotentiary for Labour Mobilisation Fritz Sauckel, German women, with their "long legs", were not suited to hard work. They could only do it with great physical and psychological effort. In his view, the state had failed to protect women during the First World War. It had subjected them to "unspeakable suffering", which in turn had damaged morale and contributed to the defeat. It was a mistake that Hitler had vowed not to make. Moreover, if only because it was something "their husbands, fiancés, fathers and brothers in uniform had a right to expect", women workers were to be defended "at all costs" against "ill-treatment, overwork, insults or moral damage". Unfortunately, the war did not provide the necessary protection for women. But for the future, "the aim is to ensure that in 20 years' time no woman will have to work in a factory" [105].

Social reality reflected these views. As millions of men had been called up for military service and could therefore no longer take part in household chores, between October and December 1939, the number

of working women fell by 300,000. In May 1941, there were 500,000 fewer than in May 1939. This situation was partly due to the fact that the provisions made by the German authorities for the upkeep of the families of members of the armed forces were much more generous than those made for this purpose in other countries. In October 1939, a law was passed explicitly allowing soldiers' wives to stop working. A British woman with two children received 38% of her absent husband's income, an American 36% and a German 75%.

Germany paid pensions to the fiancées of fallen soldiers and to the mothers of their illegitimate children [106]. Later, during the war, the trend towards a smaller female workforce was reversed. The vast majority of newly employed women found work in the public services, where their numbers rose from 954,000 in May 1939 to 1,746,000 in 1943.

Proportionally, fewer German women than Allied women were employed in arduous work in factories, mines and transport, and their working conditions were relatively good. In the United States in 1943, 50 per cent of all female employees worked at night; in Germany, restrictions on night work for women were not lifted until January 1944. Germany subsidised far more kindergarten places than either the United States or Great Britain [108].

The requisitioning of foreign workers during the war also explains why German women had an easier time than their counterparts abroad. Their numbers are estimated at ten million. Employed in mines and factories, they died like flies. Most of the two million women put to forced labour were captured in the East; in the West, the Germans did not requisition women, only men. Hundreds of thousands of these women were brought to Germany specifically to help German women whose husbands had been drafted.

While most German women enjoyed the benefits of their position, the regime made considerable efforts to promote and publicise the exploits of a few particularly enterprising women as examples for the rest of society. The most famous of these, Leni Riefenstahl, produced the most famous propaganda films ever made for a political movement.

Meanwhile, at a time when British and American women were only allowed to fly aircraft on transport missions at the rear of the front, at least three German women became test pilots. One of them, Hanna Reitsch, flew the world's first helicopter. Another, Melitta Schiller, made no fewer than 1,500 test flights of the Stuka bomber and flew the first prototypes of jet and rocket aircraft. A third jet and rocket test

pilot was Flight Lieutenant Beate Köstlin. After the war, she became rich and famous under the assumed name of Beate Uhse by setting up a business producing pornographic material and sexual stimulants.

How did German women view the criminal measures of the National Socialist regime [108bis]? The answer is that, as far as possible, they supported these measures. Some Frauenbünde began to expel their Jewish members even before they were officially asked to do so [109]. Later, NSF leaders worked hard to educate women about the need to maintain racial purity. And, as we have already mentioned, some Frauenbünde were for a long time in favour of compulsory sterilisation, the success of which depended almost entirely on denunciations: there were women among the informers. During the war, 40% of Gestapo personnel in Vienna and perhaps in other cities were women [110]. Procedures were often initiated by social workers who visited women in their homes

Women doctors helped to examine candidates for sterilisation and performed some of the operations involved. Others performed compulsory abortions on women held in concentration camps [111]. Nurses killed thousands of mentally and physically disabled people of all ages. Women, most of them from the lower class, but also some from the middle class, made up 10% of the concentration camp guards. Surviving prisoners remembered them as particularly vicious. At Auschwitz, we know that female guards crowded around the peepholes to watch the gas chambers fill with cyanide and the victims die [112] [112bis]. At Ravensbrück, a woman doctor called Herta Oberheuser carried out horrible medical experiments on prisoners [113] [113bis].

In short, some National Socialist leaders had very early ideas about the place of women in society. This did not prevent German women from working for the Party, campaigning for it and voting for it in increasing numbers [113ter]. Later, far from attacking feminism, Hitler embraced the aims of many of its leaders, including Bäumer [113quater]. He saw German women as one of the Volk's most precious resources, to be protected "at all costs". This protection had both negative and positive repercussions. The negative aspects affected only a very small number of women, mainly in the civil service, universities and the legal profession. In 1945, many more women were studying law than in 1933. In all other respects, National Socialist policy was expressly designed to help women in the area that most of them had long regarded as their main occupation, motherhood. Many of the significant measures taken by the National Socialist government in this respect resembled those which had already been instituted in other countries during this period. Most were praised by women, with the sole exception of the Lebensborn, which were surrounded by all sorts of dubious legends. His real fault, however, was that he threatened to erase the distinction between pregnant women who were married and those who were not.

Like the leaders of other countries, the National Socialists tried to overcome unemployment by dismissing employed women whose husbands had an income. However, the attempt was half-hearted and came to nothing. Earlier than in other countries, once the Depression was over, the National Socialists began to encourage women to take up paid employment. During the Second World War, the pressure on women to enter the workforce was less intense in Germany than in other countries. More than in any other country, those who did enter the labour market mostly worked in white-collar occupations. Meanwhile, non-German forced labourers, both men and women, were doing the hard work in the fields and factories. German women were protected by various laws and regulations. They also enjoyed benefits such as allowances and subsidised kindergartens that would have been the envy of all their non-German counterparts. It's hardly surprising that most German women remained loyal to Hitler to the very end. Far from being persecuted, they cooperated in the persecutions to the extent that they were allowed to do so.

## 5. Conclusions

A detailed examination of these three myths, which are among the many that modern feminists have concocted to 'prove' that men oppress women, has shown them to be false. As far as we can tell, women in ancient Greece did not live locked up at home or reclude themselves inside the house. The witch-hunt of the period between 1500 and 1650 was not simply a mechanism invented by the patriarchy to control women who did not stay in their place. Among other things, the charge of witchcraft was often brought by women against other women, which may explain why the majority of witches were women. Finally, if the National Socialists had wanted to oppress German women, they would hardly have aroused the enthusiasm of German women. On the contrary, National Socialist policy was primarily designed to help women fulfil what they and their own leaders had long regarded as their primary function, namely motherhood. In many ways, this policy was successful, both in itself and in comparison with other countries. As the National Socialists themselves pointed out, in implementing their racial policies, women's cooperation with National Socialism was at least as important as that of men.

In many other cases too, the idea that misogynists discriminated against women, oppressed them and subordinated them is a myth. In fact, very often the opposite was true. In many ways, society and nature have conspired to make life easier for women than for men. Far from being discriminated against, women in many ways have been and still are free of most of the burdens that weigh on men. This is true from the day they are born until the day they die, not to mention the fact that they live longer than men do in between. To be convinced of these truths, the reader need look no further than the pages that follow.



Martin van Creveld, *The Privileged Sex*, Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2013, translated from the English by B. K.

[5] See Gordon Weil, *Gender Analysis of Dismantling the Command Economy in Eastern Europe: The Case of Poland*, in Valentine M. Moghadam (ed.), *Democratic Reform and the Position of Women in Transitional Economies*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1993, p. 287.

[6] Bernice Glazter Rosenthal, *Love on the Tractor: Women in the Russian Revolution and After*, in Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (eds.), *Women in European History*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1977, p. 389.

[7] Juliet Webster, *Shaping Women's Work: Gender, Employment and Information Technology*, Longman, London, 1996, p. 38, 59, 60.

[8] Anne Lokke, *Philanthropists, Mothers and Doctors: The Philanthropic Struggle against Infant Mortality in Copenhagen, 1860-1920*, in Birgitta Jordansson and Tinne Vammen, *Charitable Women: Philanthropic Welfare, 1780-1930*, Odense University Press, Odense, 1998, p. 154.

[9] E. L. Flacliere, *Daily Life in Athens at the Time of Pericles*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1965, p. 55.

[10] *Les Troyennes*, 646-7.

[11] Plato, *The Republic*, 579b; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.45.

[12] See Ken Dowden, *Approaching Women through Myth: Vital Tool or Self Delusion?* In Richard Hawley and Barbara Levik (eds.), *Women in Antiquity*, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 56.

[13] Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, 1067-70.

[14] *The Illiad*, 2, 140-242.

[15] See David Cohen, *Seclusion, Separation and the Status of Women in Classical Athens*, in Ian MacAuslan and Peter Walcot (eds.), *Women in Antiquity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 138-40.

[16] Demosthenes, 57, 30-1.

[17] *Politics*, 1300a, 1323a.

[18] Theophrastus, 11, 9-10 and 16, 2.

[19] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 2,46; Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 253.

[20] Plutarch, *Pericles*, 13, 9-10.

[21] Andocide, Discourse, 1, 48; Lysias, Discourse, 13, 39-41; The Phaedo, 60a.

[22] Demosthenes, 40, 11.

[23] Aeschines, 2, 148, 152; Plato, Apology of Socrates, 34c-35b; Demosthenes, 19, 310, 21, 99 and 186, 25, 85, 54, 35; Aristophanes, The Wasps, 568-9; id., Ploutos, 380.

[24] Plutarch, Pericles, Heinemann, Loeb Classical Library London, 28.

[25] The Laws, 658a-d, 817a-c; Gorgias, 502b-e.

[26] See Leena Vittaniemi, Partheneia-Remarks on Virginity and Its Meanings in the Religious Context of Ancient Greece, in Lena Larsen Loven et al (eds.), Aspects of Women in Antiquity, Astron, 1998 [pp. 44-57], p. 51.

[27] L'Économique, 7, 3-5; 9, 3-4.

[28] Demosthenes, Lysias, 3.

[29] See David Cohen, Law, Sexuality and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Greece, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 156.

[30] Hippocrates, Epidemics, 6, 7.

[30bis] "By referring to one of the rooms as the *gunaikonitis*, translated as the *gynaecae*, historians have deduced that Athenian (and even Greek) houses all had flats reserved for women and others for men. However, texts describing such spatial divisions are very rare and, today, the work of archaeologists - after that of image specialists - tends to conclude that rooms were not specialised according to gender. It has recently been suggested that the lexical specialisation (*gunaikonitis*, *andronitis*) corresponded to temporary activity assignments of multifunctional rooms. Depending on the activity, the time of year or the time of day, men or women were in the majority in a particular room. Given that status distinctions (slaves, members of the household, outsiders to the household) were more important than gender distinctions, it is hard to believe that the groups could have been made up entirely of men or entirely of women. In other words, the idea that free women were closely watched and controlled in their comings and goings because of the anguish that the birth of an illegitimate child would have represented is, like the "guardianship of women", an idea that needs to be revised. The *gynaecae*, a symbol of control over the sexuality of pubescent women, is nowhere to be found" (Violaine Sebillotte Cuchet. *Familles et société à Athènes à l'époque classique : un éclairage par les études de genre*, 2017. fihal-01618996e, p. 7-8). "Le mythe du gynécée ne vaut pas plus que celui de la médina" (Annie Bélis [compte-rendi], *Music in the Bronze Age (SMAL, Pocket-book, 144)*, 1 vol. by John G. Younger In *Revue Archéologique, nouvelle série, fasc. 1, 2001 [p. 109-112]*), at the risk of frustrating some.

[31] See Eva Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1993, p. 212.

[32] Sarah Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece: Representations and Realities*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 297.

[33] Dyfri Williams, *Women on Athenian Vases: Problems of Interpretation*. In Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt, (eds.), *Images of Women in Antiquity*, pp. 103-4; Helene P. Foley, *The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama*, in Helene P. Foley (ed.), *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, Gordon & Breach, New York, 1981, p. 151.

[34] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1971, p. 586.

[35] Marianne Hester, "Patriarchal Reconstruction and Witch-Hunting", in Jonathan Barry et al. (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 288-9; see also Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama*, Methuen, London, 1985, pp. 185-6; and Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, p. 69.

[36] See Gerhard Schormann, *Hexenprozesse in Nordwestdeutschland*, Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, Hildesheim, 1977, p. 1.

[36bis] The second example is probably not very well chosen, since the heliocentric theory, formulated by Copernicus in 1543 in *De Revolutionibus*, can probably be compared to a storm in a glass of water, the glass of water being constituted here, initially, by the small world of scientists and the sects (J. Dobrzycki [ed.], *The Reception of Copernicus' Heliocentric Theory: Proceedings of a Symposium Committee of the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science Toruń, Poland 1973*, Springer) and, secondly, by certain academic cenacles. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink et al (eds), *Les lectures du peuple en Europe et dans les Amériques [XVIIe-XXe siècle]*, Editions Complexe, 2003, p.50). [N. d. E.]

[37] See Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 176.

[38] See Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexen und Hexenverfolgung in Deutschland*, Universität Tübingen, Munich, 1988, p. 157.

[39] Exodus 22:18.

[40] Sermon Preached by Mr. James Hutchinson [on Witchcraft], 13 April 1697, in Brian D. Levack, (ed.), *Witchcraft in Scotland*, Garland, New York, 1992, pp. 379-80; Barbara Rosen, *Witchcraft in England*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, MA, 1969, pp. 51-60; Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Kent: stereotypes and the background to accusations*, in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 274.

[41] See Christina Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*, Alan Macfarlane (ed.), Oxford, Blackwell, 1984, p. 20.

[42] Peter Burke, *Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy, 1420-1540*, Batsford, London, 1972, p. 164; see also George Mora et al. (eds.), *Witches, Devils and Doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer, 'e praestigii daemonum'*, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, Binghampton, NY, 1991, pp. 181-2.

- [43] Rachel Speght, *A Muzzle for Melastomus* (1617), quoted in Sara Gamble (ed.), *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of Feminism and Postfeminism*, Routledge, New York, 2000, p. 7.
- [44] Heinrich Krämer and Jacob Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Pushkin, London, 1948 [1495], p.44.
- [45] Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches: A Study of the Dynamics of Male Domination*, Routledge, London, 1992, pp. 4, 108, 114.
- [46] Robert Muchembled, *La sorcière au village* (xve-xviii siècle), Paris, Gallimard, 1979, p. 181.
- [47] Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550-1650*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1989, pp. 226-7; Walter Rummel, *Bauern, Herren und Hexen*, Vanderhoeck, Göttingen, 1991, p. 317; Cynthia B. Herrup, *The Common Peace: Participation and the Criminal Law in Seventeenth Century England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. 33.
- [48] Christina Larder, *Crimen Exceptum? The Crime of Witchcraft in Europe*, in Brian D. Levack (ed.), *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, Pearson, London, 2006, p. 87; Jim Sharpe, *The Devil in East Anglia: the Matthew Hopkins Trials Reconsidered*, in Jonathan Barry et al (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 254.
- [49] See Christina Lerner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, Blackwell, London, 1984, p. 32.
- [50] Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, *Six Centuries of Witchcraft*, in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *Witchcraft in the Netherlands*, University of Rotterdam Press, Rotterdam, 1991, pp. 29-30.
- [51] C. L'Estrange-Ewen, *Witch-Hunting and Witch Trials*, Kegan Paul, London, 1929, p. 112 ff.
- [52] Marianne Hester, *Patriarchal Reconstruction and Witch-Hunting*, in Jonathan Barry et al (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 298; Alan MacFarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, Routledge, London, p. 160, table 15. An admittedly small sample shows that, in the Netherlands, twice as many women as men were bewitched (see Hans de Waardt, *At Bottom a Family Affair: Feuds and Witchcraft in Nijkerk in 1550*, in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 137, Table 1.
- [53] Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1995, p. 13, 97.
- [54] See G. Geis, *Lord Hale, Witches and Rape*, in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *Witchcraft in England*, New York, 225 Garland, 1992, pp. 54-7.
- [55] See Alan R. Young, *Elizabeth Lowys: Witch and Social Victim, 1564*, in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *Witchcraft in England*, pp. 79-86.
- [56] Ian Bostridge, *Witchcraft and its Transformations c. 1650-1950*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 132-4; Phyllis J. Guskin, *The Context of Witchcraft: The Case of Jane Wenham*, in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 94-117.

[56bis] Pricker can also be translated as "poincer"; in slang, it means "fucker"; "to prick", "to make a mark or a shallow hole with a pointed instrument"; as for the noun, it refers to the penis in slang. Various punches, one of which was used for the tongue, are reproduced in Georges Charpak and Henri Broch, *Devenez sorciers, devenez savants*, Editions Odile Jacob, Paris, 2002, p. 69-70. [Editor's note]

[56ter] See S. W. McDonald, *The Devil's Mark and the Witch-Prickers of Scotland*, JRSM, vol. 90, 1997, on the subject of this Paterson, or rather this Paterson, "who allowed many women to be wrongly convicted". She had at least one emulator: "Christian Caddel". (Elizabeth Ewan; Sue Innes and Sian Reynolds, *The biographical dictionary of Scottish women: from the earliest times to 2004*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006; Louise Yeoman, *The woman who became a witch-pricker*, BBC News, 18 November 2012. [Editor's note]

[57] W. N. Neill, *The Professional Pricker and His Test for Witchcraft*, in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *Witchcraft in Scotland*, pp. 278-9.

[58] See Richard von Dülmen, *Imagination des Teuflischen*, in Richard von Dülmen (ed.), *Hexenwelten, Magie und Imagination*, Fischer, Frankfurt, 1987, p. 114.

[59] J. K. Swales and Hugh V. McLachlan, *Witchcraft and the Status of Women: A Comment*. McLachlan, *Witchcraft and the Status of Women: A Comment*. In *British Journal of Sociology*, September 30, 1979, vol. 30, no. 3 [p. 349-59].

[60] Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550-1650*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1989, appendix, table 1.

[61] Wolfgang Behringer, 'Erhob sich das ganze Land zu ihrer Ausrottung'... Hexenprozesse und Hexenverfolgungen in Europa, in Richard van Dülmen (ed.), *Hexenwelten, Magie, und Imagination*, Frankfurt, 1987, p. 143. See also Richard van Dülmen, *Frauen vor Gericht: Kindsmord in der frühen Neuzeit*, Fischer, Frankfurt, 1990, p. 95.

[62] E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands During the Reformation*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1976, p. 23.

[63] Robert Muchembled, *op. cit.* p. 176.

[64] Joseph Klaitz, *Servants of Satan*, Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1985, p. 52; Peter Brown, *Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, in Mary Douglas (ed.), *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, Tavistock, London, 1970, p. 17-45.

[65] Hans de Waardt and Willem de Blecourt, *It Is No Sin To Put an Evil Person to Death*, in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Willem Frijhoff [eds.], *Witchcraft in the Netherlands*, p. 69.

[66] Bengt Hennigsen and T. Kervinen, *Finland: The Male Domination*, in Bengt Ankerloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, pp. 31-8.

- [67] Richard Kiekhefer, *European Witch Trials*, Routledge, London, 1976, pp. 100, 147; E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NJ, 1976, p. 26.
- [68] Wolfgang Behringer, *op. cit.* p. 167-8.
- [69] Christina, Lerner, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*, Blackwell, London, 1984, p. 28.
- [70] Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, Doubleday, Garden City, NJ, 1970; Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Del, New York, 1983 [1st ed/: 1963], p. 37.
- [71] Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, New York, McGraw Hill, 1970, p. 302; Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1975, p. 394; Andrea Dworkin, *Scapegoat: The Jews, Israel and Women's Liberation*, Virago, New York, 2000, p. 30; Betty Friedan, *Life So Far*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000, p. 262.
- [72] David Schoenbaum, *Die Braune Revolution: eine Sozialgeschichte des Dritten Reichs*, Kippenheuer & Witsch, Berlin, 1961, p. 426.
- [73] Richard Grunberger, *The 12-Year Reich: A Social History of the Third Reich*, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971, p. 252.
- [74] See Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, St. Martin's, New York, 1987, p. 6, 17, 405.
- [75] See Ann T. Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800-1914*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1991, p. 197, 201, 202.
- [76] Christine Wittrock, *Weiblichkeits Mythen*, Sandler, Frankfurt, 1984, pp. 81-4.
- [77] See Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894-1933*, Sage, London, 1976, p. 157, 235, 237, 247.
- [77bis] In his 1934 speech to the Conference of the National Socialist Women's Association, he declared: "The term 'liberation of women' is only a term invented by the Jewish intellect and its content is characterised by the same spirit. In the truly good times of Germany, the German woman never had to liberate herself". (quoted in Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship*, translated from the German by Thomas Thornton, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 373).
- [78] See Hans Peter Bleuel, *Sex and Society in Nazi Germany*, Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1973, pp. 26-8.
- [79] Speech to the National Socialist Women's Association (1934), in Max Domarus (ed.), *Hitler, Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Löwit, Würzburg, 1963-4, vol. 1, p. 449.
- [80] Henry Picker (ed.), *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, Goldmann, Stuttgart, 1963, p. 11, entry for 4 January 1942.
- [81] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Jaico, Mumbai, 1988 [1924-6], p. 411.

[82] Herman Rauschnig, *The Voice of Destruction*, Putnam, New York, 1940, p. 265.

[82bis] As much as the author successfully submits the question of the gynaeceum in ancient Greece and that of the witch-hunt during the 'Renaissance' to a revisionist critique based on primary sources that have been swept under the carpet by academic historiography, her treatment of the question of women's suffrage in the 1920s and early 1930s is nothing but very conventional and even rather superficial. Like many popular studies on the subject, it echoes Rauschnig's assertion, made in 1939 in his novel "Gespräche mit Hitler" ("Hitler told me"), that "it was the women's vote that made Hitler's triumph possible" (quoted in Richard J. Evans, *German Women and the Triumph of Hitler*. In *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 48, no. 1, On Demand Supplement, March 1976 [p. 123-175], p.123), a statement that led to the spread in the following decades of both the belief that women's vote for Hitler was explained by their supposedly innate irrationalism and a Freudian interpretation of Hitler's supposedly irresistible attraction to women ("il faut, wrote Rauschnig in his famous novel, "you have to have seen from above, from the speakers' rostrum, the moist, rolling, veiled eyes of [Hitler's] female listeners to no longer doubt the character of this enthusiasm" ; which later inspired the historian Joachim Fest (*The Face Of The Third Reich*, Harmondsworth, 1972, p.. 401): "The 'role of eroticism in modern mass propaganda' has rarely been better documented". "But," he had said before quoting Rauschnig, "the over-excited, distinctly hysterical tone that spread rapidly in all directions arose in the first place from the excessive emotionalism of a particular type of older woman who sought to energize her unsatisfied impulses in the tumult of nightly political demonstrations before the ecstatic figure of Hitler" (8). Not to be outdone, Richard Grunberger (*A Social History of the Third Reich*, Harmondsworth, 1974, p. 117), also projecting his troubled fantasies onto Hitler, asserts: "Hitler's monk-like persona engendered a great deal of sexual hysteria among the women of the Third Reich, particularly the single women, who transformed their repressed desires into 'tearful adoration'."

All that was needed to settle this question was to look at the voting statistics, as historian Dorothee Klinksiek did in the early 1980s. Her conclusion, set out in *Die Frau im NS-Staat* (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1982), is unequivocal: "The well-known thesis that women alone made Hitler's electoral victory possible must [...] be rejected as false on the basis of electoral statistics". (full electoral statistics, not the electoral statistics of particular cities and regions, which Helen L. Boak [*Our Last Hope*; *Women's Votes for Hitler: A Reappraisal*. In *German Studies Review*, vol. 12, no. 2, May 1989 [pp. 289-310], p. 303] to prove "that it is no longer possible to continue to maintain that Hitler and his party did not attract women and that the NSDAP benefited little from the female vote"). "There is general agreement on six major points concerning the electoral behaviour of women after their emancipation in 1918. Firstly, although women voters were in the majority, their influence was modified by their tendency to vote in smaller numbers than men. Secondly, women voted much more than men for the clerical/conservative parties, especially the clerical parties. The Catholic Centre Party and its partner, the Bavarian People's Party (BVP), benefited particularly, although the Nationalist Party (DNVP) and explicitly evangelical interest groups also benefited in Protestant areas. Thirdly, women's support for left-wing parties was lower. The Social Democrats (SPD) did, however, gain female voters, so that by the end of the 1920s they had almost as many female as male votes. The Communist Party (KPD) failed to attract a significant number of women. Fourthly, until at least 1930, women's support for the NSDAP

was very limited (though greater than their support for the KPD). Thereafter, there was a sharp increase in both men's and women's support for the NSDAP, although it was only in a few regions that it won half of the women's vote. Whatever may have been said about 'Hitler's triumph thanks to the women's vote', it is clear that Hitler's chances of being elected would have been even greater without women's suffrage. Fifthly, the presidential elections of 1932 help to confirm this point: the majority of women supported Hindenburg. If only the women's vote had counted, Hitler would not have reached the second round. Finally, the vast majority of married women voted in the same way as their husbands, while daughters and sisters often tended to vote in the same way as the head of the family [...] It is likely that 6.5 million German women voted for the NSDAP in July 1932 and 5.5 million in November 1932, many of them, no doubt, because of the influence of a husband or head of household" (Jill Stephenson, *National Socialism and Women before 1933*, in Peter D. Stachura, *The Nazi Machtergreifung (RLE Nazi Germany & Holocaust, Routledge Library Editions, 2014 (1st ed.: 1983), pp.35-8* ; see also Wendy Lower, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, p. 213, note 20, 2013; Richard F. Hamilton, *Who voted for Hitler?*, Princeton University Press, 1982). [N. d. E.]

[83] Quoted in Otto Strasser, *Hitler and I*, Cape, London, 1940, p. 78.

[84] Claudia Koonz, op. cit. pp. xxiii-xxv.

[85] Grit Philipp, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Frauen-Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück, 1939-1945*, Metropol, Berlin, 1999, p. 103, 107, 150, 180, 226.

[86] Reimer Voss, *Steuern im Dritten Reich: vom Recht zum Unrecht unter der Herrschaft des Nationalsozialismus*, Beck, Munich, 1995, p. 80.

[87] Claudia Koonz, op. cit. p. 278.

[88] See Dörte Winkler, *Frauenarbeit im Dritten Reich*, Hoffman und Campe, Hamburg, 1977, p. 187.

[89] Clifford Kirkpatrick, *Nazi Germany: Its Women and Its Family Life*, Bobbs-Merrill, New York, 1938, p. 207; Hilde Browing, *Women under Fascism and Communism*, Lawrence, London, 1943, p. 9.

[90] Gertrude Bäumer, *Des Lebens wie der Liebe Band*, Wunderlich, Tübingen, 1956, p. 135.

[91] Dörte Winkler, *Frauenarbeit im 'Dritten Reich'*, Hoffmann und Campe, 1977, p. 49-50.

[92] See Charlotte Grätz-Menzel, *Über die rassenideologische Wirkung der akademischen Frauenberufe mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ärztinnen und Zahnärztinnen*, *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, no. 27, 1933, p. 143, Table 10.

[93] Astrid Dageförde, *Frauen an der Hamburger Universität 1933 bis 1945: Emanzipation oder Repression*, in Eckart Krause (ed.), *Hochschulalltag im 'Dritten Reich'*, Reimer, Berlin, 1991, pp. 256-7.

[94] James C. Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1988, pp. 222-3.



[95] Hans R. Bleuel, *Sex and Society in Nazi Germany*, Bantam, New York, 1973, p. 67.

[96] Jacques R. Pauwels, *Women, Nazis and Universities*, Westport, CT, Greenwood, 1984, pp. 101-5; see also Michael H. Kater, *Doctors Under Hitler*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1989, p. 99.

[97] Claudia Koonz, *op. cit.* p. 45.

[98] Joseph Goebbels, *Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei*, Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Munich, 1939, p. 72.

[99] Speech (1932), quoted in Werner Siebert, *Hitlers Wollen, nach Kernsätzen aus seinen Schriften und Reden*, Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Franz Eher Nachf. GmbH, Munich, 1937, p. 105.

[100] *Statistisches Jahrbuch des Deutschen Reiches*, 1935, Berlin, 1935, p. 474.

[101] Renate Bridenthal, *Something Old, Something New: Women between the Two World Wars*, in Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (eds.), *Becoming Visible*, p. 426, table 18-1.

[102] Dörte Winkler, *op. cit.* p. 55, 64-5; Hans R. Bleuel, *Sex and Society in Nazi Germany*, Bantam, 1973, New York, p. 63.

[102bis] In reality, the relationship between National Socialism and professional women was not as idyllic as the picture painted by the author suggests. In fact, the significant increase in the number of women in white-collar jobs was a legacy of the Weimar period and cannot be attributed to the Third Reich alone (Marie-Bénédicte Vincent, *White-Collar Workers in the Weimar Republic: Historians and Hans Fallada's Bestseller, 'Little Man, What Now?'*, Université d'Angers, Centre de Recherches Historiques de l'Ouest (CERHIO, CNRS, 1932, Angers). Between 1907 and 1933, the number of female clerks and civil servants rose by 248.9%, while the number of male clerks and civil servants rose by "only" 43%; in fact, the number of female clerks and civil servants rose faster than the female workforce as a whole; they were secretaries, telephone operators, saleswomen, nurses, technicians, etc.; in 1925, women accounted for more than half of the total workforce. In 1925, women accounted for 51.6% of the "teaching profession" (Helen Boak, *Women in Weimar Germany: the "Frauenfrage" and the female vote*, in Richard Bessel and E. J. Feuchtwanger (eds.), *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany*, Croom Helm, London, 1981, pp. 188-9). Similarly, women had not waited for the Third Reich to infiltrate higher education. Their numbers in universities rose from 3,368 (5.6%) in the summer of 1913 to 7,182 (10%) in the summer of 1918 (who said women didn't benefit from the war?), and to 2,934 (18.7%) in the summer of 1931 (Jill Stephenson, *Women and the Professions in Germany, 1900-1945*, in Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch, *German Professions, 1800-1950*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 1990, p. 277). Hitler made the mistake of failing to clean up the senior civil service, and the bad habits acquired under Weimar, and in some cases even before, persisted and became more pronounced. [Editor's note]

[103] Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement In Germany*, p. 263.

[104] Dörte Winkler, *Frauenarbeit im Dritten Reich*, p. 74.

[105] See *ibid.* pp. 110-9.

[106] Hans Peter Bleuel, *op. cit.* p. 155.

[107] Dörte Winkler, *op. cit.* p. 123.

[108] Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1978, p. 171.

[108bis] Let us rephrase: "How did German women view the measures taken by the National Socialist regime, which the author considers criminal? [Editor's note]

[109] Claudia Koonz, *op. cit.* p. 161, 246.

[110] Franz Weiss, "Die Personelle Zusammensetzung der Führungskräfte der Wiener Gestapo-Leitstelle zwischen 1938 und 1945. In *Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 20, no. 7-8, 1993, p. 247.

[111] Grit Philipp, *op. cit.* pp. 101, 122, 123.

[112] Claudia Koonz, *op. cit.* p. 404-5.

[112bis] In 1952, having been granted early release from Landsberg, where she was serving a twenty-year prison sentence commuted to ten years after being "found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity" by the court of the Judeo-Allied Inquisition, Dr Herta Oberheuser (1911-1978) declared that she had been the victim of a conspiracy by Communists and former prisoners of the Ravensbrück concentration camp (<https://individual.utoronto.ca/jarekg/Ravensbruck/Regainedfaith.pdf>). In her 1989 review of Koonz's book in the history journal *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, German historian Gisela Bock accused her American colleague of having written a biased book "of no historical value" (Atina Grossmann, *La question des femmes et du nazisme au cœur du féminisme*, Liliane Kandel (ed.), *Féminismes et Nazisme*, Editions Odile Jacob, Paris, 2004, p. 214. [Editor's note]

[113] Michael H. Kater, *op. cit.* p. 110.

[113bis] It should be pointed out that such accusations were made in the aftermath of the war by prisoners whose testimony could never be confirmed by material evidence. In the case of Dachau, the main eyewitness was a certain Walter Neff, who worked there as an assistant to Dr Sigmund Rascher. According to Neff, medical experiments were carried out on 180 to 200 prisoners, ten of whom volunteered, while most of the others, with the exception of around forty, had been sentenced to death by the Gestapo (John Cobden, *Lessons from Dachau Book Review*, in *IHR*, vol. 9, no. 4, 1989). With regard to the notorious Dr Mengele, most of the information we have about his medical practice at Auschwitz comes from a book published in 1947 by the Jewish forensic pathologist Miklós Nyiszli, who claimed to have been his assistant at the concentration camp. Interestingly, the book, which was originally published in the Hungarian newspaper *Vilag*, was presented as historical fiction (Charles D. Provan, *New Light on Dr. Miklos Nyiszli and His Auschwitz Book*. In *IHR*, vol. 20, no. 1). Carlos Mattogno has subjected Nyiszli's various writings to an in-depth critical examination in *An Auschwitz Doctor's*

Eyewitness Account-The Tall Tales of Dr. Mengele's Assistant Analyzed (Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield, 2018). His conclusion is formal: "Nyzsli was either an extraordinary impostor or a madman; there is no escaping this dilemma. And both horns of this dilemma - blatant lying or madness - disqualify Nyzsli and completely destroy his credibility." [Editor's note]

[113ter] This is to say little of the many women who went into resistance against National Socialism (see Zurn and Meyer, *Women Against Hitler* and Hanna Elling, *Frauen im deutschen Widerstand, 1933-45*, Röderberg-Verlag, Cologne, 1978). "Much has been written about the resistance of the Churches, and in particular the Catholic Churches, to the Third Reich. But it has rarely been pointed out that this resistance would have collapsed overnight if it had not been solidly supported by the mass of Catholic women" (ibid., p. 159), a resistance which, from the start of the war, "became more general and unbridled" (ibid.). "Women's resistance to Nazism was generally more direct, more violent and more widespread than men's resistance" (ibid., p. 158), particularly in Catholic and Protestant circles. On 11 October 1943, riots broke out in several towns in the Ruhr: the miners' wives were in the front line. In Witten, three hundred women demonstrated so violently that the authorities were forced to order the police to disperse them; the police refused to carry out the order, claiming that the women's cause seemed just to them. What gave rise to the demonstrations on 11 October 1943 was the authorities' refusal to distribute ration coupons to the women concerned, on the grounds that they had returned home without authorisation from the regions where they had been evacuated following large-scale Allied bombing raids. Women's resistance to evacuation orders seems to have been relatively widespread. They had little or no interest in the course of the war and made no secret of it. In the middle classes, many women withdrew to health spas, completely disengaging from national life. In the factories, women, especially married women [...] tended more and more to do their work badly, not to follow the rules, not to turn up for work and generally to be considered less reliable and more undisciplined than the men. But while the authorities severely punished workers who broke the rules, women workers got away with it" (ibid., p. 160). [Editor's note].

[113quater] It would be more accurate to say that the feminist leaders, or at least some of them, including Bäumer, aligned themselves with the aims of the National Socialist leaders, as is evident from what the author himself says above about the latter. It will come as no surprise to anyone that the National Socialist leadership resolutely rejected feminist philosophy (Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894-1944*, London, 1976, pp. 247-8). [Editor's note]

3

From the ice-age to the dole-age

There is but one concern

I have just discovered :

Some girls are bigger than others

Some girls are bigger than others

Some girl's mothers are bigger than

Other girl's mothers

Steven Morrissey, *Some Girls are Bigger than Others*, 1986

Masculinity and its disorders

### 1. Forgotten sex

In the vast body of feminist literature, no accusation is more frequent than the assertion that men tend to treat themselves and are themselves treated as the reference sex for evaluating women. This claim is not without foundation. In many languages, the term 'man' is synonymous with 'human being' (which is a double-edged sword, given the very high number of unflattering judgements that are constantly made about 'human beings' and therefore 'men'. EDITOR'S NOTE). There is, however, a flip side to this coin. It is precisely because men are considered and see themselves as the reference sex that the status of woman is seen as particularly interesting. Conversely, a man as a man is often overlooked and even generally ignored. A search of the Library of Congress shows that books with the word 'women' in the title outnumber those with 'men' in the title by twelve to one. On Amazon.com, there are four times as many "guides for women" as there are "guides for men" (no doubt there's a reason the site isn't called Macho.com. EDITOR'S NOTE). On the same site, there are five times as many books about 'women' and 'physical activity' as there are about men.

Perhaps because many women don't like sex, the main course in sexology is said to be the "narration of the (female) orgasm". In contrast, "the male orgasmic experience is hardly the subject of literary concern" [114]. Helene Deutsch's major work on female psychology, published in 1944, was an authority on the subject for several decades. It was followed by works by Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan (both published in 1989). To this day, however, there is no such classic work on male psychology. It's as if psychological problems specific to men didn't exist. Similarly, in the field of education, the number of publications on the specific needs of girls is simply staggering. On the other hand, when it comes to the specific needs of boys, the silence is almost deafening. As one historian has written, given that there is no book on ancient Egyptian men, the reader might well wonder whether there is any justification for

writing one on ancient Egyptian women [115]. Needless to say, this remark did not stop her from going ahead.

The lack of interest in men may be partly due to institutional provisions that discriminate against them. Before the start of the "second wave of feminism" around 1970, it could be explained by the fact that no case was made for men. What everyone knows or thinks they know does not need to be studied. Since then, the neglect of men has been an integral part of the campaign against "patriarchy", in which any attempt to pay attention to men's needs and demands can lead to prosecution. Whenever there are fewer women than men studying a subject, this is immediately seen as a problem. However, when there are fewer men than women studying a subject, as is the case in areas such as foreign languages, most liberal arts and some social sciences, no one seems to care. As one author has written [116], one could not blame a visitor from outer space for concluding from his exploration of our libraries and academic world that there is only one sex: the female sex.

In this chapter, we will see that, in fact, it is much more difficult to become and to be a man than to become and to be a woman. I will begin with a brief summary of the bio-psychological data on the problem from the moment of conception. Then I will look at how men compete for and provide for women and some of the consequences of their failure. Then I will show how society, by claiming to be preparing young men for the heavier burdens they will have to carry into adulthood, is making their lives even more difficult. The final section will summarise these problems and explain how, to cap it all, men are forbidden to talk to other men about these problems.

## 2. Bio-psychological data

Why did nature create two sexes instead of one? Today, most biologists would reply that the function of sexual reproduction is to enable each generation to give life [117]. Life is seen as a process of deterioration, as some genes mutate spontaneously and develop abnormalities. Others are damaged by ultraviolet light. By recombining two strands of DNA, each from a different parent, sex makes it possible to correct the errors, just as a new car can be made by dismantling two car wrecks and assembling the undamaged parts of each.

To form a new organism, two sex cells, each with half the normal number of chromosomes, must fuse. Then, the zygote must be sufficiently nourished to get through the first phase of its life. In theory, these two requirements could be met by two cells from two different organisms, each of which is equally able to move easily (to seek out the other) and equally nutritious. This solution, called isogamy, is how some

fungi fertilise. However, it's like building an aircraft designed for both transport and combat. The resulting hybrid is unlikely to perform either function very effectively. As we know, the vast majority of species that reproduce sexually have developed differently. Some of the parent organisms produce small, motile sex cells (spermatozoa) and are known as male organisms. Others produce larger, less mobile but more nutritious cells (ova) and are known as female organisms.

Women are the primary sex. Man exists to serve her, not the other way round. Since every foetus in the embryonic state is either female or sexually undifferentiated, the Bible got it wrong. Males are, so to speak, mounted on a female chassis. For an organism to become male, an extraordinary event is required, namely the appearance at a given moment of a Y chromosome, which will trigger the process. Otherwise, the zygote will follow the path of least resistance and transform into a female gamete [118]. However, not everything stops at conception. In many species, such as turtles and crocodiles, the sex of the young is determined by the temperature at which the eggs are incubated. Here too, nature "gives a striking advantage to women" [119]. In human beings, even if a Y chromosome is present, hormonal disorders can result in the baby looking and behaving like a female. It is so difficult to become a male that, in all species for which information is available, once the sex of the foetus has been determined, more males than females are aborted [120].

From a biological point of view, becoming a woman means following the path of least resistance. As society allows girls to follow directly in their mother's footsteps, becoming a woman also means, from a psychological point of view, following the path of least resistance. Like girls, boys are born to women and spend the first years of their childhood under their care. Unlike girls, boys must at some point renounce their mothers, begin to identify with their fathers and become men. If Freud is to be believed, this may be because the father threatens them with castration. Or it may be because they see their mother as strong and threatening [121]. Or, as some feminists have argued, it may be because boys, forced to witness the suffering their father inflicts on their mother, will do anything not to share it [122]. In one way or another, men suffer from the Oedipus complex. If they are not to remain forever in childhood, they must overcome it; it is perhaps the most difficult thing they will have to do in their lives.

As a single male can fertilise a very large number of females, the vast majority of males are not needed. Once they have donated their sperm, they are even less necessary. All this suggests, in the words of one biologist, that nature uses males to produce extra females and is rather wasteful [123]. In reality, all you need is a syringe and a few cubic centimetres of sperm. If current experiments to fertilise eggs with DNA taken from other eggs are extended from mice to humans, we will soon not even need them. The fact that the necessary techniques were invented by men only compounds the offence. It's as if, every time men try to help women, they only make themselves even more superfluous. The superfluity of men is most evident in the praying mantis and the tarantula. The females of these species eat the males during copulation. In addition to his sperm, the male also gives the rest of his proteins. As far as mammals are

concerned, nature's solutions are less radical and less lethal. However, the same principles apply. We don't know whether male animals understand that they are superfluous. Yet the spectacle of the young males of some mammals, such as baboons and zebras, sacrificing themselves to defend the females and their young, suggests that to some extent they do. Among humans, the fact that "man is the infertile animal", in the words of Friedrich Nietzsche, is obvious to all. In many cultures, it is tormented from childhood. From childhood, girls are told that one day they will have babies, while boys are told that they must become men [124].

As if to confirm this reasoning, a society composed entirely of women is not only conceivable, but has often been conceived [125]: consider the myth of the Amazons. For our purposes, the most important "fact" about them is not that they were warriors "equal to men" and capable of fighting and defeating them. Rather, it's that they lived alone, without men. Several legends explain how they managed to do this and still have descendants, but most of them date from a relatively late period [126]. The impact of the Amazon legend on people's imaginations was so great that it gave rise to countless imitations. For example, Mary E. Bradley described in *Mizora* (1890) a world of powerful blonde Brunhildes who, thanks to their discovery of the "Secret of Life", were able to eliminate all men [127]. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915), the women, having somehow rid themselves of "their brutal (male) conquerors", live isolated on an Amazonian plateau. At first, they expected their race to perish for want of offspring. But thanks to an unforeseen miracle, not only did they begin to reproduce by parthenogenesis, but the resulting offspring were all female [128].

The second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s produced a new crop of such stories. In Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975) [129], most of the men are killed by a mysterious disease that affected only their sex. The rest are exterminated by Jael, a misandrist fury with retractable steel fingernails. In this novel, the women reproduce by parthenogenesis. In *The Wanderground* (1978), Sally Gearhart has achieved the same feat by "implantation" and "egg fusion". The children have the chance to be raised by not one but seven mothers [130]. Other feminine utopias suggest that children should be raised by machines, to leave their mothers free to look after their own spiritual development. In fact, it's not impossible that one day egg fertilisation without sperm - based on triggering the genetic code present in every cell of the body - will become a reality [131].

Until such progress is made, it might occur to women to keep a few men in cages for reproductive purposes as well as sexual pleasure. Gearhart suggested limiting them to 10% of the population. Monique Wittig, for her part, was prepared to let a few of them live [132], provided they accepted a feminist society inspired by primitive communism, did not lay claim to any children they might father and wore their hair long. Other feminist visionaries have suggested that men be given injections to enable them to produce milk or be conditioned to walk on carrots to get an erection on demand [133].

On the other hand, male authors, with very rare exceptions, have never sought to rid the world of women, partly because they realised that women are indispensable and partly because they loved them so much. Men's addiction to women may be linked to the reproductive mechanism itself [134]. The difference in size between the egg and the cell varies, but the egg is always much larger, six to twelve times larger and sometimes even more. As a result, producing an egg requires much more energy from a woman than producing a sperm requires from a man, even taking into account complete ejaculations. A man may ejaculate thousands of times in his lifetime. A woman, on the other hand, will only ovulate around four hundred times. Of these eggs, only a small proportion will be fertilised, while the rest will be excreted through natural channels. The most fertile man known to date is a king of Morocco in the early 19th century by the name of Ismaël le Sanguinaire: he had 700 children, not including daughters. But as far as we know, no woman has ever had more than 69 children; the lady in question was a Russian who specialised in triplets [135].

Add pregnancy to the equation and the difference between men and women becomes so great that it is almost impossible to assess. Most healthy men under middle age can have sex at least once a day and therefore have many children. However, every time a woman has sex, there is a risk that she will become pregnant. If she does become pregnant, she will not be able to conceive for at least nine months. Even after giving birth, the mother remains sterile for as long as she breastfeeds. This period can last from a few months to three years. Because she can only conceive relatively few times in her life, and because of the considerable investment that each of her children requires of her before and after birth, she makes every effort to ensure that they survive and grow into adulthood. This explains why women are "stingy with their vaginas", as one Papua New Guinean tribe puts it [136]. Experiments show that men are much more willing to seek pleasure in the arms of strangers [137]. The same applies to males of other mammal species. [138].

The mechanism by which society regulates sexual behaviour is known as marriage. However, marriage has a different meaning for men and women. As both surveys and the existence of a huge matrimonial industry in Western societies prove, women follow their inclinations and fulfil their dreams through marriage [139]. The same cannot be said for men, who have little to gain from an arrangement whose aim is to force them to have only one or, in non-Western societies, only a few wives, and who would undoubtedly have better chances of survival and development if they remained single. This imbalance explains why there is no magazine called Groom that specialises in the sale of top hats and striped trousers (a magazine of this name has been published since 2016 whose editorial line does not, however, make the author lie. EDITOR'S NOTE). On the contrary, stag parties are an opportunity for men to enjoy their sexual freedom for the last time, or, in the form of a stripper, a third-rate substitute for it.



Much has been written about women's fear of sex and the physical and mental consequences that can ensue if they are not properly introduced to it. This overlooks the other side of the coin, which is no less important [140]. In sexual relations, as in many other areas, women are allowed to play a passive role; in fact, in most societies, women were traditionally required to play such a role; any activity on their part was considered unladylike and likely to reduce the chances of conception. Not so for men, who are expected to satisfy their partners and without whom the act simply cannot take place. As Betty Friedan, a self-proclaimed "slut" not known for her concern for men, wrote in her memoirs: "It would be terrible to have that pressure [of having to get him hard] all the time" [141]. The result is that men approach the first encounter, and not just the first, with fear and nervousness. Anxious to avoid scorn, they cannot admit their ignorance to other men or women. They are often led to lie about their level of experience.

By focusing solely on the difficulties faced by girls in this area, modern society expects boys to fend for themselves. This was not the case in earlier times, when a great deal of attention was paid to the problem and attempts were made to deal with it in a way which, however clumsy it may seem to some of us, at least shows that it was taken seriously [142]. Often special arrangements were made for young men. In some societies, boys were taught by their elders; this is still the case among Orthodox Jews [143]. In other cultures, boys were initiated by an older, more experienced woman. This could be an unmarried servant of the family or a prostitute. In France, Italy, Spain and Latin America, it was customary for fathers to take their teenage sons to a brothel to spare them future embarrassment. In Thomas Mann's novel *Royal Highness*, which describes how these things were done in the upper classes of late nineteenth-century Germany, everything is organised by the young hero's tutor. The lady was the mistress of an older man. She lived in another part of the country, where she more or less belonged to the socially suspect world of the theatre. As a reward for her services, she received a souvenir.

Failure in bed can mark a man's life just as much as a woman's. All the more so as an impotent man is more likely to attract opprobrium than a woman suffering from anorgasmia. Especially as an impotent man is more likely to be stigmatised than a woman who suffers from anorgasmia. While this orgasmic disorder can be, and often is, successfully concealed, impotence cannot. A woman who blames her husband for her lack of sexual pleasure is likely to be sympathetic. But a man who accuses a woman of 'castrating' him will be ridiculed. This difference may explain why, even in societies where divorce is difficult to obtain, a woman whose husband is unable to fulfil his 'conjugal duty' can usually obtain it if she can substantiate her accusation. Court records from the Middle Ages and early modern times document the methods used to make husbands confess; it is hardly necessary to explain how humiliating and even destructive they were.

Even if things follow their normal course, a man will find that a woman's sexual abilities are superior to a man's in some respects. Whatever she's feeling, she's always ready. She can come again and again, whereas he cannot. Add to this the problem of premature ejaculation, which is thought to affect 30% of

men, and it's easy to see why, for many men, this performance gap is a constant source of anxiety. Anxiety can be entirely justified. According to a *Cosmopolitan* survey, around half of its married readers had had an affair. As *Cosmopolitan* readers tend to be young, this survey underestimates the likelihood of a woman having an extramarital affair at some point in her life [144].

Worse still for husbands, research shows that women are more likely to conceive when they commit adultery than when they have sex in the marital bed [145].

DNA tests show that between 5% and 30% of babies born to married women in the USA and the UK are the offspring of men other than their husbands [146]. In Germany, the figure is around 10%. As the law only allows the results to be used as evidence if the tests were carried out with the woman's consent, this is probably an underestimate [147]. It is not for nothing that, according to rabbinic law, the Jewishness of a Jewish child is always determined by that of its mother. It is not for nothing that attempts to change this rule meet with determined opposition from Orthodox rabbis. They rightly fear that if paternity tests are carried out, the number of Jewish children will fall dramatically [148].

In short, simply becoming a man is a risky business. Even when successful, men remain sex superfluous both before and after coitus. Most men are acutely aware of this fact. The result has been a whole literature on worlds without men, while the number of attempts to create worlds without women is very close to zero. As Darwin argued, biological factors make women more difficult to satisfy sexually than men [149]. Since men feel a stronger need to have sex with as many women as possible, marriage implies a much greater sacrifice for them than for women, especially when monogamy is the rule. Marriage or not, "phallic power is an implacable conveyor belt that threatens to collapse at any moment" [150]. Finally, women's sexual performance is superior to men's, not to mention their ability to produce offspring whose paternity, until now, could rarely be established with certainty.

### 3. Fighting and meeting needs

In all animals, male sex cells must seek out the least mobile females, either inside the body, as in mammals, or outside, as in fish. Heaven forbid that we should interpret this as proof that female sex cells are less 'active' than male cells! In fact, the type of activity they carry out is different. The spermatozoa fight each other to reach the eggs. The eggs remain in place and, by means of the finger-like structures attached to their walls, "decide" which ones to admit and which ones to reject. So, for male sex cells, life itself begins with a competition; of the tens of millions that enter the race, only one will live.

Before spilling their sperm into the womb, males must first compete to gain access to one or more fertile females and monopolise them as far as possible. The mathematics of competition varies from species to species, but the principle itself is widespread. Male ants and male bees fight each other for access to the queen. In many species of fish, the males chase the females and use bright colours to attract their attention. The same is true of many species of birds and mammals. In this struggle, many males adopt particular characteristics; for example, their canines, manes and antlers change shape or colour. The female, unless she is raped (which is not entirely unknown in animals) [151], is content to observe. At the end of the fight, she will give her approval to the winner by mating with him.

The absolute necessity for males to fight for access to females often comes at a high cost. In some mammals, such as kangaroos, mountain sheep, deer and elephant seals, it leads to fights that can cause fatal injuries. The loser can expect, at the very least, to lose his rank and to be excluded from the best hunting grounds, resulting in a reduced life expectancy. In addition, sexual selection often works against other evolutionary forces [152]. A male may well lose some of his mobility or become more vulnerable to predators because of the disproportionate size of some of his limbs, the bright colours he takes on or the particular sounds he makes when he is in rut. In other words, he may lose his life trying to attract a female.

The fact that it develops certain characteristics and engages in certain activities whose sole justification is display can also cost it a great deal in terms of biological resources. To cite the best-known examples, each year the peacock sheds its tail feathers at the end of July, which grow back the following spring, and the deer sheds its antlers at the end of winter, which grow back the following August [153]. In short, males show their biological aptitudes by engaging in types of display that are not essential to their survival [154]; the more costly the change in colour or shape that an animal undergoes during the rut, the more it proves its ability to bear this cost. His situation is comparable to that of a man driving a brand new Mercedes. Although such a car is not essential to its owner's movements, it demonstrates its power better than a modest Chevrolet or Volkswagen. At the wheel of his Mercedes, the owner shows the world that he has the purchasing power that women hope he will share with them and their offspring.

In almost all cultures, a man must invest in a woman in order to attract and keep her. To attract and keep a man, a woman must invest in herself [155]. Few men, if any, can make their way on the basis of their looks or their ability to make friends. Those who do are called frauds. This is not the case for women, for whom beauty is often the quickest route to success and whose social skills may be enough to maintain their lifestyle. In US department stores, the surface area devoted to women's accessories, jewellery and cosmetics is seven times greater than that allocated to men's products of the same kind

[156]. It's no coincidence that most self-help magazines are read by women [157]. It's no coincidence that most career magazines are read by men. It doesn't matter how successful a man is; the reward is always women with parted lips and deep necklines. So competition between men, even if it involves personal development, which may take the form of bodybuilding, will eventually lead to them giving away. At the end of the day, men are measured mainly by their pockets. On the other hand, the main ground on which women fight amongst themselves is that of personal development. Their aim is to get men to pay for them, an act that is by definition self-centred.

In many societies, control over a woman's reproductive capacity lies with her family. A young woman may give herself to a man because she feels passion for him; that's why Juliet gave herself to Romeo. On the other hand, in such circumstances, her parents or other family members are much more likely to have practical considerations in mind. The legends of many peoples tell of rulers who organised competitions to marry off their daughters. In the Irish epic *The Tain*, the hero, Cuchulainn, has to kill twenty-four men - any one of whom could just as easily kill him - to win the right to roam the 'sweet land' of his beloved's breasts. Later, a woman called Medb shamelessly abuses seven different men by promising each of them her daughter in marriage [158]. Many of those who took part in these competitions were put to death in various exotic ways. It is not only in myths that women marry, or are given in marriage, to the best fighters. In ancient Rome, successful gladiators received the same kind of attention from women as today's football stars. In many tribal societies, but not only in tribal societies, women grant favours to warriors who perform prowess, either temporarily before marriage or permanently afterwards.

The bride price is another aspect of the competition between men for access to women. In the Bible, Jacob had to serve Laban for seven years before getting his daughter, Leah, and another seven before finally getting his true love, Rachel. Today, the bride price continues to be practised by many tribes in black Africa, as well as in parts of Oceania and Australia. It can be symbolic in nature and last for just one day, as among the Ngondi of Rhodesia and the Baganda of Kenya. It can also last up to 20 years and exhaust a man's resources, as among the Goba of the Zambezi Valley [159]. The period in question is stipulated in advance and begins several years before the marriage can take place. There is no guarantee that the young man will get what he wants, as the woman or her parents may change their minds in the meantime.

Some see the bride price and dowry as a system used by older men to control younger men. Others think that this system is intended to reassure husbands who are not "very sure" that their wives will not run away during the early stages of marriage [160]. With particular reference to Japan, others see a link between the country's low divorce rate and the fact that, before a marriage can take place, the groom or his family must pay up to 30,000 dollars (1999) [161]. Be that as it may, in all societies it is men, not women, who have to work and pay to get married. In this respect, as in so many others, they are

humanity's beasts of burden. Not only did Cuchulainn have to risk his life twenty-four times, but he also had to perform the "salmon jump" with "twice his weight in gold" [162] on his back.

Stimulated and encouraged by women, this competition can shape a man's entire life. The winner may gain power, wealth and greater self-esteem. But even for the winner, the rewards are bittersweet. The very qualities that are needed to win, such as aggression, cunning and ruthlessness, can isolate the victors, making it almost impossible for them to have real relationships with men or women. Often, the man at the top of the social hierarchy has the fewest friends. There has perhaps never been a more powerful man than Joseph Stalin. In the Soviet Union, even his closest cronies recoiled in awe from him, and abroad he provoked the same reaction by threatening to march all five hundred divisions of his army and, later, to rain down atomic bombs. This is the same person who, in a documentary, is filmed with a glass of vodka in his hand at a private performance by a famous ballerina. After the show, he didn't even bother to sleep with her; after all, it wouldn't have proved anything.

For Stalin and his ilk, providing for their families was not a problem. However, for many other men, then as now, providing for their families is the most difficult thing they will do in their entire lives. In some species of birds, males are monogamous and feed their females during courtship or nesting [163], but even in these birds this is a temporary arrangement that does not last a lifetime. In contrast, the males of most mammalian species simply move away from the female after mating, having provided their offspring only with their genes. Only a few, including gorillas, gibbons and saddle-tailed tamarins, take care of her. Even then, they only play with the young, if and when they are in the mood. In no primate, with the exception of man, is there any question of the father providing for the needs of his offspring. Compared to the size of their mother's body, human babies are enormous, which explains why childbirth is both difficult and dangerous, especially as bipedalism has made the birth canal relatively narrower in women (what about ostriches and penguins? N.D.E.) [164] than it is in the female of other mammals. In no other species of mammal is the child so helpless at birth and takes so long to grow. This is true both in absolute terms and in relation to overall lifespan. Even the most precocious youngsters in the simplest societies will hardly reach the final stage of the growth process before they are 14 or 15 years old [165]. This is almost certainly the reason why our hunter-gatherer ancestors entered into an arrangement, found in no other species, whereby the males provide for the long-term needs, not only of their offspring, but also of the mother (to give any credence to this explanation, you obviously have to believe in the fable of evolutionism. EDITOR'S NOTE).

Even today, all things considered, a mother or father who tries to bring up their children alone is faced with a serious difficulty. He or she will find it much harder to bring up healthy, well-balanced children [166]. To help women cope, men provide for them all the time, from marriage to the grave and beyond. Whether the union is polygamous or polygynous, whether it is contracted in a hunter-gatherer society or in a post-industrial society, whether the bride and groom are Christian or Muslim, Buddhist or

Animist, whatever the time, place or culture, with the possible exception of the short-lived communist experiment, men provide for one (or sometimes several) wives and their offspring. Polyandry, which is not the general rule, is found in less than 1% of societies. In the vast majority of cases, men marry one or more women. In these circumstances, they are expected to hand over a large part, if not the majority, of their livelihood. In Western countries, if men abandoned their families, their disposable income would increase by up to 75% [167]. In the whole of nature, there is no more demanding and altruistic arrangement.

Given the immense burden they carry, it is hardly surprising that some men find it difficult to cope with life all the time, or that almost all men find it difficult to cope with life at certain times. A range of solutions to this problem have been proposed, which vary according to culture and personal inclination and present varying degrees of danger, both to the men themselves and to society. Several of these solutions will be examined here, from the least dangerous to the most dangerous.

First of all, there is the use of imagination. This can take many forms, from reading the Iliad to playing a computer game. In all times and places, men and women have dreamt of "heroes of the future", albeit for different reasons. What he wants to be, she wants to have. From the circus games to the Super Bowl, via medieval tournaments, the function of spectator sports has hardly changed. They provide people with heroes with whom they can identify, diverting their attention from reality, at least temporarily.

Pornography can also be understood as a sub-category of fantasy. It is often used by men who feel unable to obtain the women they desire, in order to create for themselves a kind of universe in which they are omniscient and all-powerful [168]. It may also represent an attempt to penetrate the mystery of femininity - "the great abyss of nothingness", as the American author Henry Miller once called it [169] - or to stimulate declining sexual performance. It is true that women also resort to pornography, sometimes in the company of or at the insistence of men whose interest they hope to stimulate in this way. However, you only have to go to the nearest newsagent to see that it concerns far more men than women. Gay pornography is abundant [170]. Lesbian pornography, on the other hand, is practically non-existent. According to psychoanalysts, women do not react in the same way to pornography. In particular, they do not seem to be particularly fond of scenes involving force and coercion [171].

Another solution is crime. Worldwide, far more men than women become criminals. To give just one example, in Great Britain during the 1990s, men committed 84% of all recorded crimes, 92% of violent crimes and 97% of burglaries [171bis]. By the age of 25, a quarter of men had been convicted of one offence or another [172]. The question is why [173]. The answer lies partly in biology, and more specifically in the properties of male hormones. However, many sociologists believe that the criminal

propensities of young men reflect the greater difficulties they encounter in finding their place in the world. As we will see in the next chapter, the fact that men commit more criminal acts may also reflect the harsher treatment they receive from society from birth.

Men's problems may be compounded by the fact that modern urban life does not allow them to make full use of their most important advantage over women: their courage and physical prowess. In simpler societies, these qualities enable men to acquire adult status. Faced with the obligation to achieve difficult, if not impossible, goals by means that handicap them, and labelled wimps or losers if they fail, it is hardly surprising that some of them seek to do so by illegal means. All things considered, the more modest the family they come from, the more likely they are to succeed. Conversely, the need to have money to spend on girls is thought to be one of the driving forces behind the drug trade [174].

One crime that should be referred to in this context is rape [175]. In the case of people who know each other - known as date rape - it may be inappropriate to talk about "rape". Even the most determined opponents of rape admit that 50% of women who have been raped were raped by people they knew [176]. Some studies put the figure much higher. A man may have what he believes to be consensual sex with a woman and leave her on the friendliest of terms, only to find himself accused of rape the next day or even years later. It's not surprising that, according to police officers responsible for combating sexual offences, almost all the men arrested for this crime seem very surprised by the charge brought against them. In some cases, a woman accuses a man of raping her to get back at him for refusing her advances. Think of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in the Bible. As one academic put it, false allegations are "a very old feminine strategy" [178].

Apart from these cases, the fact remains that rape does occur. Reports from the US and the UK claim that the vast majority of rapists are single, unskilled, unemployed workers [179]. If this is true, it would mean that rape is the only way for men to possess women who despise them and do not want to have sex with them. In other cases, particularly those involving various types of sadistic acts, rape may be a way for a man to use a woman to take revenge on other women [180]. Whatever the motive, rape very often indicates the perpetrator's inability to be loved, his insecurity, dissatisfaction and powerlessness [181].

The last option open to men is to give up on life. When statistics on suicide began to be collected in the nineteenth century, it was found that men were more likely to take their own lives than women. Other men may let themselves wither away, like the main character in Herman Melville's short story *Bartleby* [182]. *Bartleby*, a clerk in a Wall Street office, decides one day to stop working and look after himself. His condition begins to deteriorate, much to the horror of his employer, who plays the role of narrator

and whose own gloom increases as he tells the story. Having resisted his boss's urgent pleas to pull himself together, Bartleby ends his life huddled in the "Tombs", as the Manhattan prison was then known [183], where, refusing to eat, he starves to death. The story probably struck a chord with many men in the one hundred and fifty years since its publication. The lot of men is endless toil, the fruits of which are largely consumed by others. The more men give, the more is asked of them. If they suffer a reversal of fortune, they risk losing both the fruits of their labour and those to whom they have given them. Perhaps the most terrifying thing about Melville's novel is that, at times, Bartleby's behaviour and fate can tempt even the most active and successful man.

In the end, the only way for men to escape their burden is old age. In Plato's Republic, it is an old man, Cephalus, who opens the discussion. In response to a question, he explains how happy he is to be rid of the "raging and savage" passion of sex [184]; he is finally able to lead a quiet life and sacrifice himself to the gods. Similarly, in Chinese art, a famous motif is that of bald, fat, smiling old men sitting comfortably in the lotus position. They have reached a point where they have nothing to fear except eating at will; for the luckiest among them, they almost seem to float in the air. But to reach old age in such good conditions, you have to be able to carry the burden and survive the competition. In humans, as in apes [185], the road to tranquillity is littered with the corpses of men.

In short, the mathematics of reproduction has made women the privileged sex. These same mathematics have created in men a desperate need to possess women and to fight each other for them. Hundreds of thousands of years of evolution have strongly programmed this competition into their genes [186]. The competition is particularly fierce in polygamous societies, which historically have always been the most numerous. In these cultures, many men can only marry late in life, if at all. They enter into competition with each other shortly after puberty, and remain in competition for most of their adult lives. Competition can take the form of combat, work or payment. Whatever form it takes, in almost all cases it involves the obligation to provide for oneself. Whether in terms of risk, resources, wealth or health, the price people pay for this competition is staggering. So it's not surprising that, in some cases, they resort to unconventional means or abandon it altogether.

#### 4. Becoming a man

In everything except pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding, it is the male sex that bears the heaviest burden. In their youth, men have to be more or less forcibly separated from their mothers to be able one day to take on the role of adult man - uprooted from the maternal paradise, as one psychiatrist put it [187]. After that, they will find themselves condemned to compete with other men, in terms of risk-taking, professional success or providence, to win women's favours. In a sense, they will always remain



the superfluous sex. Like an erection, virility cannot be taken for granted, but must be reaffirmed until old age renders it meaningless. Given all this, how does society treat men? Does it help them and make their lives easier? Or, on the contrary, does it put even more obstacles in their way?

First of all, the dreaded break with the mother. A second weaning," says Simone de Beauvoir, "less brutal and slower than the first, withdraws the mother's body from the child's embrace; but it is the boys in particular who are gradually denied kisses and caresses; As for the little girl, they continue to cajole her, they allow her to live in her mother's skirts, the father takes her on his lap and flatters her hair; they dress her in dresses as soft as kisses, they are indulgent of her tears and her whims, they comb her hair with care, they amuse themselves with her looks and her coquettish: carnal contact and indulgent looks protect her from the anguish of loneliness. The little boy, on the other hand, is not even allowed to be coquettish; his seductive manoeuvres and comedies are irritating. A man doesn't ask to be kissed... A man doesn't look at himself in the mirror... A man doesn't cry', he is told. They want him to be 'a little man'; it is by freeing himself from adults that he will win their approval, he will please by not appearing to be trying to please. Many boys, frightened of the harsh independence to which they are condemned, want to be girls; at the time when they were first dressed like girls, it was often with tears that they abandoned the dress for trousers, that they saw their curls cut, Some stubbornly choose femininity, which is one of the ways of moving towards homosexuality (...)" [188].

The process of gender differentiation begins even before birth. Women who know they are pregnant with a boy are much more likely to report that the foetus makes "energetic" movements than those who know they are carrying a girl [189]. The greater vigour attributed to boys may explain why, when they are babies, they are much more likely to be repressed, denigrated, threatened and disciplined [190]. Later in life, parents are more likely to encourage boys to actively explore their environment and, in so doing, take risks. Young boys in many other species are subject to similar pressures; the method of demanding more from boys may be in our genes [192]. Girls, on the other hand, tend to be protected from dangers of all kinds, whether it's climbing trees, swinging, cycling or going out alone at night. They are also more likely to enjoy better living conditions than boys. In Great Britain, for example, boys are more likely than girls to suffer from overcrowding, lack of amenities and insufficient psychological support [193]. It doesn't take long for boys to realise that their parents are making life more difficult for them, or to understand the underlying reasons. Research shows that, by the age of 4, they already want to be "tough guys" [194].

Worse still for boys, if they are perceived as "difficult", which is often synonymous with "vigorous", the difference in treatment will increase accordingly [195]. The same behaviour by a little girl and a little boy may lead adults to support and comfort the former and chastise or discipline the latter. Conversely, failure is much more likely to be tolerated in girls, but denounced, fought and punished in boys. Boys are four times more likely than girls to be punished by teachers for aggressive acts [196]; according to one

psychologist, "they take longer to react to difficulties and adapt" [197]; these are just euphemisms for the fact that, practically from birth, boys are proportionally much more likely to be bullied than cuddled.

Many societies use initiation rites to separate boys from their mothers. As some tribes put it, the aim is to excise their "feminine substance" [198]. Therefore, as long as the women are not involved, the precise nature of the rites is of little importance. The first step may be to remove the novices from their mother's hut and forbid them to enter it again [199]. Then they are taken to a sacred place outside the village, or locked in a house that no woman can enter. There, they are told men's "secrets" that they must never divulge, even to the women closest and dearest to them [200]. Once the initiation is complete, the young men are given special clothes, ornaments and accessories to represent their new status as men [201].

A second aspect of initiation, closely related to the first, is the testing of boys before they are granted full male status. As is done in countless societies around the world [202], they may be forced to humiliate themselves by shaving their hair and sometimes their pubic hair. They may also be forced to strike ridiculous poses, recite self-deprecating phrases or undress in front of their elders. Other ordeals involve making them suffer from hunger, thirst and cold, depriving them of sleep or cutting, mutilating and tattooing their bodies at the cost of "terrible" suffering [203]. In Papua New Guinea, the men of certain tribes were known to climb a tower, have a rope tied to their legs and then plunge headfirst into the void. This ritual is thought to be the origin of bungee jumping, but as traditional practice was hardly as safe as modern practice, the dive was a real test of strength.

In many parts of the world, the highlight of male initiation is circumcision or some other form of genital mutilation. With the exception of the Jews, the operation is generally performed on boys aged between 6 and 12. Since the aim is to check that the boy can bear it without flinching, every effort is made to ensure that it is painful. If he fails the test, he dishonours himself and his family. The women of the Australian tribes told a researcher that they would refuse to marry a man who had not undergone it [204]. A nineteenth-century traveller said he had witnessed a ceremony in Arabia in which a young man standing up had the skin of his penis peeled off in the presence of his wife, who was playing a crouching drum. She had the right to separate herself from him if he stirred or moaned [205].

In the literature, it is relatively difficult to find first-hand accounts of women's initiation rites. From those who do mention them, it seems that they tend to be more fun than those for men. Humiliation is not a big part of it - at worst (or at best, depending on the case), the girl has to undress in the presence of other women. Nor is there any question of hurting her. In general, it all boils down to putting the initiate in isolation for a few days, after she has had her first period. At the end of this period of confinement,

she is washed, anointed and given feminine clothes and decorative items that symbolise her status as a marriageable woman [206]. Some societies mark and mutilate the female genitalia in various ways. However, the sexes are by no means on the same footing in this respect either. Whatever its purpose, excision is not a test of character or resistance. Those who undergo it are allowed and even expected to scream like the devil.

In imperial China, medieval Egypt and Christian Europe since the early Middle Ages, upper-class boys aged between 6 and 8 were often placed in special institutions. These institutions were often military, monastic or military-monastic. The modern schools that are their descendants often resemble prisons or concentration camps. They are equipped with barred windows, assembly areas, fortified walls and gates. Applicants may be subjected to tests of courage, endurance or both. For example, Nazi schools for the elite (under National Socialism, there were no schools "for the elite", but schools for the elite; over 90% of SS members were peasants. For example, in the SS schools (see N.D.E.), admission for 12-year-old boys was subject to the condition that they swim ten metres from hole to hole under the ice [207]. Never in history has anything similar been required of girls (never in history have there been military schools for women. EDITOR'S NOTE).

Once admitted to one or other of the medieval institutions mentioned above, whether religious or military [207bis], the boys were subjected to training lasting several years, which included trials such as sleep deprivation, forced fasting, corporal punishment and gruelling physical exercises. Added to this were (and still are) mental exercises such as meditation, mastery of foreign languages, learning difficult or incomprehensible texts by heart, and repeated confession of their innermost thoughts. Not to mention the constant surveillance, lack of privacy and harassment. The agogé, or Spartan education, was so harsh that Aristotle considered it better suited to beasts than to men. Then, as now, many of the exercises served no purpose other than to make life difficult for those subjected to them, under the guise of "character building" - an expression that was often no more than a euphemism for ill-treatment - and under the pretext of helping pupils to forge bonds of faith with each other and with the institution (the example, whatever one thinks of agogé, could not have been more poorly chosen: in fact, in Lacedaemonia, physical exercise was imposed not only on men, but also on women. Below, the author will express more nuanced views on Spartan education. N.D.E).

Boys who did not attend military or monastic schools were nonetheless often subject to compulsory education to a greater or lesser extent. Now that co-education exists in most countries, schools may not appear to be particularly threatening institutions. But historically, in boys' schools, the situation was often very different. In both Greece and Rome, the "youth leaders", who were either slaves or freedmen, used sticks to pound what little knowledge their pupils possessed into their skulls. In ancient art, the stick became the schoolmaster's trademark. The Roman poet Martial, describing the noises made by schoolmasters' sticks with his customary exaggeration, wrote: "(t)he brass does not resound

with greater clangor on the anvil of the blacksmith who puts in the saddle the statue of a lawyer; less noisy are, in the great Amphitheatre, the frenzied clamours of the supporters of a victorious gladiator" [208]. In medieval England, schoolboys were known as "wild colts" and were regularly beaten [209]. One of those who experienced this kind of discipline at first hand was Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536). He later wrote an entire book on the need to abolish it.

Partly because they were seen as less difficult and more docile and partly because, as eighteenth-century German education manuals suggested, beating girls was simply not pleasant [210], girls, whatever their social class, were far less likely to suffer corporal punishment. Not for nothing did the gentle, pure skin of upper-class girls become proverbial. They received their first lessons, and often all their lessons, from their mothers or other female relatives. In Europe in the early modern period, and in some places well into the twentieth century, really well-to-do upper-class girls were tutored at home [211].

Another type of education for boys was apprenticeship. As early as the Middle Ages, there were many journeymen in Europe, but female journeymen are rarely mentioned in historical accounts. Even when young women left home, they tended to stay close by so as not to lose contact with their families [212]. Once they were apprenticed, perhaps against their will in some cases, the boys entered a strange world. They could spend many years doing the most menial jobs for little pay, if any at all [213]. Whatever the arrangement, it was clear that it could cause a great deal of suffering. It was young men from this group who are said to have coined the phrase "homesickness" in the early nineteenth century [214]. Girls could also become apprentices. However, from the Middle Ages onwards, they had the privilege of staying at home [215]. Over the centuries, the number of female apprentices declined throughout Europe [216]. In modern times, this discrepancy between the number of male and female apprentices may be reflected in the fact that, until recently, twice as many girls as boys stayed at home until they married [217].

Like boys, some girls could receive a relatively formal education without having to leave home. And, like boys, some girls were educated outside the home, for example in convents. In the 13th century, Maimonides spoke of classrooms filled entirely with girls. Visiting the Indian town of Hinawr in the early fourteenth century, the Arab traveller Ibn Battuta noted that there were twenty-three boys' schools and thirteen girls' schools [219]; the women, he said, all knew the Koran by heart. In Germany, following Luther's call to provide "instruction in German or Latin", boys' schools and girls' schools developed in parallel. Whenever a municipality or community founded an institution for boys, it was only a matter of time before an equivalent institution was set up for the girls they intended to marry later.

From the end of the fifteenth century onwards, a great deal was written about the education of girls. In 1800, according to one expert, "the number and variety of educational opportunities available to girls inside and outside their parental or other homes defied imagination" [220]. However, in line with parental preferences and not just those of fathers, fewer girls than boys attended school. In accordance with the demands of society, the only type of educational institution closed to them was the military school. Most military schools were founded in the 1740s, catering for boys from the age of 12 and renowned for their Spartan character and fierce discipline. In order to maintain this fierce discipline and Spartan character, girls were excluded. Now that military schools have become co-educational, the harshness that once reigned there has largely disappeared. [221] This is because, according to the academics who teach there without knowing anything about war, the Spartan methods of military training are "arbitrary and useless" [222]. It is therefore hardly surprising that, in recent decades, almost every time Western troops have been sent to fight in "developing" countries, they have been soundly beaten.

Most girls' schools were modelled on boys' schools. Until the 19th century, the main subject taught to young people of both sexes was religion. Then came reading, writing and arithmetic. As middle-class girls were expected to help their future husbands with bookkeeping and other similar activities, the teaching was largely similar for both sexes. The difference was that the entry requirements for girls and the programmes designed for them were generally less demanding. In the early grades, they were taught to read, but not to write. Since historians generally rely on a person's ability to sign his or her name to determine literacy rates, they may have exaggerated gender differences in education [223]. Girls were not required to study difficult subjects such as Latin, Greek, mathematics or the natural sciences, but there was no shortage of schools that taught them to those whose parents wanted them to [224].

What all the girls' schools had in common was a relaxed atmosphere. In the words of the great feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, headmistress of one of these schools for a time, they were "pampered for the first time" [225]. Boys, on the other hand, were put to the test, often with barbaric cruelty. The more difficult a subject, the more optional it was for girls, and the less study it received if they chose to take it. This was as true in the United States as it was in Russia before the revolution [226]. It was not uncommon for boys to have to double up in a class, whereas, before the advent of co-education, girls rarely had to double up. A teacher who "made a young girl's flesh tremble under the rod or férule... (was) likely to be accused of excessive severity. All this explains why the memoirs of nineteenth-century female students, unlike those of male students, rarely contain expressions of fierce hatred of the school [228].

Many of the educational differences between boys and girls can be attributed to the fact that girls' schools were not supposed to prepare them for university, which, with rare exceptions, was closed to women. This is not to say that higher education directly discriminated against women. Firstly, until the

second half of the twentieth century, the vast majority of men did not attend university either. Secondly - and more importantly - universities were for those who had to earn a living. As a result, the sons of the great and the rich didn't go to university any more than their sisters. They were just not allowed to go on the Grand Tour, lest they be seduced and come back pregnant. Their education was often as good, or as bad, as that of their brothers.

In the 19th century, the United States was the first country to adopt co-education. Other countries followed suit and began to make school compulsory from 1850 onwards. The teaching profession became increasingly feminised. In 1900, three quarters of public school teachers in the United States were women. Twenty years later, they accounted for 90% [229]. For the first time in history, large numbers of boys began to be taught by women; the more integrated education developed, the more likely they were to be treated like girls. The result was that boys were simply disadvantaged, either because they developed more slowly, or because they were physically more active and found it harder to spend endless hours in class, or because they experienced it as a humiliation to have to compete with girls [230].

In the second half of the nineteenth century, girls outperformed boys at primary school [231]. Since then, the same has been true of secondary schools in almost all countries [232], and the same trend is currently being observed in universities. At the same time, the importance of grades has been eroded. Those who visited the United States in the nineteenth century noted that the schools, which were co-educational, tended to place less emphasis on results than European schools [233]. Throughout the developed world today, it is forbidden to criticise a student, let alone give an 'F' for a paper. As schools have admitted girls, who on average are less competitive than boys, they have been forced to adapt to meet their needs.

Over time, however, boys left behind the suffocating atmosphere of school, with its overwhelmingly female teaching staff, to follow different paths. Unless they came from wealthy families, most boys were pushed into paid work in their early or mid-teens. This was not the case for girls, who, as the bearers of culture, were not expected to hold down a job. It was much easier for them to get an education; indeed, education itself was seen as a luxury for girls who didn't have to earn a living. Boys who dared to show their love of learning were often scorned for it; some were called sissies and punished. These pressures explain why, in the second half of the nineteenth century, girls began to outnumber boys at primary school [234]. Among secondary school pupils, the gap was even wider. This is not surprising, given that secondary education was sometimes free for girls; in contrast, the parents of boys had to pay school fees [235]. In 1900 in the United States, there were three times as many girls as boys in secondary schools [236].

In St Louis, which around 1900 was considered a large progressive city, 23% of Euro-American girls aged 16, but only 15% of boys of the same age and background, attended school. In the world of work, the figures were diametrically opposed: 73.7% of boys, but only 46.9% of girls, were employed [237]. Contemporaries were well aware that women had more opportunities to study than men [238]; some thought this was why boys, "chased out of the classroom", concentrated on athletics, "the only field in which male supremacy is indisputable" [239]. These differences have persisted. In 1950, the average number of years of schooling for those aged 25 and over was 9.6 for women, compared with just 9 for men [240]. Today, more girls than boys graduate from secondary school. As there are more girls-only educational establishments than boys-only establishments, girls also have more opportunities to study "collegially" [241].

At the time and in the places where girls enrolled in co-educational schools, it was generally easier for them than for boys to gain admission. They also enjoyed better conditions, followed less demanding programmes, were subject to less severe discipline and could graduate with little or no effort. Not content with these advantages, they or their teachers demanded that subjects such as cooking and cleaning counted as much towards scholarships and university admission as Latin and algebra [242]. When girls started going to school with boys, they continued to take less demanding courses of study, or those perceived to be less demanding. For example, they studied the humanities rather than the exact sciences. This may also be why, on average, girls have long obtained higher marks. If girls were educated separately from boys, it was claimed that they were discriminated against. If they were educated with boys, it was said that their special needs were not being met [243].

When women began to be admitted to universities, nothing changed in this respect. Oberlin College, founded in 1833 to train priests, was the first in the world to offer higher education to women. And from the outset, female students were exempted from calculus, which was considered the most difficult subject of all. Some might say that mathematics was of little use to Oberlin's seminarians, but it is much less clear how they were supposed to do without Greek and Latin. These measures were not intended to discriminate against women, but rather to attract them. Indeed, as soon as four women applied in 1837 to take the courses previously reserved for men, their applications were accepted. Nevertheless, the vast majority of women continued to enrol on the women's course, which was easier [244].

In the nineteenth century, other women's colleges built their curricula in the same way. Wellesley, founded in 1875, claimed from the outset to be as good as any boys' school. But, unlike boys' schools, Wellesley did not require those wishing to enrol to have knowledge of such a 'formidable' subject as Greek. Although the entrance requirements for Vassar and Bryn Mawr were stringent, Greek was not required at either institution [245]. In fact, of all the early women's colleges, only Smith College rivalled the men's colleges. Founded in 1871, it ran out of students after a few years and had to make savings [246]. As late as the 1950s, only a very small minority of women's colleges presented study as a means

of "developing intellectual curiosity and a love of knowledge" in the catalogues they used to attract students [247].

According to Mabel Newcomer, a professor of economics at Vassar who studied the issue in the late 1950s, "girls' colleges as a whole provided better dormitories and more elaborate gardens and grounds than other colleges". They were saving money elsewhere. The lounges in the girls' dormitories were likely to be professionally redecorated at regular intervals, although the classrooms, where students spent more time studying than they did in the lounges, remained dingy and unattractive. While the teachers live in the students' dormitories, their quarters are more elegant than anything their colleagues can afford on their own salaries; and the teachers' offices tend to be as bare as the cells of a monastery.

To justify these amenities, Newcomer said that "it would be like giving jam to pigs to give it to men", who don't need "maids" to serve them, but are happy to eat in the cafeterias. Although tuition fees are higher at men's universities than at women's, when the cost of accommodation and meals is added in, the situation is reversed: men spend more on studying, women spend more on having a good life. Not only does living like a woman come at a price, but it is also a disproportionate price that is paid by others. At the time, two-thirds of men attending university, but only half of women, contributed to the costs of their own education [248]. Until 1987, women received more financial support for their studies than men [249].

To prepare themselves to earn a living, men chose fields such as engineering, agriculture and law. To prepare to become homemakers or, if they couldn't find a husband, teachers, women chose domestic arts and education [250]. As late as 1961, only a small percentage of American students were concerned with earning a living [251]. All they hoped for was a nice job in an office where they could meet their future mate. Many of them went straight from university to their husbands' homes, if they didn't interrupt their studies to get married. On the whole, the same trend has persisted to the present day. In the United States, as in other countries, men make up the vast majority of engineering and natural science students. Conversely, women outnumber men in the humanities and, more recently, in many of the social sciences too [252].

Feminists have often blamed women's tendency to concentrate on the human sciences on the fact that society 'steers' them in that direction. In fact, the opposite is generally true. Even as children, girls are more likely to be admitted into the company of boys than vice versa [253]. In the past, attempts to attract more women into technical occupations and the natural sciences have failed to change the situation [254]. Even today, the most demanding subjects in higher education, such as engineering and physics, have the fewest female students [255]. Apart from theories about the different intellectual



capacities of the sexes, which are now so out of fashion that a Harvard president was sacked for mentioning them, two explanations for this state of affairs come to mind. Firstly, if girls are educated differently, it may be because, having been spoiled and pampered from birth, they end up shying away from any subject that is or is reputed to be difficult. It is said that they do this with "extreme ingenuity and determination" [256]. Secondly, relatively few women plan to feed a family. As a result, their objectives in choosing the above subjects are other than to make a lucrative career; in other words, women are freer to study what they like.

Many women study humanities or social sciences because these fields are considered easy. When the going gets tough, they often drop out, if not during their studies, at least later, as they try to climb the academic ladder. The rest tend to enter female ghettos such as community colleges, gender studies departments and certain other departments whose staff and attendance [257] are almost entirely female. Women are also over-represented in "accessible" medical specialties such as paediatrics, psychiatry and general medicine [258]. Surveys conducted in several countries confirm that female academics are on average considerably less productive than their male colleagues [259]. Women's inability or unwillingness to compete with men may explain why, even at the five largest women's universities in the US, the majority of full professors are men. It also explains why university competitions and prizes reserved for women have a long history [261].

On the other hand, the few women who show courage and devote themselves to "difficult" fields explicitly deny being victims of discrimination [262]. They often do their work as well as their male colleagues [263]. Yet even in these fields, the Nobel Prizes, which reflect, among other things, exceptionally great efforts and sacrifices, are awarded mainly to men. According to some analyses, the fact that men are much more willing to follow courses of study that require much more work and bring greater rewards is a direct result of their forced break with their mothers. Others believe that this is linked to male hormones, particularly testosterone, which on average make them more aggressive and ambitious [264]. Thus making them, to follow the author's reasoning, excellent parties. EDITOR'S NOTE].

In any case, we have seen that, to prepare men for the heavy burdens they will have to carry into adulthood, society imposes on them, from their earliest years, burdens that grow heavier as they grow older. Boys tend to be neglected and scolded, while girls are coddled, pampered and comforted. These differences are reinforced by initiation rites in some societies and by the school system in others. At one time, only boys were subjected to a Spartan education. Once girls were admitted to boys' schools, it was not long before women began to teach in these establishments and they lost their Spartan character.

Once women became the majority in the teaching profession (parity, always parity, editor's note), boys were discriminated against even more. Unable to cope with the boys' greater turbulence, female teachers did what they could to suppress it [265]. If, during breaks, the girls did not take part in the boys' games, it was said to be because they were excluded. On the other hand, if they did take part, it was because they were being harassed. The repression and discrimination to which boys are subjected is almost certainly one of the reasons why, in most cases, boys tend to do less well at school than girls [265bis]. The less demanding and stimulating a school is, the better the results for girls.

When the time finally comes to give them a choice, men and women continue to do exactly what society expects them to do. In preparation for becoming wives, whose first duty is to help their husbands make their way in the world, women are proportionately more likely to go into fields that will enable them to make their way in society without too much embarrassment. These days, women also have to think about how to earn a living in the event of divorce (society has made provision for this, notably through alimony, compensation and other forms of extortion, bearing in mind that custody of the children is awarded to the mother in most cases. EDITOR'S NOTE). On the other hand, proportionally more men are preparing to become husbands, whose first duty is to provide for their wives, by embarking on fields that are difficult from every point of view.

## 5. Conclusions

Since the early 1970s, a considerable amount of literature has sought to show that women, as women, are despised, oppressed and discriminated against by men. But the truth is quite different. Whether for biological, psychological or social reasons, it is women and not men who are considered particularly interesting. This was as true around 1300, when Pseudo-Albert the Great wrote *Des secrets des femmes*, as it is today. Whether for biological, psychological or social reasons, in almost every field far more books are published about women than about men. The proportion was the same in the past. At almost every stage of life, women make life difficult for men, and men themselves pull at each other. Since the same phenomenon exists in primates, it may have genetic causes (once again, to take this possibility into account, you have to share the evolutionist belief. EDITOR'S NOTE). In any case, the aim is to prepare men for the difficulties of adulthood and, to achieve this, to make life difficult for them even before they reach that age.

The fact that less is demanded of women may be linked to the psychology of mating. To gain access to a woman, a man has to be able to compete and pay. All things considered, the better he performs and the more he can pay, the more likely he is to impress the woman and those around him. This is as true among Australian aborigines as it is in the most advanced Western societies. On the other hand, one of

the best ways for a woman to attract a man is to be alone, vulnerable and poor. This is particularly true if she is young and beautiful, and especially if her plight can be blamed not on herself but on another man. For every man who has ever "oppressed" a woman, there is another who is ready to save her in order to win her favour, even at the risk of his own life.

For a woman, making an effort, facing up to difficulties and becoming independent is only one way of finding a partner. Worse still, it can be counter-productive. Studies show that female students think that men don't like women because they think they are too intelligent [266], and they may be right. As has been said, if it is preferable for a woman to be beautiful rather than intelligent, it is because men are better at looking than at thinking. Today, as in the nineteenth century [267], the better educated a woman is and the more successful her career, the less likely she is to marry and have children. In the past, most girls were educated separately from boys, a fact that contemporaries justified by the need to preserve decency. The proof that they were right is that, now that co-education has become the norm, boys as young as 4 risk being accused of sexual harassment [268]; it is as if their teachers, who are almost all adult women, wanted to punish them for being male.

As long as they were educated separately from boys, girls had it easier. When education became mixed, they continued to have it easier and, because of their "humanising" and "reassuring" presence, everyone ended up having it easier. For their tendency to misbehave, either because of the harsher treatment they received or because of the unstimulating nature of school life, the boys were punished. Today, they are drugged; among children with various behavioural problems, many more boys than girls are prescribed Tranxene [269]. All of the above applies to the West as well as to the other side of the world; this was already the case in China at the beginning of the twentieth century [270]; at a time when most people had only a few years of primary school ; at a time when forty per cent of a given age group attended school; at a time when most young people entered working life in their teens; at a time when "boys" took exams in their thirties and "girls" of the same age were not yet mothers.

Yet sooner or later in most women's lives, the time comes when they want to get pregnant, have babies and look after their offspring. Similarly, sooner or later in most men's lives, the time comes when, on pain of not finding a mate or losing the one they have, men have to carry the extra burden that comes with women getting pregnant, giving birth and caring for their offspring. As men and women prepare for this, gaps are created in "human capital", as the experts say. Willy-nilly, most women settle down or enter one of the many women's ghettos, where they are largely among themselves and there is less competition. Willy-nilly, most men work hard at whatever jobs they can get or continue their studies to prepare themselves to compete for the bigger, more demanding, more difficult and more lucrative jobs that society has to offer [270bis]. Although there are a few exceptions, most women settle into a life where they are fed, housed, laundered, looked after and protected. Although there are a few

exceptions, most men throw themselves into a life that has little purpose other than to provide for and protect women.

Finally, not only are men condemned to maintain women, but, as resources are always scarce, they have to compete with other men. In addition to the other difficulties involved, competition prevents men from opening up to each other or to women. The heavy burden they carry and the harsh treatment they receive need not be mentioned. The more successful a man is, the more this is true. A man is expected, as the saying goes, to "endure without flinching" - without being more specific. If he admits his difficulties to his fellow men, they are likely to despise him; if he admits them to women, they will avoid him [271]. All this explains why men cry much less readily than women and why married men, in particular, are less likely than any other group to seek psychological help [272] (from specialists, the overwhelming majority of whom are women. N.D.E.) [272bis]. After all, men have responsibilities.

If they don't succeed, the first people to abandon them are all too often their wives. The need for men to compete also explains why occasional attempts to create men's movements have not been very successful. As in some fairy tales, the best a man can hope for is to meet a stranger in an inn. He can offer him a glass of wine, confide in him his worries and hope that he will give him some sound advice. In one version of the story, a man is reduced to confiding in a fish. For some readers, parts of this chapter, which focus on the much greater difficulties of becoming and being a man, may seem maudlin and self-pitying. If so, it only proves my point [272ter].

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- [163] See Jared Diamond, *op. cit.* pp. 37, 55, 56, 58, 72, 107; see also Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*, Methuen, London, 1967, pp. 108-9.
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[165] See Sherwood L. Washburn, 'Longevity in Primates', in James L. McGaugh and Sara B. Kiesler (eds.), *Aging: Biology and Behavior*, Academic Press, New York, 1981, pp. 11-29. [166] See Judith S. Wallerstein et al, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*, Hyperion, New York, 2000, pp. 358, 107-9, 250, 297.

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[168] Andy Metcalf and Martin Humphries (eds.), *op. cit.* p. 53, 55, 57, 59, 161.

[169] Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer*, Grove Press, New York, 1961, p. 140.

[170] See Camille Paglia, *Vamps and Tramps*, Vintage, New York, 1994, pp. 122-6.

[171] E. Person, 'The Omni-Available Woman and Lesbian Sex: Two fantasy themes and their relationship to the male developmental experience', in G. I. Fogel, F. M. Lane and R. S. Liebert (eds.), *The Psychology of Men*, Basic Books, New York, 1986, pp. 73-4, 75-8, 83-4.

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[174] See Carl S. Taylor, *Dangerous Society*, Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, MI, 1989, p. 60.

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- [188] Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, vol. 2, Gallimard, 1990 [1949], p. 252.
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- [191] Carole R. Beal, *op. cit.* p. 77.
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- [193] See Hilary Graham, 'Socio-Economic Change and Inequalities', in Ellen Annandale and Kate Hunt (eds.), *Gender Inequalities in Health*, Open University Press, Buckingham, 2000, p. 103, figure 4.6 and p. 104, figure 4.7.
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- [201] Deborah B. Gewertz, "The Father Who Bore Me: the Role of Tsambunwuro during Chambri Initiation Ceremonies", in Gilbert H. Herdt (ed.), op. cit. p. 298.
- [202] See Elisabeth Badinter, X. De l'identité masculine, Editions Odile Jacob, 1992, chap. 3.
- [203] See Jürg Schmidt and Christin Kocher Schmidt, *Söhne des Krokodils: Männerhausrituale und Initiation in Yensan, Zentral-Iatmul, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea*, Ethnologisches Seminar, Basel, 1992, pp. 114-6, 143, 158.
- [204] Phyllis M. Kaberry, *Aboriginal Woman: Sacred and Profane*, 2004, Routledge, London, p. 82.
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- [206] See Gisele Simard, 'The Case of Mauritania: Women's Productive activities in Urban Areas-A Process of Empowerment', in Parvin Ghorayshi and Claire Belanger (eds.), *Women, Work and Gender Relations in Developing Countries: A Global Perspective*, Greenwood, Westport, CT, 1996, p. 159.
- [207] Johannes Leeb, *Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler*, Heyne, Munich, 1999, p. 62.
- [207bis] It is absurd to equate military schools with monastic schools. In the former, physical exercises have a practical purpose, whereas in the latter they are part of a technique of mortification and as such constitute punishment or penance. Having said that, it is undeniable that schooling is a form of training that constitutes one of the important aspects of the formation of the Leviathan: "The development of the school institution from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries was part of the spread of a transversal model for the grid of the social world, of new techniques of power that allowed for rationalised control, or, if you like, by re-reading this history in a more paradoxical way, civilised control, in the sense of Elias. This transformation, which is based on a vision of man as a place where science and technology can be invested, is in a sense the translation of a collective intention: 'at the starting point,

then, we can place the political project of controlling illegalisms exactly"" (Jean-Claude Bourdin, Michel Foucault: savoirs, domination et sujet, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008, p. 114).

"Under the Ancien Régime, each social stratum enjoyed a margin of impunity that could take two forms: The other, imposed by practice, consisted in granting an area of tolerance resulting either from the inability of the authorities to punish the perpetrators of offences, or from a 'silent consent' designed to preserve the social order (the popular illegalism of peasants seeking to avoid tax was, for example, tolerated by the bourgeoisie, which also tried to evade tax rules). With the development of capitalism, the bourgeoisie ceased to tolerate the offences of the working classes (theft, robbery, brigandage). The economy of penalties was then restructured around the opposition between 'illegalisms of property' (theft, violent transfers of property) leading to punishments handed down by ordinary courts, and 'illegalisms of law' (fraud, tax evasion, irregular commercial transactions) falling within the remit of special jurisdictions and able to benefit from settlements, accommodations and mitigated fines" (Anthony Amicelle and Carla Nagels, 'Les arbitres de l'illégalisme : A new look at ways of doing social control', Champ pénal/Penal field [Online], Vol. XV | 2018, online 20 November 2018, accessed 01 May 2020. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/champpenal/9774>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/champpenal.9774>).

The law," remarks Foucault, "is not designed to prevent this or that type of behaviour, but (at least in part) to differentiate the ways in which the law itself is turned" (Roger-Pol Droit, Michel Foucault: entretiens, Editions Odile Jacob, 2004, p. 70). From the seventeenth century onwards, the authorities, under the influence of the rising bourgeoisie, gradually reserved the privilege of this "law" for themselves, while reducing, circumscribing and "squaring off" the areas where the Third Estate could ignore or violate it (see Jean-Claude Bourdin, op. cit, pp. 114 ff; see also Véronique Castagnet-Lars, 'L'histoire des élèves en France du XVIIe au XVIIIe siècle : des acteurs dans l'ombre des institutions scolaires', in Jean-François Condette et id. [eds], Histoire de l'éducation, vol. 2, no. 150, 2018 [pp. 35-72]). Over the centuries, they have been reduced to a trickle, to the point where, for example, every year taxpayers on modest incomes are fined for failing to declare a few pennies at tax time. So was Foucault wrong when he said that, in order to perpetuate itself, power absolutely had to preserve 'spaces' for illegalism for each social class? No. These 'spaces' still exist, mapped out by ever more powerful algorithms, and they are constantly expanding and condensing illegalisms that are often pure and simple illegalities, but they are in some way informally reserved for two categories of the population: the clientele of power and immigrants of non-European origin.

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- [215] Steven A. Epstein, *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1991, p. 118; P. J. P. Goldberg, 'For Better or Worse': Marriage and Economic Opportunities for Women in Town and Country', in P. J. P. Goldberg (ed.), *Woman is a Worthy Wight: Women in English Society, 1200-1500*, Sutton Publishing Ltd, Phoenix Mill, 1992, pp. 111, 112.
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- [217] Warren Farrell, op. cit. p. 168, 292.
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- [219] A. L. Hussain (trans.), *The Rehlah of Ibn Battuta*, Baroda, Oriental Institute, 1953, p. 179.
- [220] Peter Petschauer, *The Education of Women in Eighteenth-Century Germany: New Directions from the German Female Perspective*, Edwin Mellen Press Ltd, 1989, p. 105.
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- [222] Virginia Valian, *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1999, p. 253.
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- [228] James C. Albisetti, op. cit. pp. 23, 51, 52; Peter Petschauer, op. cit. pp. 370-1.
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- [232] David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, op. cit. pp. 114, 179; Susan S. Klein (ed.), *Handbook for Achieving Sex Equity Through Education*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1985; Ingrid Jonsson, 'Women and Education from a Swedish Perspective', in Julia Wrigley (ed.), op. cit. p. 64, table 3.2; Jeff Hearn, 'Troubled Masculinities in Social Policy Discourses: Young Men', in Popay et al (eds.), *Men, Gender Divisions and Welfare*, pp. 41-3; Christina Hoff Sommer, *The War against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000, pp. 23-34.
- [233] Richard Rubinson, 'Class Formation, Politics and Institutions: Schooling in the United States'. In *American Journal of Sociology*, 92, 1986, p. 521.
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- [235] David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, op. cit. pp. 124-6, 129. The same was true in France: Cecile Viela, 'Les écoles de charité du bureau de bienfaisance de Bordeaux dans la première moitié du xix siècle', in Bernard Plongeron and Pierre Guillaume (eds.), *De la charité à l'action sociale*, Paris, CTHS, 1995, p. 273.
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- [242] Felicity Hunt, *Gender and Policy in English Education*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, pp. 84, 85, 120.
- [243] *Ibid*, p. 141.
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- [248] Mabel Newcomer, op. cit. pp. 113, 124, 153, 155, 157. [249] See Paul Taubman, 'The Role of the Family in the Formation of Offspring's Earnings and Income Capacity', in Paul L. Menchik (ed.), *Household and Family Economics*, Kluwer, Boston, 1996, p. 35, note 22.
- [250] Mabel Newcomer, op. cit. p. 91.
- [251] Barbara Miller Solomon, op. cit. p. 197; Mabel Newcomer, op. cit. p. 175.
- [252] For figures on various countries, see Sara Delamont, *A Woman's Place in Education*, Avebury, Aldershot, 1996, pp. 97-8, 117; Statistisches Amt der Europäischen Gemeinschaft, *Frauen in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft*, Luxemburg, Amt für amtliche Veröffentlichungen der Europäischen Gemeinschaft, 1999, pp. 61, 64 ; Rosemary Simmen, 'Women in Switzerland since 1970: Major Achievements or Minor Changes?', in Joy Charnley et al. (eds.), *25 Years of Emancipation? Women in Switzerland 1971-1996*, Lang, Bern, 1998, p. 19; Joan Wolffensperger, 'Engendered Structure: Education and the Conceptualization of Gender', in Kathy Davis et al. (eds.), *The Gender of Power*, Sage, London, 1991, pp. 93-6; *Der Spiegel*, 8 February 1999, p. 82; Christiane Diemel, *Frauen in Führungspositionen in Europa*, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Weinheim, 1996, pp. 25-6.
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- [255] T. Loose (8.1.2013). 'Ever Wonder Which Majors Require the Most Study Time?', Yahoo Education, [http://education.yahoo.net/articles/most\\_demanding\\_majors.htm?kid\\_1LCND](http://education.yahoo.net/articles/most_demanding_majors.htm?kid_1LCND)
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- [257] Evelyn Torton Beck, 'To Make Our Lives a Study', in Suzanne S. Lie and V. E. O'Leary (eds.), *Storming the Tower: Women in the Academic World*, Kogan Page, London, 1990, p. 218.
- [258] For the United States, see Virginia Valian, *Why So Slow?*, p. 208; for Great Britain and Australia, see Rosemary Pringle, *Sex and Medicine: Gender, Power and Authority in the Medical Profession*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 150-2; see also Evelyn Torton Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
- [259] See Sara Delamont, *A Woman's Place in Education*, pp. 110-2. For Swedish women, who chose less prestigious occupations, see Ingrid Jönsson, 'Women in Education from a Swedish Perspective', in Julia Wrigley (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 55-6; Diane E. Davis and Helen S. Astin, 'Life Cycle, Career Patterns and Gender Stratification in Academe', in Suzanne S. Lie and V. E. O'Leary (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 92, table 6.1. p. 94, table 6.2; Suzanne S. Lie, 'The Juggling Act: Work and Family in Norway', *ibid.*, pp. 109, 111, 123; J. R. Cole and Harriet Zuckerman, 'The Productivity Puzzle', in P. Maehr and M. W. Steinkampf (eds.), *Advancement in Motivation and Achievement*, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, 1984, pp. 217-56; M. F. Faver and C. A. Faver, 'Men, Women and Publication Productivity'. In *Sociological Quarterly*, 26, 1985, p. 537-49.
- [260] Virginia Valian, *op. cit.* p. 227.
- [261] Kathleen F. McCarthy, *Women's Culture*, The Chicago University Press, Chicago and London, 1991, pp. 20, 101, 109.
- [262] See J. R. Cole and B. Singer, 'A Theory of Limited Differences: Explaining the Productivity Puzzle in Science', in Harriet Zuckerman et al (eds.), *The Outer Circle: Women in the Scientific Community*, Norton, New York, 1991, pp. 277-310.
- [263] See (in Hebrew) Ninna Toren, 'Men and Women on the Faculty of the Hebrew University, 1983/1993', pp. 10, 11, 12.
- [264] See Steven Goldberg, *Why Men Rule: A Theory of Male Dominance*, Open Court, Chicago, 1993.
- [265] See Jere Brophy, 'Interactions of Male and Female Students with Male and Female Teachers', in Louise C. Wilkinson and Cera B. Marrett (eds.), *Gender Influences in Classroom Education*, Academic Press, New York, 1985, pp. 115-42.
- [265bis] The essential reason for this is much simpler; see, if it is necessary to refer to research to be convinced, <https://dailycollegian.com/2018/04/schools-are-designed-more-for-girls-than-for-boys/>. N. D.E.
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- [267] Claudia Goldin, *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, pp. 204-5; Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1990, pp. 31, 32.
- [268] B. Schulte, 'For Little Children, Grown-Up Labels as Sexual Harassers', *Washington Post*, 3 April 2008.

[269] Lawrence H. Diller, *Running on Ritalin*, Bantam, New York, 1999, pp. 35-6.

[270] See Pang-Mei Natasha Chang, *Bound Feet and Western Dress*, Anchor Books, New York, 1996, pp. 47, 59-60.

[270bis] According to a recent survey by the University of Texas, echoed by a weekly French women's magazine co-founded in 1965 by a certain Lazareff, women "who hold positions of responsibility [sic] are [...] more exposed to depression than their male counterparts and than women with less responsibility". Even if it is by definition impossible to caricature a living caricature, it is safe to say that shaking hands, kissing, pretending to smile, chatting, tapping the keys of mobile phones, laptops and tablet computers, having coffee served, having statistics done, analysing graphs, curves and tables, all day long, in the midst of almost exclusively female 'human resources' and for a salary that is often no higher than at least ten times the minimum wage, while running the risk of breaking a nail or a heel at any moment, must indeed be inhuman, when you have the privilege of being a woman. Of course, if women "who hold positions of responsibility [sic] are [...] more exposed to depression than their male counterparts and than women with less responsibility", it's because of men. EDITOR'S NOTE.

[271] See Roy Schafer, 'Men Who Struggle Against Sentimentality', in Fogel et al (eds.), *The Psychology of Men*, pp. 95-110; Jeff Hearn, 'The Welfare of Men?', in Popay et al (eds.), *Men, Gender Divisions and Welfare*, Routledge, London and New York, 1998, p. 27.

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[272bis] Sabine Bessièrè, 'La féminisation des professions de santé en France : données de cadrage'. In RFAS, n° 1, 2005, table 1, p. 20.

[272ter] The danger for anyone who is sufficiently differentiated to realise the "much greater difficulties involved in becoming and being a man" in a gynocentric society, but lacks the character to understand the paradox with which this second chapter closes, would be to allow himself to be led down the slope of self-victimisation, but here again, no matter how hard he tries, a man cannot compete with a woman.

4

(An anti-Semite and a philosemite at odds) :

A PHILOSEMITE: (in a neutral tone) the woman is a sub-Jew.



AN ANTISEMITE: (in a neutral tone) The woman is an over-Jew.

Anonymous, Dialogues de sourds: drama in X acts, 2020

Men, women, work

### 1. A brief history of work

These days, "What do you do for a living?" is probably the first question a person asks a stranger. The implication is that not working is, if not a crime, at least slightly dishonourable. A man who doesn't work for a living is likely to be labelled a playboy or a parasite, while a woman who doesn't work for a living is likely to be labelled a socialite or a housewife.

However, as the biblical account of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden makes clear, for most of history work tended to be seen as unpleasant, hard and even dangerous. Similar attitudes permeate the rest of the Old Testament. In fact, ancient Hebrew doesn't really have a word for 'work'; the modern word, *avoda*, derives from the root *avad*, 'to serve'. Service could be rendered to a god, in which case it was only positive if it involved the worship of the great and jealous Jehovah, or to a human being, in which case its connotations were almost always negative. The Bible tells us of countless times when a people is conquered and forced to 'serve' another ruler. The Israelites appealed to God against the "service" imposed on them by the Egyptians. In short, working was anything but pleasant. In fact, a secondary meaning of the term is "to pay homage". From *avad* also comes the common word for "slave", *eved*, which implies that work is equivalent to servitude and vice versa [273].

Similarly, the Greek word for "work", *ponos*, can also mean "suffering" or "punishment" [274]; its opposite, *hedone*, can be translated as "pleasure". A good example of what *ponos* could imply is provided by the twelve "labours" that Zeus imposed on Hercules for having drunkenly killed his brother Eurystheus. Some *ponoi* were humiliating. Others involved working in filth, while others were dangerous. Like *ponos*, the Latin word *labor* also has the secondary meanings of "painful situation", "result of pain" and "hardship". It also means "suffering", such as that endured by women during childbirth [275]. Work, *lavoro* and *travail* retain these different meanings. Work makes the link between work and suffering doubly clear by suggesting that a person is "labouring under" this or that difficulty.

In Greece and Rome, the fundamental distinction was between slaves, who worked (and most likely suffered while working) and free men, who, if they could, did not work. In Buddhist thought, the fundamental distinction was between the laity and the religious. The laity were either those who worked for a living, such as merchants and craftsmen, or those who held those who worked and supported themselves through their work, such as princes and warriors. Religious people also lived off the work of others. However, rather than taking society in hand, they spent their time praying or navel-gazing. It is true that Taoist thought did not distinguish to the same extent between religious and lay people. However, for Taoism, the ideal was not work but meditation. Self-transcendence, understood as freedom from earthly preoccupations, was and remains the common goal of these two religions.

As the common language of the Middle Ages was Latin, the word "work" retained many of the connotations it had in that language in antiquity. In fact, Western Christianity, guided by the Old Testament, associated work, sin and punishment even more closely. [276]. It is often said that medieval society was made up of those who fought, those who prayed and those who worked. Although this is an oversimplification, the fact that those who worked were at the bottom of the social ladder speaks volumes. What differentiated the Middle Ages from the ancient world and also from biblical times was the fact that chattel slavery, the state of a group of people legally considered to be the property of others, having no rights and being predestined for nothing other than work, was rare. As a result, work was not automatically associated with servitude. Nor was it considered, at least in theory, to be degrading. You could work and still be a free man, especially if you lived in the city.

In theory, if not in practice, those at the top of the social ladder were not supposed to work. They administered, hunted and fought. And what was the situation of the members of the second estate, the monks and nuns? Their vocation was to worship God. However, it was recognised that it was not healthy, either physically or spiritually, to devote oneself exclusively to this and that, with the exception of ascetics, the time people could spend praying or meditating without losing their minds could not exceed a certain number of hours. In any case, the days when prophets lived in the desert and ordered crows to feed them were over. Many monasteries were vast and complex organisations. Hence the rule, instituted by Saint Benedict at the beginning of the sixth century, that monks and nuns should work - *laborare et orare*, as the saying goes - as well as pray [277].

Later, the idea that work is something positive in itself was taken up by the secular community, specifically the Protestants. As Martin Luther put it in the first of his Ninety-Five Theses, "the whole of life [was] penance" for Protestants. Protestantism affirmed that salvation did not depend on prayer, the sacraments or works. Apart from faith, the main means of getting to heaven was undoubtedly productive work. By doing productive work, the Protestant hoped to become rich and prove that he was one of God's chosen [278]. This implied that work as such was hard and unpleasant and that the

temptation to abandon it was both constant and great. Hence the many warnings against idleness in Protestantism from the sixteenth century to the present day [279].

Between 1600 and 1800, the idea that work was good for the soul permeated society as a whole, as can be seen from the many workshops established during this period in Amsterdam, London and elsewhere [280]. The next step was to extend the system to prisons. As substitutes for other forms of punishment, such as exile, fines, flogging, mutilation and death, prisons sprang up like mushrooms in the European countryside from the 1780s onwards. From then on, it wasn't long before society began trying to reform criminals through work. To prevent the inmates from competing unfairly with those working outside the prisons, the tasks they were asked to perform were often completely stupid; for example, they were made to dig holes in the ground and then fill them in. However, even in its silliest forms, work was supposed to instil habits such as order, regularity and discipline [281].

In short, for most of history and in places as far apart as Western Europe, India and China, work was generally regarded as something unpleasant, difficult and humiliating and, as a result, it was often inflicted as a punishment. Of course, Protestants had different attitudes in this respect, but for them it was less a question of glorifying work than denouncing idleness. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that Protestantism glorified work precisely because it was unpleasant and therefore well suited to "penance". It was not until the twentieth century that, due to a change in attitude, work came to be seen as something positive in itself, although the lower classes (or "working classes") did not always share this view. For them, work remained a harsh necessity to be avoided wherever possible, and rightly so, as anyone who has ever visited a mine or a foundry knows.

## 2. Men's work, women's work

Given these attitudes to work, some of them purely subjective but others rooted in the harsh reality of physical labour, it seems appropriate to ask how exactly work was divided between men and women. The first answer to this question is perhaps provided by the Bible: when God chased the first human couple out of Eden, it was Adam and not Eve whom he punished by decreeing: "You shall earn your bread by the sweat of your brow [282]". It remains to be seen why he attacked Adam. It may have been because men are stronger and more capable of physical labour, but it may also have been because God felt that women should not be treated as harshly as men in this respect.

The story of Sisyphus perhaps follows a similar logic. Because Sisyphus had succeeded in deceiving them, the gods punished him by forcing him to roll a heavy stone to the top of a mountain, from where, as

soon as he had reached it, it fell back down of its own accord, forcing him to start all over again. Provided the stones were lighter, there was no reason why a woman should not have received a similar punishment. In Greek mythology, there are many wicked women who receive all sorts of punishments (Antiope is struck mad, Arachne is turned into a spider) for their misdeeds. None, however, is forced to work as hard as Sisyphus.

Insofar as mythological women are obliged to work, their work is not very difficult. Many Greek goddesses spun and wove. So did Greek nymphs; the Odyssey paints an idyllic picture of the nymph Circe singing happily at her loom [283]. Similar scenes can be found in the tales of other peoples, notably Germany and Russia. Freya, the wife of Wotan, embroiders. In many fairy tales, the male hero is given an impossible mission from which he must not return. On the other hand, women's work, even if forced, consisted of cleaning (Cinderella), spinning or sorting small objects. These tasks could be tedious, unpleasant and even, like weaving hay into gold, impossible. If the work was not done on time, it could result in severe punishment, but the work itself was rarely a source of real difficulty.

While etymology proves that work has historically been considered a burden rather than a privilege, it also shows that it has always been men who have performed the most arduous tasks. For example, the biblical term eved, "slave", has no feminine form. The two Hebrew terms for "slave woman", shifcha and ama, are related to the Semitic words for "woman" and "family" [284]. This reflects the fact that slave women were often used as concubines. Clearly, none of these terms express the idea of work. Similarly in Germanic languages, the feminine form of Arbeiter (worker) was not created until the nineteenth century. A second word, the verb schaffen, is said to be derived from the Old Germanic scafan, "bent in two" [285]. In addition to its original meaning of "to create", it means "to succeed by hard work", "to labour" or "to work hard". The term derived from "worker", Schaffer, is masculine and often used as a surname. As such, it has no feminine equivalent.

Reality reflected legend and language, or perhaps it was the other way round. In ancient Egypt, the hundred thousand people enlisted each year to build the pyramids - who, as the pictures show, were whipped to a pulp if they didn't do their job - were not women, but men. Throughout the ancient Middle East, it was men, whether prisoners of war or hired racketeers, who built the roads, dug the canals, erected the fortresses and built the temples [286]. According to the Bible, King Solomon employed tens of thousands of male slaves to obtain the materials needed to build the Temple of the Lord [287]. Men, not women, built the Great Wall of China, and thousands died in the process. Countless male slaves, but very few female slaves, worked in the silver mines of Laurion, from which classical Athens derived much of its wealth [288].

It was men, not women, who worked like beasts of burden in the industrial corn mills. Like modern prisons, the places where this work was carried out were generally considered too unsavoury to attract visits from members of civil society. However, in the second century AD, one of them was visited by Apuleius. Here is how he described it [289]: "Good heavens! what a rickety population of human beings, their livid skin mottled with lashes! what miserable rags covering, without hiding, backs black with bruises! Some had no more than a scrap of apron thrown around their loins. All, through their clothes, showed their nakedness on all sides. All had a letter on their foreheads, their hair shaved on one side and a ring on their feet. There was nothing more hideous to see than these spectres, their eyelids eaten away by burning steam and smoke, their eyes almost devoid of light. Add to this a pallid, dirty tint that they owed to the flour with which they had been dusted, like athletes who flood themselves with dust before going into battle."

Being a slave woman was no picnic, either because of the nature of her work or because she was sexually at the mercy of her masters. However, those who practised the world's oldest profession were generally well fed, reasonably well clothed and tolerably housed: what use would a slave who was puny, ragged or too frightened to perform her role properly have been? It is also unlikely that they were subjected to corporal punishment of such severity as to cause them to lose their charms for good. In any case, as Petronius, Horace and Seneca point out, male slaves were also sexually exploited [290].

The workforce, made up partly of conscripts and partly of prisoners of war, that built the Roman roads and erected the Colosseum was male. When the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru instituted the repartimiento or "forced labour" system, particularly in the silver mines, it was once again men rather than women who went down into the pits [291]. The system itself was inspired by that of the Aztecs and Incas, according to which it was up to men, not women, to build temples, construct roads and serve as beasts of burden in societies that neither had large domestic animals nor had invented the wheel. In fact, all pre-monetary economies subjected men to forced labour to carry out major public works. Even in Western Europe, drudgery, which Adam Smith called "one of the chief instruments of tyranny" [292], continued until the end of the eighteenth century. In Eastern Europe, where men were obliged to work for free two, three or even four days a week, it continued until the 1860s [293]. If women took part, they worked shorter hours and performed less arduous tasks [294].

In none of these societies was the social and legal position of women equal to that of men. Despite attempts to reduce this inequality, it persisted in the field of work. In the Republic, Plato creates a society which is, from the point of view of sexuality, undoubtedly more integrated than any other had been or would be. To enable women to participate fully in the life of the polis, the philosopher proposed abolishing the family and taking newborn babies away from their mothers so that they could be brought up together, letting men and women train together in the gymnasium and run the city together. Nevertheless, Plato had Socrates declare that "we will assign them the lightest share in service, because

of the weakness of their sex" [295]. If Plato had lived in our time, he would no doubt have been accused of misogyny. The same would have been true of Thomas More, Thomas Campanella, Charles Fourier and countless other utopian writers. The reason why women have always been entrusted with the least arduous tasks is quite clear.

Thanks in part to attempts to integrate women into the armed forces of many modern countries, the physical differences between the sexes have been accurately measured. One study showed that the average female recruit to the US army is 12 centimetres [296] tall and weighs 14.3 kilograms less than the average male recruit. Female recruits have 16.9 kilograms less muscle and 2.6 kilograms more fat than the average male recruit, their upper limbs about half as strong and their lower limbs about a quarter as strong. Fat mass is inversely related to respiratory capacity and heat tolerance, so women are at a disadvantage when performing activities such as carrying heavy loads, working in the heat and running. Even when adjusted for height, the samples showed that women have only 80% of the overall strength of men. Only 20% of the strongest women were able to physically compete with 20% of the weakest men. Of the one hundred strongest people in a random group of one hundred men and one hundred women, ninety-three would be men and only seven women [297]. Another study showed that only 5% of the strongest women were as strong as the average man [298].

Another definition of women's work was that it did not take place very far from home or in unexplored territory. Women rarely undertook long journeys (the English word for travel is related to the French word for "work"), partly because, once married, they spent much of their time either pregnant, breastfeeding or looking after their children, and partly because travelling was dangerous. The dangers could come either from the elements, or from people, or from both. The dangers posed by the elements explain why women did not normally take part in deep-sea fishing expeditions. Nor did they board merchant ships, except as passengers. The dangers posed both by the elements and by people explain why they rarely made long land journeys. Not all rulers could boast, as Ramses III did, that women could travel safely throughout their kingdom [299]. And the pharaoh was almost certainly wrong to boast of this.

Women's physical weakness and reluctance to stray far from home have always dictated the nature of women's work [300]. Men hunted big game and were sometimes killed in the process; women, on the other hand, preyed on smaller, less dangerous creatures [301]. The men ran long distances, while the women did not hurry, taking breaks at their convenience, gathering roots and berries. The men dived into the sea to catch pearls, while the women stayed ashore, looking for clams, which live in shallow water, and prepared the catch [302]. The men looked after the biggest and most difficult animals to manage, such as camels, horses and cattle. The women looked after the small domestic animals and poultry.

In the 1830s, the political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville travelled to the United States to gather material for his famous *De la Démocratie en Amérique*. (O)n (n) rencontre point (d'américaines) (...)," he wrote, "qui sont obligées de livrer aux rudes travaux du labourage, ni à aucun des exercices pénibles qui exigent le développement de la force physique. No family so poor is an exception to this rule" [303]. Harriet Martineau, the most famous economist of her time, also travelled in the United States. A modern researcher describes her as having "made more striking observations about women than de Tocqueville ever imagined" [304]. Among other things, she observed that the American husband's hair "stands on end at the idea of his wife working, and he works hard to provide her with money" [305].

In nineteenth-century America, it was cowboys, not cowgirls, who spent weeks on the trail, sleeping in the open air, without the opportunity to wash, shave or change clothes, driving cattle from pasture to market and from market to station. In other societies too, the less pleasant a job was, the more demanding and dangerous it was, the more likely it was to be done by men [306]. In China, both because of the dominant Confucian ideology and the unsafe conditions, women worked at home or nearby. Indeed, *neiren*, one of the Chinese words for woman, literally means "indoor person" [307]. As a result, Chinese women did only between 5 and 38 per cent of all agricultural work. Until the twentieth century, it was considered shocking to see a woman wielding a hoe [308]. When Communist officials tried to change the system and get women to work alongside men in the fields in the 1950s, both sexes did everything in their power to oppose their efforts.

What was true for agriculture was also true for other jobs. The didactic texts of ancient Egypt describe all the occupations in which men could work, with the exception of scribes, as arduous by definition [309]. The men built the houses, while the women gathered straw to cover the roofs (when thatch was replaced by wood or stone as roofing material, the women disappeared from the building sites). Women may have cooked at home, but when it came to domestic products sold at the market, it was almost always the men who had the arduous task of kneading the dough and baking the bread. Women spun, wove and carded, but it was up to the men to operate the looms to produce fabrics for sale [310]. While it is true that women were everywhere responsible for housework, as most people lived more or less at subsistence level, the workload was minimal. Housework as we understand it hardly existed either in hunter-gatherer societies or among nomadic herders. In most other societies, whether rural or urban, the vast majority of the population ate simple, easy-to-prepare foods. Owning only a few rough pieces of furniture, people often considered personal hygiene to be more of a nuisance than a pleasure [311].

Apart from women's physical weakness and their need to stay at or near home, the third reason why men and women did different types of work was the way in which work affected health. Long before the birth of modern science, a century-old Hippocratic text entitled *Des Maladies des femmes* discouraged

women who had just given birth from working too hard. In the second century AD, the Greek physician Soranos was well aware that women subjected to hard labour could lose their periods and that, if they were subjected to it for too long, their fertility could also suffer [312]. Women were also more vulnerable to the effects of heat and chemicals, and every effort was made to ensure that they were not exposed to them at work. In Babylon, female slaves weaved and male slaves washed clothes [313]. In the first pottery factory opened by Josiah Wedgwood, it was the men who were responsible for doing the most menial part of the work, such as handling and firing the clay, while the women were responsible for decorating the objects [314].

The justification for this concern is that in early twentieth century Japan, when women were allowed to work in the mining industry, 20% of those who worked in the mines contracted urogenital diseases [315]. Women's greater vulnerability to infection explains why men have always been obliged to perform all sorts of arduous tasks, particularly outside the home. Good examples are burning charcoal, slaughtering large animals and cleaning public drains. In fact, even though doctors knew that sweeping chimneys could cause scrotal cancer, sweeping was a man's job. To this day, rubbish collection and removal in the United States is "the most masculine of all male jobs" [316].

Not only did women generally do the least arduous, least exhausting and most healthful types of work, but their working lives differed from those of men in that they were likely to work both part-time and intermittently. Some societies regarded the menstrual period as "a pleasant interlude" [317]. Regardless of what the American novelist Pearl Buck wrote about Chinese women returning to work a few hours after giving birth, it was always recognised that pregnant women or women who had recently given birth could only do light work. [318] Until the opening of the first crèches at the end of the nineteenth century, women with young children could not work full-time either. In short, all men worked or were expected to work full time throughout their lives, but not women, except for young single women and widows [319]. Economic laws and regulations often reflected this reality. For example, in seventeenth-century England, daily rates for female employees were calculated on a seasonal basis [320].

The above principles seem to have applied to virtually all societies at virtually all times and in all places. This did not, of course, prevent considerable variation, both between different societies and within the same society at different times. While today knitting is considered almost exclusively a women's job, it was often practised by both sexes until the end of the eighteenth century. In Tibet, carpet weaving was a man's job. Particularly during the peak agricultural season, urgent tasks were often carried out jointly by people of both sexes. But even at these times, a division of labour prevailed: normally the hard work, such as loading the products onto wagons, was done by men. Women rarely performed the most difficult tasks, such as ploughing, except when the men were absent - whether this absence was permanent, because they had moved abroad, or temporary, because they had been mobilised. When circumstances forced women to undertake such work, the result was a sharp drop in productivity, as in



Germany during the First World War. In other cases, the land was left fallow, as happened in the Soviet Union in the 1920s [321]. In China, during the Great Leap Forward, the attempt to make women work in agriculture while men processed iron ore in blast furnaces caused famine throughout the country [322].

The Israeli kibbutzim provide another illustration of what happens when the physical differences between men and women are flouted or ignored. Partly because they lacked capital and partly for ideological reasons, the first settlements tried to support themselves almost entirely through agriculture. Partly because of their socialist vision, partly because the difficult conditions in a new and unfamiliar country made it imperative to employ all hands, they took the doctrine of gender equality to extremes rarely seen before or since. Photographs from this period often show women in headscarves wielding shovels or hoes, although even then they tended to be given easier tasks.

To make equality possible, women were largely relieved of household chores such as cooking (meals were eaten together), laundry (done by the kibbutz laundry) and childcare (who lived in their own homes and saw their parents for only a few hours a day). Mothers were entitled to an hour's break every day. Fathers did not [323]. Despite this, after a few years, most women could no longer keep up. Those who tried to keep up paid the price by ageing very quickly; all Israelis remember these women whose features made them look like their husband's mother. The others retreated to the kitchen, the crèche, the school, the laundry, the communal sewing room, the secretariat and the clinic, professions that more and more of them would take up in the following decades.

In short, women have always been favoured in the workplace, partly because of their relative physical weakness, partly because of pregnancy and childcare responsibilities, partly because of their awareness of the risks that work posed to their health, and partly because, being less able to defend themselves, they tended to stay close to home. Conversely, women's participation in men's activities could be a sign that these occupations were no longer dangerous [323bis]. A good example is provided by the ladies of the medieval and Renaissance periods, who went hunting, shooting small crossbows specially designed for them or flying the falcon. A more modern example can be found in the recent fashion for cowgirls. With a few exceptions, the fact that women were privileged when it came to work was as true in times when they were free as in times when they were slaves or servants, working without pay, helping their relatives or working for strangers in exchange for wages.

To avoid any misunderstanding, this does not mean that women's lives were necessarily easy, that they had a lot of free time, that the work they did was always enjoyable or even that they did not have to do certain types of work considered degrading. Nor does this mean that women's work was not important.

In subsistence economies, where trade played little or no part, the distinction between men's paid work and women's unpaid work was unknown.

What this means is that the really hard work - the *ponos* - have always and everywhere been reserved almost exclusively for men.

### 3. Industrialisation and its impact

While women had always done less work and done easier jobs closer to home, the Industrial Revolution had the effect of forcing many of them into complete inactivity. This change was due to the mechanisation of two processes, production and transport. As a result of mechanical manufacturing, the many small businesses that had existed until then gave way to a small number of large factories. Mechanical transport contributed to this development by enabling many more people and goods to travel with unprecedented ease and speed, over unprecedented distances and at unprecedented prices.

The separation of the workplace from the home affected men and women differently. Men left home in the morning and only returned at the end of the working day. Women looked after the home and the children. Previously, most women did at least one productive job at some point in their lives. It was at this time that the category of full-time mother and housewife was invented. This development took place at a time when domestic help was both cheap and considered an indispensable part of life, even in lower middle-class households. The more the population concentrated in urban areas, the lower the fertility rate, making life even easier for married women [324]. The higher their social status, the less likely it was that they would have to earn a living, either before or after marriage.

It should be noted that not all women stopped working at the same time, and some never did, particularly on the farm. The first labour-saving devices, such as steam engines for pulling ploughs, were designed to make men's work easier. Women's work was both easier and, since it did not involve bulk products, more difficult to mechanise. It's relatively much easier to invent a combine harvester than a tomato-picking machine. In fact, another century would pass before machines began to influence women's traditional tasks, such as gardening and tending livestock [325]. Cultural factors also played a role. It was in the Netherlands that women first stopped working; conversely, women continued to work in the dairy long after they had left other agricultural jobs [326]. The really hard work, and that which involved long journeys away from home, continued to be virtually monopolised by men.

Most employed women worked in domestic service, a field in which they vastly outnumbered men. In the mid-nineteenth century, 18% of London women over the age of 20 worked as domestic servants. They accounted for 43% of all London women recorded as having a profession. In the United States, they represented half of the female labour force until 1940 [327], partly because they had no other qualifications, partly because the work had its attractions. Then as now, some people saw factory work as irreconcilable with femininity. Domestic work was seen as both more pleasant and less impersonal [328]. It also tended to be a more stable sector of activity with low unemployment.

Its other advantage was that it met the basic needs of a salaried woman, since accommodation and some of her clothes were provided by her employer. The same applied to food; domestic servants ate better than other workers. It has been calculated that in no other type of employment could unskilled women from the lower classes earn so much money. The hours were long and free time was scarce, but this made it easier to save money. Most women only served as domestic servants for a relatively short time before getting married. Those who chose to make service a career had a good chance of promotion. In Hamburg, for example, only 1% of domestic servants remained in the lowest ranks. The vast majority became qualified cleaners, ladies-in-waiting and cooks, among other higher positions [329].

During the 20th century, at least in the cities, only the wives of very poor workers worked. Even more than today, a man considered it humiliating to be supported by his wife. Friedrich Engels' mawkish description of "poor Jack" sitting at home and shedding tears of humiliation as he tried to mend his wife's stockings is a true period piece [330]. Even that great defender of women's rights, John Stuart Mill, thought that "it is (...) not to be desired (...) that (...) the woman should contribute by her labour to the creation of the family income" [331]. At most, such work was seen as a reserve that could be drawn on in times of extreme need. Married women only accepted occasional work and left as soon as possible [332]. Over time, the same was true of the wives of unskilled workers and immigrants [333].

Women represented only a small minority of industrial workers. In England, by far the most industrialised country at the time, there were only 8,879 female industrial workers in 1841. In the Dutch town of Tilburg, young male workers outnumbered young female workers five to one [334]. Women accounted for between 3% and 4% of the mining workforce, a sector they had begun to leave since the 1780s. And the women who worked in mining operations rarely went into the tunnels; they worked on the surface, sorting the coal and preparing it for transport [335]. As a French saying goes [336], the mining areas were "women's paradise, men's purgatory and horses' hell".

However insignificant the number of women industrial workers may have been, there was an outcry about the "corrupting" effects of industrial work on women. In 1844, England became the first country to pass factory laws. Belgium, France, Germany, the United States and other countries followed suit. Step by step, women employees were protected. This protection included prohibiting their employment in certain trades, regulating the hours they could be required to work, the conditions under which they could be employed and the three-hour shifts they could or could not be forced to work. In 1908, the future Justice Louis Brandeis was able to present the US Supreme Court with a brief containing over a hundred studies on the need to protect women from overwork. The strategy worked and national regulation of women's work was declared constitutional. Yet just three years earlier, another court had rejected similar regulation of an industry in which men carried one of the heaviest burdens, namely baking [337]. In any case, by 1917, no less than forty states in the United States had adopted legislation protecting women to a greater or lesser extent [338]. It was not until much later that men, including boys aged 11 and over, enjoyed similar protection. When the legislation for men was finally adopted, it turned out to have been modelled on existing regulations on women's work [339].

In the 1880s, purified gas and electricity began to replace coal as the main source of energy. As a result, at least some branches of industry were rid of some of the dirt and grime that had characterised Dickens' Coketown at its worst. The administrative structure of large companies expanded, creating an insatiable demand for secretaries and receptionists. Even more white-collar jobs were created by the development of institutions, including social insurance, the health care system and compulsory universal education [340]. Other such jobs owed their existence to technological advances, such as the telegraph, telephone and teletypewriter. Previously, work in domestic service or factories was not worthy of the typical middle-class young woman, who spent the years before her wedding learning to sing, embroider or paint. Henceforth, young middle-class women flocked to temporary employment in occupations that, while often unexciting, were at least clean, safe and required little effort or skill. In 1887, three quarters of female wage earners in American cities were under the age of 25. No less than 96% of them were single; in Berlin, the situation was similar [341].

Wherever easy, clean work was available, large numbers of women jumped at it. In the United States, women represented 4% of office workers in 1880; 21% a decade later. In that time, the total number of office workers had risen from 504,000 to 750,000 [342]. In Germany, between 1882 and 1907, the number of white-collar women in commerce, transport, the civil service and the professions tripled [343]. According to the prevailing wisdom of the nineteenth century, women were weak and delicate souls. The further they were from home, the greater the danger that they would be corrupted by men and lose their manners if they were lucky and their virginity if they were unlucky. Most employers shared these concerns. To attract female workers, even those who didn't share these concerns had to protect them. Photographs often show rooms full of well-dressed young women working at their desks, with hardly a man around [344].

Despite these attempts to make life easier for female employees, women only entered the labour market to a limited extent. In 1851, about a quarter of English women were working. Sixty years later, the figure was still the same [345]. While 83.7% of men aged 10 and over were in the labour force, 31.6% of women were [346]. And this figure does not give the whole picture, because many of the women who entered the labour market at that time did so because, given the demographic imbalance created by emigration, they could not find any men. The situation in continental Europe was similar to that in Great Britain [347]. In the United States, where there was a surplus of marriageable men, only one married woman in twenty was gainfully employed [348]. Even this figure does not fully reflect the reality of the time. A turn-of-the-century survey of "married" working women in Philadelphia revealed that, of the 728 women interviewed, 237 were in fact widows, 146 had been abandoned by their husbands and 12 were divorced. Only 333 of the 728 women were married [349].

When the First World War broke out, it was initially thought that, because of the resulting disruption to economic life, people of both sexes would be affected by unemployment. This is indeed what happened in the first few months. Industries in which women were numerous, particularly manufacturers of luxury goods, suffered from a drop in demand or were forced to close down [350]. As a result, almost half of British women employees were unemployed in 1914 [351]. However, from the winter of 1914-1915, the situation was reversed. Since millions of men had left for the front, they had to be supplied with millions of tonnes of equipment of all kinds. Before the war, the authorities thought that their main task would be to provide for the unemployed. Instead, they soon found themselves short of manpower - both men and women - to fill the posts that had been left vacant or had just been created.

Women were still concentrated in industries where the work was relatively easy. The most important made shoes, boots, stockings, uniforms, straps, rucksacks, harnesses and similar articles [352]. Women then began to replace men in jobs requiring contact with the public, jobs which, again because of their supposedly delicate souls, they had previously rarely, if at all, taken. They became post office and bank tellers, bus and tram clerks, taxi drivers and even van drivers. In 1916, some women, attracted by the high wages offered by the arms industry, began to work in munitions factories. Yet even at the height of the war, in April 1918, when the British armies were still reeling from the most powerful offensive ever launched by an army, almost two-thirds of the workforce remained male. Despite the fact that three and a half years had passed since the outbreak of war, the total number of British women employees had risen from just 3,276,000 to 4,808,000 [353].

The situation was the same in other countries. In 1916-1917, female employees in munitions factories in several countries - Germany, Italy, France and Britain itself - were paid such high wages that the men, who were dying by the hundreds of thousands on the battlefields at the time, accused them of

capitalising on the war [354]. The really difficult jobs, whether in mining, forestry or transport, among others, continued to be done almost entirely by men. These men were either unfit for military service because of their age or health, or had been discharged because their jobs could not be done by women. For example, at Wigan Pier, later made famous by George Orwell, women made up only 5.5% of the workforce. None of them worked underground [355].

With the war over, most women were happy to go home. Normally, the question was not whether a married woman would stop working, but how soon. Workers, influenced by left-wing ideologies, often looked at the question from the point of view of class struggle. They were proud that capitalism, although it had succeeded in enslaving them, had not managed to get its hands on their wives. Conversely, those whose wives worked tended to be despised [356]. In the United States, only 15% of married women were employed, and only 20% of both sexes even thought that women should have jobs. By 1939, the latter figure had fallen to 10% [357]. As one company vice-president wrote, freedom to work was "God's greatest gift to woman and her natural birthright". In all countries except the Soviet Union, both the proportion of working women and their weight in the labour force stagnated. In 1929, 40% of all married women in the United States had never worked outside the home [358]. At no time and in no country did they represent more than 36.1% of the working population [359]. Insofar as women had jobs, they continued to take the least arduous and least unhealthy ones.

When the Great Depression hit, it was mainly men who bore the brunt. While it became much harder for both men and women to find work, it did not have the same impact on both sexes. In the United States, because fewer women were employed and generally earned less, proportionately fewer women than men became unemployed. During the 1930s, the labour market recovered more rapidly for women - in office work, services and light industry - than for men, who competed unfairly with them on lower wages [360].

Nor was the impact of unemployment on the two sexes the same. For women, it was often synonymous with deprivation; for men, deprivation and emasculation, all at the same time. It prevented young people from becoming men. They could end up as tramps or vagabonds, especially if their families couldn't afford to keep them at school. When they grew up, they stayed at home or left in search of work, only to return empty-handed. Their social ties were severed, their status reduced, their self-esteem weakened and their marriages destabilised [361]. The same applied to women, but to a much lesser extent. Photographs show thousands of men queuing, three or four abreast, outside soup kitchens. As was noted at the time [362], there were no women in the queues. Few women lived in slums or slept in parks. Whatever their suffering, in one way or another, women always managed to be offered room and board.

The Second World War was on a par with the First. Once again, millions upon millions of men were mobilised. Once again, governments called on women to fill the gap, first in services and offices, then in light industry and finally in heavy industry. With the exception of the Soviet Union, women continued to enjoy many privileges. It is true that Britain and the United States employed large numbers of married women, but even there women generally did the easier work. In Great Britain, even in 1943, at the height of the war, ten million women were not working at all. On average, these women each had less than one child to support. At no time during the war did women represent more than 38.8% of the working population. So even after 5,000,000 men, compared with only 450,000 women, had been called up for military service, there were still more working men than women. It was only towards the end of 1943 that the authorities finally began to "direct" childless women under the age of fourteen to war-related tasks. In fact, the plan was implemented very cautiously, for fear that it would lead women and men alike into rebellion [363].

In 1945 in the United States, out of 52 million adult women, only 19.5 million had a job; only a quarter of married women had a job [364]. Although the image of Rosie the Riveter dominated propaganda, she was largely a fictional character. In all metalworks, men outnumbered women three to one [365]. A survey carried out in 1945 shed light on women's reasons for doing certain jobs and avoiding others. It turned out that three quarters of female employees intended to continue working after the war. If possible, they hoped to do so without leaving their chosen fields. Only in the war industry was the figure significantly lower. Yet it was here that women were best paid, their wages being about twice as high as those of employees in other sectors [366].

So why did women want to leave the very industries where they were best paid? Another set of statistics provides an answer to this question. The highest concentrations of women were found in industries with the lowest number of accidents. In these industries, there were almost four times as many women as men. Conversely, in the most dangerous industries, there were practically no women [367]. Overall, the injury rate for male workers was twice that of their female counterparts [368]. It is not surprising that women were not attracted to the male-dominated branches of industry. Despite their exceptionally high wages, most women employed in the war industries planned to leave the job as soon as possible. Most did so as soon as their men returned from the war and began to toil again to support themselves [369].

In short, the separation of the workplace from the home in the 19th century had a profound impact on women's working lives. Only on farms did women continue to work as before. Elsewhere, a very large number of women, particularly married women, stopped working altogether. Partly because they did not want to do arduous or dangerous work, and partly because the law increasingly forbade them to do so, the urban women who continued to work did so in an easy and safe way. The resulting model prevailed for most of the first half of the twentieth century, and in some countries, such as the

Netherlands, until the 1960s [370]. Whether because governments tried to protect women or because it was opposed by women, not even two world wars could change this model.

#### 4. The great transformation

As noted earlier, for most of history, work was seen as a burden imposed on man as a punishment - a burden which, monks and Protestants aside, most people tried to avoid as much as possible. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this view began to change. This change can be traced back to the late 17th century English philosopher John Locke. Locke's argument was that, in the state of nature, everyone had as much right to everything as anyone else. The origins of private property lay in labour; if some people owned far more property than others, it was ultimately because they or their ancestors had worked harder and done more to transform raw nature into products consumable by man [371]. For the young Marx, productive labour was the main difference between man and other animals [372]. In the hands, or rather in the mouths, of the socialist leaders, labour became the foundation of the social order. Soviet biologists went much further, declaring that the main human characteristic was the hand and not the brain. Thus, not only did work constitute the essence of man, it was in fact at the origin of his evolution.

In the past, most men boasted of their wealth, social status and education. And most women prided themselves on their husbands' qualities. But now, capitalists and socialists were praising work. As a result, being a man of leisure became socially unacceptable, so even those who didn't need to work began to do so, or at least pretended to. Little by little, they came to regard work as the essence of their lives. Once work had ceased to be seen - at least in words - as a burden and had begun to be seen as a privilege, it wasn't long before men, claiming to speak for women, began to suggest that they too should be working.

As the writings of John Stuart Mill show, the problem of emancipating women from the economic despotism of their husbands was in the air. The most important writer to suggest that the instrument of this emancipation should be labour was Friedrich Engels. In *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, he states that, under "primitive communism", men and women were equal, sharing the fruits of the earth. However, technical progress and the invention of animal husbandry and then agriculture led to the privatisation of the means of production. In economic terms, this change made men's work much more important than that of women. Worse still for women, it led to a situation in which property, which was no longer collective, had to be passed down through lines of males. The combination of inheritance and private property proved fatal to women's position in society. The only way for them to free themselves from their state of economic and therefore social dependence was to



"participate in production on a broad social scale". By this, Engels meant that women had to do paid work outside the home. The unpaid work they had done previously was, in his view, unproductive by definition [373].

Partly out of genuine concern for women, partly in the hope that women would join the movement or persuade their husbands to do so, other socialist leaders endorsed these ideas. The most detailed programme was proposed by the founder of the German Social Democratic Party, August Bebel [374]. In Bebel's account, the story of women was a sad one of subjugation and degradation made possible by their lack of economic independence. Under socialism, he proclaimed, women would be liberated. In fact, the right to participate in productive work and to be paid accordingly was the essence of freedom. With women freed from their state of economic dependence, people of both sexes would be free - for the first time in history - to marry purely for love.

In many ways, Bebel's work formed the basis of the policies adopted by the Soviet Union from 1918 onwards. Having come to power in a country ruined by war and revolution, the Bolsheviks' most immediate concern was to restore production. They believed that the quickest way to achieve this goal was to take advantage of what they saw as the country's main untapped source of labour: the large number of unemployed women. It was primarily to enable, not to say force, them to take up a trade that the young Communist state carried out some of the most far-reaching reforms in the history of women [375]. The nature of the reforms was set out by two women, Alexandra Kollontai and Lenin's wife Nadezha Krupskaya, both of whom adopted Bebel's analyses without citing their source.

For Kollontai in particular, working on behalf of society was the most important thing in life - so important, in fact, that she was hardly prepared to allow women the time they needed to give birth. For women to be able to work, "the kitchen had to be separated from the marriage". Women's traditional tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, laundry, mending clothes and even bringing up children, would be communised. In his most radical flights of fancy, Kollontai even predicted that single-family dwellings would be replaced by huge dormitories. In fact, Soviet architects were still drawing up plans for these dormitories at the end of the 1920s [376].

If this project had been carried out, it would have transformed the Soviet Union into a vast impersonal kibbutz. It did not succeed because women refused to allow their children to be taken away from them, as the Communist Party wanted. In the end, the most far-reaching reforms concerned family law. Men were officially stripped of their role as head of the family and, with it, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children. Expecting women to work for a living on an equal footing with men, the government made divorce proceedings so easy that the family itself was virtually abolished. The same

was true of alimony, now seen as the linchpin of the old system. It was felt that these benefits deprived women of both their economic independence and their pride.

The results, including a staggering rise in the divorce rate, were not long in coming. The number of abandoned wives and children desperately trying to survive without the economic support of men - that is, without any economic support at all - grew into the millions [377]. Poverty bred crime. A generation of young people was thrown onto the streets, forced to live by stealing or prostitution. At the end of the 1920s, the authorities did an about-turn. The family was reinstated as the basic unit of Communist society. The pre-war provisions that had subordinated women to men were abolished, and alimony was reinstated, ensuring that divorced men would continue to provide for their wives and children. Kollontai's works disappeared from libraries and many of the men responsible for drafting the earlier laws were shot. In the end, the most important part of the original project was precisely the one that concerns us here, namely the efforts that were made to provide paid employment for women.

Before the Revolution, the vast majority of people in the countries that made up the Soviet Union made their living from farming, which meant that women had always worked both in and around the home. This changed at the end of the 1920s, when every effort was made to steer rural women towards other professions. The proportion of women in the workforce increased. It reached 24% in 1928, 26.7% in 1930, 31% in 1934 and 35% in 1937. As in other countries, the first women to be taken on were those who had no man to support them. By 1936, when the Communist regime was firmly in place, less than half of married women were working [378].

Initially, the increase in the number of female employees occurred mainly in sectors that had traditionally employed women. These included light industry - food, tobacco, textiles, leather and paper - as well as services such as teaching and commerce. From 1930 onwards, a campaign was launched to encourage women to work in other sectors. In 1930-1933, 44% of new hires in construction and up to 80% of industrial workers were women. The proportion of women among workers in large-scale industry rose from 28% in 1930 to 40% in 1937. In the largest industrial cities, such as Leningrad, the figure was even higher [379]. The few women who had succeeded in their new fields were the focus of vast propaganda campaigns. Some even won the greatest prize, a meeting with the Father of the Peoples himself. Others were motivated by the draconian labour laws. And yet, even in this brave new world, the wives of the rulers did not work.

Millions more women went to university and received training. Many of them went into fields previously reserved for men, such as engineering [380], although not enough for the State's taste. However, no more than their male comrades, women were able to overcome the intolerable rigidities of the regime

and its tendency to stifle all initiative, economic or otherwise. In the end, the Communist hierarchy of labour - including, after 1945, that which prevailed in satellite countries such as East Germany and Czechoslovakia - came to resemble that of all other countries. Most women worked in a handful of professions with few men. The main ones were teaching, small-scale administration, personal services and retailing [381]. Soviet women were concentrated in the least prestigious and lowest paid jobs. Women may have been well represented in medicine and law, but this largely reflected the low income and low prestige enjoyed by professionals in these fields. In the economy as a whole, the higher you went, the fewer women you found [382].

Cramped housing, the need to spend hours queuing outside shops selling basic consumer goods and the constant burden of housework made life intolerable for many women. And from the 1930s onwards, Russians reacted by having fewer children. In the Soviet Union, contraceptives were always of dubious quality and in limited supply, and their use was sometimes officially discouraged or even banned. The main method of birth control was therefore abortion, whether legal or illegal. It is estimated that in the last years of the regime, two-thirds of all foetuses were aborted [383]. Even under the best of circumstances, abortion was a traumatic experience. In the Soviet Union, where it was often carried out under difficult conditions and with little or no anaesthetic, it was even more traumatic [384]. It is no exaggeration to say that, during the seventy years of communism, its efforts to emancipate women by giving them the opportunity to exercise a profession on an equal footing with men took away their very will to live and to give life.

It was only around 1980 that the regime realised it had a problem on its hands [385]. To solve it, it began by banning women from the four hundred and fifty most difficult and dangerous professions. Then women were allowed to work part-time. Other women were allowed to carry out certain types of work at home so that they could look after their children at the same time. They were granted longer periods of paid or unpaid parental leave [386]. Finally, Mikhail Gorbachev led a campaign to encourage them to return home", a campaign that would have made the fathers and mothers of socialism turn in their graves [387]. Soviet women had learned their lesson and categorically refused to work in manual occupations [388]. Some women blamed feminism for forcing them into work. But it was too little, too late. By the time communism collapsed, women's lives had become so difficult that the Russian population was shrinking by a million every year. In the 1990s alone, the population of St Petersburg shrank by 10%.

In the 1960s, the idea that work was both a privilege and an indispensable tool for women's emancipation reached the capitalist West. Ideologically, it was a revolution. In 1930, Sigmund Freud had declared that people's "natural" propensity was to avoid work [389]. The term "wage slave" continued to be used until the 1950s. It applied to the kind of man who spent his whole life working for companies that not only controlled him but rarely hesitated to sack him on the spot. Women made it clear that they

had no intention of participating in such servitude any longer than necessary. In 1945 and 1946 alone, three million American women gave up their trade and returned home [390]. In Britain after the Second World War, the three main parties called on women to continue working. But women did not see it that way. Far from enjoying "their new independence", as one researcher put it, women, especially married women, had "suffered the interruptions to family life during the war" and "longed to return to the pre-war domestic routine" [391]. The result was a short-lived baby boom. Meanwhile, foreign workers had to be imported to replace those who had left the workforce [392].

Over the following decades, the situation gradually changed. The first factor behind this transition was the increase in life expectancy, which meant that the average woman would spend more of her life without having dependent children. The second factor was the resumption of the long-term downward trend in fertility, which led to the same result as longer life expectancy. Another was the improvement in educational opportunities for women, which led many of them to question whether being a housewife was in fact a colossal waste of their knowledge and skills. The result was what Betty Friedan called "the problem without a name". Women, she argued, were locked into the soothing routine of housework. They spent their time scrubbing floors, dusting cupboards and, to top it all off, baking biscuits. Plagued by boredom and isolation, they ended up with mental disorders, alcoholism or lovers.

Encouraged by Friedan's message, legions of married women throughout the Western world left home to take up paid work. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the percentage of women in the workforce in developed countries began to approach that of men [393]. Most middle-class women - at that time, the majority of Americans in particular described themselves as middle-class - were looking for a job that was easy, pleasant, lucrative and not too demanding in terms of hours. Thanks to the reduction in working hours by almost a third (from 59 to 40), millions of them were able to find one. The growth of the service sector played a major role in this. To a large extent, the process was self-perpetuating: most women continued to do the housework and look after their children while working. The solution they found was to subcontract the domestic tasks they had previously performed with their own hands, which included looking after young children and cleaning the house, as well as making, mending and washing clothes. The result was a growing reliance on food prepared for consumption both inside and outside the home (emphasis added).

The needs of female employees led to the emergence of a new economic sector, that of "household services" [394]. Almost all the service providers were women. Women created jobs for other women, who in turn created jobs for even more women (emphasis added). In Great Britain, for example, between 1985 and 1996, the amount spent on domestic services doubled, making this the fastest-growing sector in the entire economy [395]. In the United States in the early 1990s, women accounted for 97% of all nurses, 97% of educators, 73% of teachers, 84% of primary school teachers, 97.8% of pre-school teachers and 68% of social workers. The division of labour in many other services followed the

same pattern [396]. Thus, in many cases, women's entry into the labour market did not so much change the nature of their tasks as lead them to do for strangers outside the home what they had always done for themselves and their loved ones inside.

Insofar as the vast majority of women gained access to jobs that did not require physical labour or long-distance travel and were safe and secure, women remained the privileged sex. To the extent that pressure from feminist organisations removed most of the restrictions on women's work, women became doubly privileged: they could literally have their cake and eat it too. In all developed countries, almost all the really hard work is still done by men. As was the case a century ago, women in fields such as mining, construction and transport constitute a very small minority [397]. As was the case a century ago, it is almost exclusively men who work in forestry and heavy industry. Men ploughed fields, dug canals, laid tracks, built roads and moved heavy loads (hence the two English terms manhaul, "to drag [a load] by hand; to pull or lift without mechanical or animal assistance" and manhandle, "to move [a heavy object] by hand with great effort"; "to handle", but also "to rough up"). They also construct buildings, operate and maintain large machines [398], put out fires and track down violent criminals. In most countries, it is almost exclusively men who drive trains, lorries, vans and taxis, not to mention sailing boats and, until recently, commercial aircraft.

The reason men do these and other difficult jobs is, of course, that they are not as difficult for them as they are for women. When a woman chooses to enter a man's profession, it is usually only a matter of time before she leaves it [399]. Most of the efforts made to train women are therefore wasted. To avoid these problems, it would first be necessary to make men's work easier, as happened when the introduction of computers into printing made this work clean and efficient, rather than complicated and messy [400]. The combination of modern anti-discrimination laws on the one hand and women's reluctance to roll up their sleeves on the other can lead to some strange results. For example, while 80% of all white-collar workers in the United States are women, postmen - the only "administrative" job that involves a lot of walking outdoors - are almost exclusively men [401]. Even in women's prisons run by women, construction and maintenance work is carried out exclusively by men [402]. Finally, insofar as certain jobs were still reserved for men, they were without exception the most arduous and the least healthy.

In all developed countries without exception, women spend fewer hours at work [402bis]. In the United States, female doctors work fewer hours than their male counterparts; the same is true of female lawyers [403]. In Japan, almost a third of the increase in the working population between 1960 and 1986 was attributable to part-time jobs for women. Since then, the figure has continued to rise [404]. In Germany, only a quarter of young mothers have a job, and only half of them have a full-time job, while almost no fathers have a part-time job [405]. In Sweden, young women spend fewer hours at work than young men; the same applies to older women. The same is true for married women and those living

with a partner. Mothers spend fewer hours at work than fathers; the same is true of Swedish women without children [406]. And less than half of Swedish women with pre-school or school-age children have a full-time job [407]. It is not for nothing that the Swedish welfare state is considered to be "women-friendly".

The reason usually given for women spending fewer hours at work is the famous double burden. However, on closer examination, this hackneyed argument falls apart [408]. It's true that women who don't have a job spend more time doing housework than their partners, but that doesn't explain everything. Contrary to popular belief, it is simply not true that working mothers spend much more time on childcare than working fathers. Given that many children from the age of six months spend a large part of their time outside the home, looking after them represents only a tiny part of a woman's adult life. The smaller the family, the more this is true. Depending on whether they have a part-time or full-time job, mothers in developed countries devote 1 to 4% of their available time to childcare; fathers, 2 to 3%. University women who have children spend so little time raising them that their colleagues who have never given birth spend more time raising the children of their non-university spouses [409].

Moreover, work can be defined as a task that one person entrusts to another to carry out for them. A survey conducted using this approach by the United Nations in thirteen different countries revealed that men spent almost twice as much time working as women, 66% compared with 34% [410]. As a result, women have more time than men to satisfy their personal needs, such as eating, dressing, socialising, watching television and sleeping [411]. If they "enjoy a well-balanced life" [412], it is because they have the leisure to do so. Women in part-time work also enjoy other benefits. They are much less likely to work overtime or night shifts. They pay proportionately much less tax [413], which means that, on an hourly basis, they can earn much more than men in similar but full-time jobs [414]. As a result, women in part-time employment tend to be much more satisfied with their jobs than those in full-time employment. Part-time employees with children enjoy better health than full-time employees [415]. It is not surprising that only 10% of British part-time employees want to work full-time [416].

One might conclude from this that, when it comes to work, only full-time female employees really measure up to male standards. But this is not the case. Even when it comes to full-time jobs, men work longer hours than women. In Europe and the United States, men in "full-time" jobs work 10% more hours than women in full-time jobs [417]. In Great Britain, while 28% of men employed full-time regularly spend more than 48 hours at work each week, half of women spend less than 40 hours [418]. When overtime is taken into account, the difference is even greater. For example, no sooner had large numbers of women entered US car factories in the late 1960s than they and their representatives demanded that the old system of compulsory overtime be abolished. Once their demands were met and overtime became voluntary, they were still not satisfied. They claimed that, since men were more willing to work overtime, the right to do so discriminated against women. By 1973, the conflicting

demands of the female employees had finally got on the nerves of the Auto Workers Union. In an attempt to turn the page and get back to business, the union approved the Equal Rights Amendment. This legislation was, however, rejected by most women [419].

Since the early 1970s, depending on the country concerned, female employees have been demanding and often obtaining the following benefits: reduced working hours, shorter working weeks, flexible working hours, flexible working weeks, flexible career paths - which can mean 35 hours at work per week instead of 60 - [420], menstrual leave, breastfeeding breaks [421], hormonal breaks [422], paid maternity leave and unpaid maternity leave of several months, or even several years, with a guarantee of return to the same job at the end of this period of professional inactivity. In Germany, women are also entitled to deduct the cost of domestic help from their taxes and, in the United States, they are entitled to deduct the cost of childcare. In Great Britain, women have the right to refuse unhealthy work or to change their place of work [423], not to mention employer-funded childcare and childcare vouchers. They also benefit from childcare leave, emergency childcare leave, leave to care for a sick child and leave to care for the elderly [424]. Britain also offers women special training, known as mentor programmes, to help them climb the corporate ladder.

There are so many companies offering such programmes, and they are so numerous and varied, that keeping track of them has become a job in itself. Software has been specially developed to help women apply. To ensure that as many women as possible benefit from these advantages, women have demanded and, in many cases, obtained mandatory representation on boards of directors [425]. European companies call these "Total E-Quality" programmes. However, as many are reserved for women, equality is just a word here. In some cases, the legal vacuum allows men to take advantage of such programmes, but these cases are rare. When men take up a typically female profession, they still tend to work full-time [426]. Even in Sweden, of all the men who have the right to work part-time after the birth of a child, only 8% have done so [427].

On the other hand, women are so rarely expected to work like men that many of those who are officially in the workforce are in fact at home, while enjoying the privileges of women who are actually in the workforce. Once again, this is particularly the case in Sweden, the most advanced welfare state of all. In Sweden, parental leave pay is equivalent to 90% of salary for fifteen months. In addition, parents are entitled to sixty days' leave a year to care for a sick child. Assuming a working year of around 220 days, a woman with two children can be away from the workplace for more than half that time without any financial loss. It's hardly surprising that most of them tend to work in the public sector, where profit is much less of a priority and productivity is difficult, if not impossible, to measure. Nor is it surprising that one survey found that only one in seven young working mothers is present at work [428]. The Swedish definition of women's paid work is so loose that it distorts all the country's labour statistics. On an

adjusted basis, much of the increase in the number of women in the Swedish labour market since the 1950s is a myth [429].

What applies to developed countries also applies, albeit in a different way, to developing countries. Since their economies were largely based on agriculture, as might be expected, the division of labour in these countries remained until recently as it had always been. In each country, the men did the heavy work and those that involved travelling far from home. Women worked fewer days a year than men. When they did work, they carried out the least arduous tasks close to home, so that they could keep an eye on their children [430]. But even in these countries, there were at least a few pleasant jobs in administration or the professions. These jobs were generally held disproportionately by women [431].

Developing countries began to industrialise in the 1960s. The industries they set up were often foreign-owned factories manufacturing products such as textiles and later electronics, and employing cheap local female labour. In other cases, the work involved processing data for companies based abroad, such as airlines. The work was repetitive and tedious, and in some industries, where days had to be spent making observations under a microscope or in contact with chemicals, even dangerous. However, as the women themselves were the first to admit [432], it was much better than slaving away in the mud, especially as the pay was up to twenty-five times higher [433]. Not surprisingly, this work was often the subject of fierce competition. Compared with the work of most men, whether in agriculture or in urban trades such as construction and transport, it was safe, easy and clean.

As a result, in countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Mexico, women began to enter the factories in their hundreds of thousands. Most of those making sports shoes or assembling computer circuits were young and single. Very often, they lived with their parents and contributed little or nothing to the family income. They spent their wages on luxury items such as clothes and beauty products. Others saved up to 50% of their income [434]. Once they were married and had left the workforce, as most did [435], they continued to be maintained, now by their husbands. Unlike Western feminists, they refused to "acknowledge that (they were) being exploited or to organise to challenge the sources of that exploitation" [436].

Not only in these countries, but in every country since the Industrial Revolution, a disproportionate number of working women were single or widowed. Later, partly as a result of the spread of feminism, these two categories of women were joined by an army of divorcees. Married women - those who work outside the home and, even more so, housewives - for the most part expect their basic economic needs to be met by men. Recent work on and by career women describes the pleasures and pains of working life for women. The latter include the need to please one's boss, travel, the sudden reversal of fortune



due to company restructuring, or simply the loss of personal freedom and the lack of free time to devote to the family [437]. These pains and joys, it seems reasonable to assume, are experienced by men as well as women. Having decided to take the male world of work by storm, women were bound sooner or later to discover its disadvantages too. When they do discover these disadvantages, many women are allowed to do something that is rarely allowed to men, which is to stop working and go home.

Leaving aside periods of unemployment, men normally remain in the labour market throughout their working lives. This is not the case for two-thirds of women. As a result, in most industrialised countries, women at the end of the twentieth century were in fact less likely to work throughout their lives than their elders. In Great Britain, only 10% of women in 1980 remained continuously employed, 15% fewer than in 1965 [438]. In the United States, employed mothers spend just over half as many hours at work as employed fathers [439]. Whether married or not, women are likely to spend 40% fewer hours at work than men over the course of their careers. This is undoubtedly the main reason why, on average, their professional experience does not match that of men [440]. In short, most women, as in the old model, participate in the economy only to a limited extent. Perhaps the most important change has been the sharp fall in the birth rate. The few children who are still born spend so much time in nurseries or at school that they barely know their parents; as a result, women today have less to do than at any other time in history.

As for men, employment patterns show that their first responsibility is always to feed their family. In the absence of a socially acceptable alternative, they generally have no other choice [441]. Few people will object to a married woman's decision to leave the labour market to spend the rest of her days, for example, watering her plants or resolving her inner conflicts. On the contrary, her "reluctance to give up her whole self for her career" will be hailed as "particularly thoughtful and intelligent" [442]. A man who makes the same choice will be devalued by both other men and women. Very often, this is the case even if his economic future is secure. If his wife continues to work, this will probably be doubly true. At some point, the man's wife will begin to wonder why she should be the one to carry the whole burden. By this time, divorce proceedings are usually already under way [443].

Today, as in the past, earning bread by the sweat of one's brow remains a duty from which the vast majority of men can only escape if they are single, childless or both. Today, as in the past, the women who follow a similar path are mainly those who have no man to support them. Married women, and to a lesser extent single women, also tend to do easier work, spend fewer hours at work and leave the labour market earlier than men. The fate of the kibbutzim and the Soviet Union illustrates what happens to women when they do not enjoy these privileges. In the latter case, as the number of Russians stagnated and began to decline, Moscow lost its grip on the rest of the population. This included many Muslims, whose women, less likely to be employed, retained a high fertility rate [444]. To a lesser but

still significant extent, the same was true of the former Eastern bloc. Such were the consequences of Communist-style emancipation of women.

## 5. Conclusions

When it comes to work, women have always enjoyed many privileges. To a large extent, these privileges can be attributed to the biological facts that limited the work women could do. Certainly, if they had children and, to a lesser extent, even if they did not, women were unable to travel far from home. Even in the United States during the Second World War, out of 106,000 female railway employees, only 250 - less than 0.5% - did not have an office job [445]. If it is true, as some say, that "it is much easier... to go from being a wage-earner to a domestic worker than the other way round" [446], it may be partly because men's work is often difficult.

Women's privileges have changed over time. Each technological and economic revolution, whether the shift from agriculture to industry or, later, from industry to services, has had an influence on the work of both sexes. Women first worked in the fields, then in factories. Then they began to work at home, in offices and in commercial agencies. Even where men and women worked together, a clear division of labour prevailed. Most women were concentrated in a handful of professions. Here and there, a societal emergency, such as a busy agricultural season or a war, might lead to women working alongside men. Over time, however, the customary division of labour always reasserted itself. As long as work was seen as a burden, women, like men, did their best to avoid it. Much more than men, women were protected from work, either by their male relatives, or by prevailing social attitudes, or by both. Sometimes the work of the men of one generation became the hobby of the women of the next, like horse-riding and pottery. In this sense too, women are the idle class.

Over the last one hundred and fifty years, socialist and then feminist writers have declared that work is a right and a privilege. Yet the situation has remained fundamentally unchanged. Naturally, most women forced to work for economic reasons continue to regard their work as a burden. As turnover statistics show, they often seize the first opportunity to leave their jobs. This is one of the reasons why feminism has had only limited success among working-class women. As for the women who entered the labour market without being forced to do so, they too, for the most part, retained their privileges: easier employment, fewer hours at work; the right to leave work at will; the right to retire earlier; and, icing on the cake, the right to adopt an attitude of self-satisfaction towards work by claiming that, unlike men, they do not do it for the money but for the "interest" and "opportunities for personal development" it offers [447]. More than ever, the higher the class to which women belong, thanks in large part to the

work of their men, the more all this becomes true. Of all Adam's descendants, it is against these women that he has yet to pronounce a curse.

Martin van Creveld, *The Privileged Sex*, Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2013, translated from the English by B. K.

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[276] Birgit van den Hoven, op. cit. p. 30 (If, in fact, "work had long been despised by Christianity as the consequence of original sin (...) from the twelfth century onwards (it) was the subject of a remarkable reevaluation in the system of values and social prestige of the people of the Middle Ages, more or less in parallel with the reevaluation of the person and role of women encouraged by the great expansion of the Marian cult. Man, until then essentially presented as a punished and suffering creature in the image of Job, became once again, as the Church recalled when commenting on Genesis, a creature made by God in his own image at Creation, the first work in history performed by God who, tired, rested on the seventh day" [emphasis added] [Jacques le Goff, *Le Moyen Age et l'argent*, Perrin, 2010]. "The Middle Ages, with the spread of Christianity, saw the establishment of three value attributes, each carrying an aspiration rooted in the Christian religion or the biblical heritage it embraced: on the one hand, work, the result of the primitive condemnation of sinful man, was an expiatory necessity rather than a duty. The etymology of the term goes back to Antiquity: the tripalium (from which the word labour derives) was a system of three stakes (or pals) driven into the ground to which the slave was tied. But this attribute, as expiatory, is distinct from the pure instrumentality of otium. Medieval man is not chained to his task by the mere force of his master, but by the will of his creator, the eternal Father, all justice and goodness. But (...) the expiatory value was doubled from the 10th century onwards by a salvific value: because it involves suffering, and only to that extent, work enables us to redeem original sin and our sins, with the hope of a positive eternal life on the horizon! (Robert Francès, *Motivation et efficience au travail*, Mardaga, 1995, p. 13).

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[278] See Richard H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, Murray, London, 1960 [1926], p. 108.

- [279] See William C. Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1996, p. 4-5.
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- [283] *Odyssey*, X, 222-223.
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burdens as in certain commercial towns; they stay at home and live like annuitants. Men's work is hard, but their earnings are high; the reward follows the ordeal. Horses, subjected to the hardest labour, either on broken and hilly roads, or in the mines, where they are brought down never to leave, find here a veritable hell." N. D. E.).

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The fourth chapter of "The Privileged Sex", which shows that women have always been assisted, that women are still assisted, predicts that women will remain assisted ad aeternam. It didn't take a decade for this prediction to fall apart. The question now is not by whom women will be perpetually assisted, but by what. Women have always been assisted by men, and still are to a certain extent, but everything points to the fact that the time is not far off when they will be entirely assisted by new technologies.

## Chapter 4: From dowry to social security

### 1. The great enigma

If it is true that the origin of all wealth is work, as the philosophers of the Enlightenment in particular said, and if it is true that women have always done less important and lighter work than men, how have women managed to survive and, in many cases, prosper? The answer is simple and well-known: to a large extent, the reason why women have been able to survive is because they have been fed, clothed, housed and cared for by men. To quote the greatest anthropologist of all time, Margaret Mead, "at the dawn of humanity, a social invention was made whereby men began to feed women and their young... In all known human societies, the young man learns that one of the things he must do to be a full member of society is to provide food for certain women and their young... The division of labour can be done in a thousand ways... but this one is essential. The man, heir to tradition, provides for the needs of women and children" [448].

In this chapter, the mechanisms that society has devised for men to provide for women will be explored in detail. Although it does not deal with childhood, because during this period of life people of both sexes cannot look after themselves, it begins with a review of the arrangements that have been made for women to be cared for within the family. This is followed by an analysis of the ways in which various societies have supported women who, for one reason or another, did not have a husband or male relative willing and able to care for them. This chapter then examines the way in which many of these provisions have been taken over or adapted by the welfare state. It will quickly become apparent that the great enigma is not an enigma at all. Women have always been looked after by men, and we have yet to discover a society in which this is not the case.

### 2. The economics of marriage

For the German philosopher Georg Friedrich Hegel, the defining characteristic of the family is that it is based on altruism and love. In this respect, it differs from civil society, which is the domain of selfishness and economic competition. It is also distinct from the state, which controls both the family and civil society and which, through the allegiance owed to it, gives spiritual meaning to human life [449]. Hegel's idea has its charm. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that no family is or has ever been founded solely on love. The family is, among other things, an economic institution. As such, its purpose is to guarantee the



support of the woman or women. Cases to the contrary are rare. Where they do exist, they are supposed to be temporary, such as student wives or so-called cougars, who spend part of their lives with men younger than themselves. The way in which society obliges men to look after their female relatives varies. Societies have long known, and some still know, the levirate, an arrangement that allows and often obliges the brother of a dead man to marry his widow. If the Koran allows a man to take several wives, it is not so that he can have fun, but so that he can provide for the widows. In a society without clear territorial boundaries or any kind of police force, women were very vulnerable. It is no coincidence that the Arabic term *qawwamun*, which refers to the position of men in relation to women, can mean either "defenders" or "breadwinners" [450]. In Reformation Europe, when a nun left the convent, the first thing the authorities did was to find her a man to look after her. Martin Luther's wife was one of these women.

Very often, before a man can marry, he has to work and pay, and after he marries, he has to continue working and paying. For example, Germans in Tacitus' time had to bring their wives a back [451]. At the end of the Roman Empire, engagement presents were given by the future husband. A whole body of literature was written on the question of whether or not the future groom had the right to demand the return of his gifts if his wife broke off the engagement [452]. In order to pay a *mahr* (dowry), a young Muslim often had to work hard for several years away from his home village. It is not surprising that one of the things that pleased Ibn Battuta most in the Maldives was the small amount of *mahr* he was asked to pay [453]. Normally, the money went to the woman's relatives, usually the father, but sometimes the mother. However, the bride-to-be often benefited as well. The back money that a German paid to the father of his bride-to-be had to be given to the bride herself. In 18th-century England, future spouses gave each other gifts. A woman whose marriage had been annulled was entitled to take back her dowry, whereas a man in the same situation was only entitled to half. Under strict Islamic law, a woman is entitled to the entire dowry. Until recently, in Palestinian villages, a bride-to-be would get around a third of her dowry. As a rule, she invested her dowry in jewellery, which she wore as a sign of her husband's love for her. Now that patriarchal power is no longer what it used to be, she once again gets the full amount [455]. If the marriage does not take place, she is still entitled to part of the *mahr*.

Another form of direct payment was the "morning-after gift". Depending on the period and the man's situation, this could range from a small sum to an entire neighbourhood, with its inhabitants and the income it generated. In France, a royal decree of 1214 stipulated that the wife was entitled to half of her husband's property, both that which he owned at the time of marriage and that which he acquired subsequently [456]. In India, these gifts ranged from trinkets to land [457]. They were often disguised as "love gifts". In practice, this was an obligation that men, and particularly high-ranking men, had to fulfil towards their wives. Once the gift had been made, it became the wife's inalienable property; it was called her dower [458]. In Germany, and perhaps elsewhere, this custom was still in force in the sixteenth century [459]. The precise arrangements varied from one society to another [460], but what they all had in common was that it was the men, not the women, who had to pay.

Once married, a man was expected to support his wife or wives for the rest of his life. This is one of the reasons why, even in societies that allowed men to have several wives at the same time, only a small minority of them were polygamists. The figures for Algiers in the 1860s are revealing. Of the 18,289 married men in the city at the time, less than 5 per cent had more than one wife and only 0.4 per cent had more than two [461]. This belief in a man's obligation to support his wife goes back to ancient times. In ancient Egypt, the oldest literate society of all, [462] the words of a man to his son clearly show the responsibility of the future husband towards his wife:

If you're excellent, you'll create a home

And love your wife according to her standards;

Fill her belly, dress her.

She absolutely needs perfume for her limbs.

Make her happy for as long as you live!

She is a field, good for her lord.

You will not judge her! [463]

Provisions were also made to ensure that women, once widowed, continued to receive financial support. For example, a widow was allowed to continue to occupy the house that her late husband had built with the fruits of his labour. As daughters had to be maintained by their husbands, it was the rule that a man's heirs were his sons. However, to provide for a childless wife, a man could circumvent the law by making her his daughter through adoption [464].

Much later, the Greek-Macedonian and Roman occupations of Egypt produced many important political, economic and social changes. In occupied Egypt, however, the husband's obligation to support his wife remained in force. A marriage contract dating from 92 BC explains the terms at the time [465]: "Apollonia will be united to Philiscus by the bonds of marriage, since he has persuaded her that it is appropriate that she should be his wife and that they should both have all their property. Philiscus will provide Apollonia with everything she needs, her clothes and all that is necessary for the maintenance of a married woman - he will provide it for her wherever they live, according to their means."

The husband's obligation to support his wife was also enshrined in later Roman marriage charters. Another example is the ketubah, a Jewish marriage contract that remained unchanged for centuries. In this document, the groom promises to "feed, clothe and satisfy" his bride. If the couple divorces, the husband is obliged to offer his wife compensation, the amount of which is specified in the ketubah.

The duty of husbands to provide for their wives according to their means is universal. It can be enforced either by public opinion or by the courts. Very often, it is incorporated in sacred wisdom, whether in the Vedic writings or the Koran [467]. In England, the phrase "with all my worldly goods I endow thee" survived for almost a millennium, despite all the changes in the laws governing its application. To help husbands support their wives, the latter often received a dowry. Coming back to Philiscus and his beloved Apollonia, it is possible that she herself provided the money for his expenses. Normally, however, this responsibility fell to a woman's father and, if he died, to his brother or brothers.

In exchange for being allowed to administer Apollonia's dowry, Philiscus had to accept several conditions. According to the marriage contract: "He must not take a wife other than Apollonia, have a concubine, have a boyfriend or a child by a woman other than Apollonia as long as she is alive, or live in any household other than the one over which Apollonia rules. Nor may he repudiate her, use violence against her, ill-treat her or dispose of their property in a way that is unfair to her. If he breaches any of these obligations, he must immediately repay his dowry to Apollonia... Similarly, Apollonia is not allowed to spend the day or night away from Philiscus' house without his consent. Nor may she sleep with another man, squander the joint assets of their household or dishonour Philiscus in the way that men are dishonoured. But if Apollonia voluntarily does any of these things, she will be repudiated by Philiscus and he will return her dowry to her within ten days of her departure".

The conditions attached to their divorce are remarkable. If the dissolution of the marriage was due to any transgression on the part of Philiscus, the dowry was to be returned. If Apollonia was guilty of provoking the divorce, the dowry was also to be returned. In ancient Athens, as in all other societies at the time, few fathers or other male guardians would give a woman under their care to a man who could not support her properly [468]. As in many other societies, a dowry was provided to help the husband fulfil his legal duty to support his wife. But the dowry did not become his property. All he could do was administer it in his own name. If the couple divorced, the dowry had to be returned. Any dowry that was not returned immediately bore a monstrous 18% interest. A special procedure had been instituted for trials for non-payment; known as *eisangelia*, it was similar to that used for the most serious crimes, such as attempts to overthrow the constitution. From the point of view of the woman and her male guardians, *eisangelia* had the advantage that a lost lawsuit did not expose those who had brought the case before the courts to punishment. Since Greek justice was agonistic - anyone who sought to impose a penalty on another would receive the same penalty if they lost their case - this was a great privilege indeed.

Dowries also served to regulate the transfer of wealth from one generation to the next. In ancient Greece, daughters received their dowries on marriage as a kind of "ante mortem inheritance" [470]. The dowry was a way of giving daughters their due, even if their father was still alive. Similar methods were used in Rome, where a bride-to-be could be given property by her parents and her future husband [471]. The dowry was also the rule among the early Germanic tribes and among the Jews, at least at the time of the Second Temple, but also during the Middle Ages in Europe [472]. On the other hand, men were forced to postpone their marriage until they were able to provide for their future family. Often, this meant waiting for their father to die.

In Renaissance Italy, dowries were customary even among the miserabili [473]. On average, a daughter's marriage cost the father one seventh of his fortune [474]. Sir Roger Wilbraham, a seventeenth-century English gentleman, complained that members of his class fell prey to four "scourges": lawsuits, building costs, serving a prince and "marrying a girl" [475]. In late nineteenth-century Europe, bourgeois families sometimes pooled their resources to prevent one of their wives from having to marry below her station in life. The custom of giving daughters their inheritance years, or even decades, before their brothers received theirs continued until the mid-twentieth century.

In all the above-mentioned civilisations, it was accepted that married women had little or no ability to earn a living. The aim was therefore to help girls attract husbands by providing them with a dowry as an advance on their inheritance. As it was the husband who had to provide for his wife, the administration of the couple's property was left to him for as long as the marriage lasted. This did not necessarily mean that he could dispose of them as he saw fit. If the dowry consisted of land, he could not dispose of it. If it was cash, the marriage contract could stipulate that it had to be placed in a bank to earn interest and that the husband could not withdraw it. In the event of divorce, either the dowry was used as the basis for calculating the amount of maintenance owed by the husband, or it had to be returned. The latter obligation also existed if the husband predeceased his wife [477]. In theory, the fact that women often received their inheritance in advance should have prevented them from inheriting property. In practice, women in early medieval Europe, Anglo-Saxon England and the Islamic world could often receive a dowry and inherit all or part of their parents' wealth [478]. Regardless of what the law might say, the same was true in Greece [478]. In Sparta, if we are to believe Aristotle and, after him, Plutarch [480], so many men had been killed in war that the female heirs were numerous and extremely powerful. In the fourth century BC, women owned two-fifths of all public land and a large proportion of private land. Perhaps it wasn't pride alone that drove Spartan mothers to demand that their sons return from war, whether with or on their shields.

Socially, and often legally too, a man whose daughters were married was expected to leave his property to his sons, whose duty it was to provide for their mother. On the other hand, a wife was under no obligation to leave anything to her husband [481]. If her sons were no longer dependent on her, she could often bequeath her property to whomever she wished. This difference between the sexes is clear from an examination of women's charitable giving [482] and from studies of French and English wills from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries. In France and England, women generally named a greater number of heirs than men. Especially if they had no male offspring, but sometimes even if they did, their generosity was directed above all towards their female relatives, servants, charities and the Church [483]. The main reason for this was simply that they could afford it: in early modern England, more than half the widows left a fortune at least equal to that left by their husbands.

Since men regularly earned more than women, it is logical that women derived more from marriage than they invested in it. British figures for the period between 1780 and 1860 confirm this theory [484]. A study of 1,350 working-class households from this period suggests that the husband's share of family income generation was between 55 and 83 per cent. Husbands, as long as they were employed, always earned more than all other family members combined. In some cases, they earned almost five times as much. Their contribution to the family income reached its lowest level in the middle of the nineteenth century, during the "Hungry Forties". It was considerably higher before that decade and has remained so since. Children's incomes were higher than those of their wives. In fact, wives never contributed more than 12%, and in some years as little as 5%. It's not surprising that women were valued above all for their fertility and derived their power from it. Only in families with unemployed children did wives sometimes contribute up to 41% of the household income. This exceptionally high figure applies to miners' families during the difficult period from 1787 to 1815. In other families, and at other times, wives rarely contributed more than 25% of the household income.

The share of household income generated by women declined further as the ideal of the housewife became established in the 1850s [485]. The higher the class to which the family belonged, the more this became true. In 1890, women's work in Europe and the United States contributed only 1.9% to 3% of household income [486]. In 1914, French women exceptionally contributed between 11 and 30%. However, these figures only applied to the lower middle class [487]. Even today, only wives whose husbands are incompetent do not do best. In Czechoslovakia, shortly before its dissolution, women contributed between 12% and 22% of household income [488]. In the Soviet Union, in the last decade before its collapse, only 15% of wives earned more than their husbands [489]. Swedish wives are an exception to the rule, whose wages account for 39 per cent of after-tax household income [490] but, as we shall see later in this chapter, this figure can be attributed in part to the fact that Swedish men pay much higher taxes. In Western countries, women's contribution to family income is much lower [491].

In the United States, women who use the services of marriage agencies are ten times more likely to want to marry for money than men in the same situation [492]. And with good reason: in 2010, women contributed an average of only 38.5% to the income of American families [493]. This figure is in itself better than the figure for 1940, when it was 30% [494]. However, it does not take into account the fact that women tend to interrupt their careers more often than men and that, as a general rule, they retire earlier than men. So the data grossly overestimates women's contribution to household finances over a lifetime. Not surprisingly, all the employed housewives questioned in an opinion poll thought that "men should be responsible for supporting their families financially". To ensure that men meet their obligations, 80% of both sexes said they would ostracize a man who was unable to provide for his family [495].

Earning money is one thing. Spending it is quite another. At most times and in most countries, most farm households were, on the whole, self-sufficient. If they weren't, it was probably the men who went out to work and earned money. When they did earn money, the men used it to buy luxuries, often for their wives and daughters, as well as tools and implements that they couldn't make themselves. They also used it to pay their taxes. If the household itself produced a surplus, the women were often responsible for selling it at the nearby market. This enabled them to control the family economy, managing virtually all the money the family possessed. This arrangement still exists today in rural Cambodia [496].

In the city, the question of which spouse would spend most of the household income was linked to whether it was the man or the woman who did the shopping. In ancient Greece, it was generally the man who did the shopping. In Rome, where some husbands praised their wives for being "thrifty with our money" [497], they probably controlled a considerable part of the family income. At the start of the Industrial Revolution, women's purchasing power would have stimulated demand in many industries, from textiles to pottery [498]. In the Victorian era, middle-class women were known as "consuming angels". Most advertisements targeted them, to the extent that men did not feature at all, or only marginally [499].

Further down the social ladder, most of the income of working-class married men ended up in the pockets of their wives. Many of them handed over their pay envelopes without even opening them, receiving in return only what they needed to buy their daily ration of wine and tobacco [500]. Even today, women buy 80% of everything [501]. From the States and Europe to China and Japan, it is women who make most of the daily purchases. On the other hand, spending on major items such as a new house or car tends to be decided jointly by men and women [502]. Perhaps it's because men work so much harder than women that many of them hardly see a penny of their pay.

In the nineteenth century, in Great Britain and America, whose legal system derived from the common law, married women could not own any property, at least in theory. In practice, however, the situation was quite different. Firstly, every married man was obliged to support his wife, even after the reforms of 1861 and 1881 (followed, in the next century, by those of 1920 and 1964). Secondly, recognising that wives were the main consumers, the law allowed them to have and spend money on a daily basis, which in many cases, if not most, meant virtually all the money the couple had. Thirdly, many lower-class women, particularly in England, did not bother to marry. They preferred to live in common-law relationships, which allowed them to keep their property "separate from that of their husbands from generation to generation" [503].

Finally, there were legal means to ensure that a wife's property did not pass into her husband's hands, either during his lifetime or after his death. To quote one historian, "the concept of separate matrimonial property was firmly rooted in the Anglo-American legal tradition, much more so than that of community of property" [504]. To draw up marriage contracts, people used "conveyancing manuals" [505]. Failing that, they created trusts. Trusts were so effective in protecting women's property that men deliberately set up trusts in the name of their wives or daughters to protect themselves from creditors in the event of bankruptcy [506]. After 1880, protection became even stronger, with several countries adopting laws exempting women from any liability for debts contracted by their husbands. As for the liability of husbands for debts incurred by their wives, it remained universal and absolute. As it included debts incurred before marriage, some women married with the specific aim of shifting the burden onto their husbands [507]. The obligation remained in force even if the couple lived apart, even if the husband had no idea where she was - and even if she slept with everyone but him.

The husband's liability was so absolute that it even extended to lawyers' fees in divorce proceedings. In other words, women could file for divorce at their husband's expense. As late as 1966, a New York court ruled that "legal services rendered to a wife in a matrimonial action are necessary and (that) a lawyer has a right under the common law to sue the husband properly for providing such services". [508] In Kansas in 1984, according to a survey [509], more than half of the men involved in divorce proceedings had to pay their wives' legal fees as well as their own.

Since marriage is an arrangement whereby men provide economic support to women, it is logical that they should no longer have to support them in the event of divorce. A man whose wife left him or divorced him would of course lose everything he had invested in her, both before the marriage and while it lasted. However, women expected to be maintained even after divorce. And, at most times and in most countries, they did receive this financial support. In ancient Egypt, divorce meant heavy fines for the man, but not for the woman [510]. Hindu and Muslim laws oblige husbands to support their former wives. In other cases, divorced wives had the right to be supported by their children [511]. In early medieval Europe, divorce was very difficult to obtain for both men and women. Consequently, in legal

terms, a man could never be released from his duty to support his wife - even if the couple had long since stopped sleeping under the same roof, even if she had turned to prostitution, even if they had been formally separated by an ecclesiastical court [512]. In this sense and perhaps in no other, the phrase "till death do us part" was literally true.

Between 1850 and 1920, many modern countries passed laws to make divorce easier [513], and to do so they introduced the concept of "fault". Although the reforms allowed either partner to sue for fault, to win the case he or she had to show that the other was at fault. The economic bias underlying the arrangement was evident from the outset. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, many wives sued their former husbands for non-assistance and won their cases. At the very bottom of the social ladder, a divorce might not even be necessary. In Wales, a working-class woman whose husband failed to support her was considered free to marry another without having to return her wedding ring [514]. Until the 1960s, in most US states, a woman could obtain a divorce because she felt her former husband was not providing for her.

Needless to say, the reverse was not true. As married women were not expected to work, if a woman divorced her husband, she naturally received alimony. If he divorced her, she also received alimony, almost as a matter of course. Only if she had been caught in the act of adultery was an exception made - and not always. As early as 1721, a certain Mrs Centreville wrote that "a wound in the reputation of an Englishwoman ... can only be healed by alimony" [515]. Fearing that women would be left without financial support, judges and juries treated adultery as "a particularly dark and secret crime". The standard of proof they required was so high that it could rarely be met [516]. As a New York court stated in 1974, the presumption of legitimacy of a child born in wedlock is "one of the strongest and most compelling in law" [517]. Now that DNA tests make it possible to establish paternity beyond doubt, some American courts still refuse to order them or accept their results [518]. Thus, the fact that a woman has had an illegitimate child does not necessarily affect her right to receive child support. It is not surprising that, by the second half of the nineteenth century, American women, aware of their power, were filing about two-thirds of all divorce petitions [519].

For much of the 20th century, the spirit of the law was that a divorced woman was entitled to retain "the standard of living to which she was accustomed". Often, she received up to 50% of her former husband's income for life. This was the case even if the couple had no children, even if the wife was perfectly capable of working and even if this guaranteed her ten years of income for each year spent with him. But whereas, until the 1840s, children in the event of divorce remained with their father, who was responsible for their economic well-being, as the century drew to a close, mothers almost automatically obtained custody of the children [520]. As few judges were insensitive enough to throw children out on the street, the enjoyment of the family home was also awarded to wives in most cases, if not permanently, at least for as long as the children remained minors [521]. If, as rarely happened,



divorced men asked for financial assistance, they risked being both refused and reprimanded. As recently as 1979, the Supreme Court of the United States had to strike down an Alabama law that refused to pay alimony to a person simply because he was a man [522].

After 1975, the legal situation changed again. Largely at the insistence of feminists, most modern countries abolished 'fault' clauses, allowing both parties to file for divorce without having to justify themselves. As more and more married women entered the workforce, the arrangement whereby, in the event of divorce, they received alimony without committing joint property began to look unfair. This was partly because these assets had been accumulated through the work of both spouses, partly because alimony, which implied that a woman was unable to fend for herself and perpetuated her dependence on her husband, was seen as an affront to her dignity. The aim of the new laws was to bring about a "clean break", i.e. a situation in which neither party would remain dependent on the other.

For this purpose, the couple's property - other than that which each party had initially contributed to the marriage - was divided between the husband and wife in proportion to the effort each had devoted to acquiring it. Since women are now presumed to be as capable of working as men, alimony has largely lost its *raison d'être* [523]. Since men generally work more and earn more, it turned out, on a case-by-case basis, that the husband's share in the accumulation of the couple's assets was much greater. Since, in the event of divorce, the couple's assets were divided accordingly and many divorced women received no payments apart from child support, if they had any, many were forced to fend for themselves. Even as feminists railed against the "equality trap" that they themselves had helped to create [524], many divorced women were reportedly falling into poverty [525].

As has always been the case and will certainly remain so until the end of time, the best way for a divorced woman to avoid poverty was to marry another man. Compensating women for the fact that they are less able than men to earn a living has always been one of the main objectives of marriage. The provisions instituted to achieve them ranged from service to the bride to the dowry, from exhortations to the strictest laws and the penalties attached to them. Some provisions benefited women directly, others indirectly, through their parents and sometimes their female relatives. Some concerned the period before marriage, while others applied to the period after divorce. All applied for as long as the marriage lasted. The system was so deeply entrenched that when American couples petitioned the courts to relieve husbands of their duty to support their wives, their requests were dismissed without review [526].

By claiming that women were just as capable of earning a living as men, the Communists of the 1920s condemned millions of women to poverty. To a lesser but apparently significant extent, the same thing

happened in Western countries from the 1970s onwards. By insisting, in defiance of experience, that women are as capable of earning a living as men, feminists ended up, if not destroying, at least threatening the long-standing privileges of their sisters. No wonder that when the Equal Rights Amendment seemed to make women responsible for their husbands' maintenance, most of them preferred to maintain the status quo [527].

### 3. Women and charity

The previous section examined the privileged economic situation of the woman who has a man to support her. This section explains that the woman who does not have a man is nevertheless also privileged. Rightly considered to be less able to earn a living, it is generally easier for a single woman to obtain financial assistance than for a man. This is particularly true if she has no parents, especially if her morality is in danger; especially if she is a widow and especially if she has children. The mere fact that a person is female may entitle her to benefits that a man can only obtain if he is ill or disabled and therefore unable to work.

In Deuteronomy, the Lord designates widows, orphans and foreigners as the main objects of charity. In a series of curt and sharp ordinances, he orders the Israelites to look after them and "damns" those who fail to do so. Early Christianity followed in Judaism's footsteps. In Roman Palestine at the time of Christ, as at almost all other times and in almost all countries, the upkeep of women was the responsibility of the husband or, failing that, his male relatives. However, women who joined the first Christian communities were often forced to break their family ties. This meant that they lost all financial support, which explains why the New Testament mentions them as special objects of charity [528].

Later Christian societies continued this tradition. In medieval Paris, Saint Louis donated 4,000 francs to set up the Filles de Dieu, a shelter for prostitutes he was trying to get off the streets. Two centuries later, at least four other Parisian hotels catered specifically for women. Men could only get similar help if they were sick or leprous. What was true of the French capital was also true of other medieval cities. In Florence, from 1350 to 1500, the largest charity was that attached to the Orsanmichele Madonna [529]. Most of its tenants were women, especially those who had no man to support them and were either too old or too young to work. Along with the elderly and widows, single women were the main beneficiaries of this assistance.

Early modern French prayer books contain three to four times as many prayers for widows as for non-widows [530]. In everyday life, there were forms of charity that only women could obtain. The simplest

way to help destitute women was always to tie them to a man. To do this, if necessary, they were given a minimal dowry to increase their charms. Around 200 CE, the Talmud recommended that orphan girls should receive fifty zuz from the public treasury. It wasn't exactly a fortune, but it was enough to buy two tunics and a cloak, the minimum clothing that every person had to possess to avoid having to walk naked in the street. Among Orthodox Jews, the commandment known as *hachnassat kalah*, literally "helping a bride into her bridal canopy", is still practised. Keeping it can cost the groom tens, even hundreds of thousands of dollars. The practice was adopted by Christian Europe. Among the first fifty known English wills, several contain clauses providing for the payment of a dowry to daughters [531]. In both medieval Paris and Byzantium, people who made donations or bequeathed money to charities often specified that they were intended to help unmarried daughters [532].

In fourteenth-century Florence, the search for dowries was the business of the *Monte di Pietà*, a sort of pawnbroker's bank that invested its profits for this very purpose [533]. In Bologna, the rules of the *Conservatorio di Barracano* made specific reference to young girls "not spoiled by nature" who had the opportunity to earn their dowry - a sizeable one - by staying at the institution for seven years [534]. In Venice, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the *Scuole grandi*, or charitable foundations, devoted between a quarter and three quarters of their annual budget, i.e. 75,000 ducats, not including the purchase of clothes and furniture for the girls to be endowed [535]. A century later, the *Santissima Annunziata della Minerva* distributed dowries to four hundred Roman girls every year. In theory, she determined the beneficiaries by examining their means, but in practice she asked few questions. In general, there were charitable organisations for young women and charitable organisations for young men. Boys and girls were apprenticed, the boys to learn a manual trade and the girls to become servants and build up a dowry. However, girls were much more likely than boys to receive money in the form of an outright gift.

At all times and in all places, particular emphasis has been placed on the sexual purity of women. It was one thing to find a more or less respectable man to take an orphan under his wing, but quite another to find one who would do the same for a woman who had worked as a prostitute or given birth out of wedlock. Whether it was to prevent women from losing their virtue or to help those who had already lost it, various mechanisms existed throughout history. First there were refuges for the wives of violent men, then groups whose aim was to redeem prostitutes and finally houses where unmarried but pregnant girls could give birth in secret and in more or less decent circumstances. Between 1600 and 1800, some Italian cities even transformed their "conservatories" into interdependent municipal systems. They transferred girls from one institution to another, depending on the needs of the moment and the resources available.

Women who could not support themselves but did not wish to marry could enter holy orders. In the Middle Ages, some convents were specially designed as homes for penniless noblewomen. Throughout

Europe until the Reformation and in Catholic countries until the French Revolution and beyond, individuals and companies that provided dowries were often just as willing to help girls leave the veil. The number of women who were rescued in this way may have been considerable. For example, of thirty-eight nuns in an eighteenth-century French institution, only twenty-one had been endowed by their parents. Of the others, three had received charitable donations and fourteen had been admitted free of charge to the institution [536].

Another way of helping women was to give them a monopoly on trading certain goods. A wool shortage in Norwich in 1532 is a case in point. To enable single women to survive until the next sheep-shearing season, butchers were instructed to sell skins exclusively to women. Towns and cities could allow women to trade even if they did not have the privileges of free citizens, allowing them to buy and sell items such as eggs, cheese and beer [538]. For example, in 1708 the City of Edinburgh allowed Anny Sempley, Mary McCallum, Jean Murray and Anna Burnet, all unmarried, to trade "for seven years free" [539]. Similar provisions existed in places as far apart as Kingston-upon-Thames and Geneva [540].

Finally, in Europe as in the American colonies [541], provisions were made to help widows and other relatives of deceased craftsmen. One of these was mutual insurance. In eighteenth-century Amsterdam, for example, the Surgeons' Guild spent half of all its funds - and two-thirds of those set aside for charity - on this purpose alone. Other guilds had similar arrangements, so that they always helped incomparably more women than people of any other category [542]. Another way of helping women was to allow them to practise their deceased husband's trade, even if they had not completed an apprenticeship and even if they were not members of the guild. These trades included ironmonger, glazier, candle maker and saddle maker [543]. Elsewhere, similar regulations applied to printers, goldsmiths and many other trades.

Then as now, teaching a young person a trade and enrolling them in a guild was expensive. Then as now, to be exempted from paying apprenticeship fees was an immense privilege for a person of either sex. The professional status that men could only achieve by investing a lot of sweat and money, women could obtain simply by getting married. If, having outlived their first husband, they married another man from the same guild, they were no worse off. When it came to women's right to trade, the law in almost every town was prepared to do some strange acrobatics. In some cases, the authorities treated one and the same woman as if she were married and unable to contract debts, but in others as if she were independent and responsible for her actions [544].

In seventeenth-century England, a disproportionate number of widows and unmarried women (other than those who were relatives) were included in the wills of other widows [545]. In Ansbach in the

eighteenth century, a disproportionate number of unmarried women and other widows received pious endowments. In Paris at the same time, the Salpêtrière women's hospital housed three times as many patients as the Bicêtre men's hospital [547]. In the parish of Gronland, Oslo, there were three times as many widows receiving assistance as widowers. In Copenhagen, the Brondstraedes hospital admitted five times as many women as men. In early modern cities, beggars regularly outnumbered women four to one [550]. It should be noted that this figure may also be explained by the fact that, in the early modern era, parents cut off food supplies to boys at an earlier age than to girls and, as a result, more boys than girls were left without means of subsistence at the same age [551].

One of the first attempts to create a nationwide "welfare system" was made by the National Assembly in 1794. A decree ordered the formation of a *Livre de bienfaisance nationale* (National Charity Book), in which those entitled to state assistance were registered. As no national statistics were available, each *département* was allocated a quota, and those responsible were free to fill it as they saw fit. Women, particularly single mothers, were an important part of the scheme. They were put on an equal footing with the war wounded and disabled. In Montpellier, for example, the plan was to help one thousand people. They were divided into four categories: former soldiers, elderly or infirm farmers and craftsmen, elderly widows, mothers and widows considered to have many dependent children. Of the one thousand people who eventually signed up, 253 were elderly widows and a further 150 were mothers or widows with many children. The total number of women was therefore 403. In practice, however, significantly more women received financial assistance, as few artisans met the prerequisites for such assistance and many more women than expected applied [552].

As shown by the National Assembly's inability to obtain the information it needed, the Charity Book was ahead of its time. As a result, for much of the nineteenth century, the old methods remained in use. Particularly in the first half of the century, the issue of women's sexual purity continued to play a decisive role. Its importance may even have increased. One result was the formation of numerous charitable societies to protect unmarried women from the advances of men. They did this by offering them accommodation in the town where they moved to look for work, setting up leisure clubs for them, and so on. In Copenhagen, where such arrangements dated back to the mid-1870s, it took another 40 years before they were extended to men. One of the main women's clubs in the Danish capital was a sewing club. It had a small library, invited guest speakers, acted as a labour exchange and offered free coffee and tea to its members. Others served as temporary homes for prostitutes who had made amends or promised to do so. The number of women who were, or were supposed to have been, 'saved' in this way ran into the tens of thousands. From time to time a talented ex-prostitute would gather with her rescuers, writing, preaching and visiting her former comrades [554].

Towards the end of the 19th century, the definition of a "deserving" woman began to change. Previously, a woman was only considered deserving if she had led an "irreproachable" life - in other

words, if she had not had illicit love affairs and if her children were legitimate. From the 1880s onwards, this requirement tended to diminish or even disappear. As a result, women were more likely to receive financial assistance even if their children were born out of wedlock. What's more, the spread of the housewife ideal meant that divorced or abandoned women could receive help even if they had no children of their own. In short, a poor man received help if he had a wife, while a poor woman received help if she had no man.

Given these privileges, it is not surprising that women continued to outnumber men among the recipients of aid. By the mid-nineteenth century, Gothenburg had a number of charitable societies. Like those in New York, most were run by women. They specifically targeted poor women, either by distributing goods or teaching them the principles of "tender and moral maternal care" [556]. At the same time, Copenhagen saw the construction of so many shelters for women - pregnant women, post-partum women, nursing mothers, women with children and elderly women - that they began to "affect the architectural profile of the city". In 1876, out of fifty-six housing projects for the poor, twenty specifically concerned single women and admitted no men [557]. In Stockholm too, more women than men benefited from subsidised housing [558]. Nor did men have to reach adulthood to discover that they were discriminated against when it came to charity. In Denmark and Sweden, for example, there were arrangements whereby middle-class families gave the children of working men free holidays in their summer homes. Whether it was because boys found it more difficult to leave their jobs or because the families in question did not like taking them in, many more girls than boys benefited in both countries [559].

In Turin in 1885, so many benefactors were prepared to give money to mothers who had just given birth that it proved easier to raise money for the programme than to find women who, for a pittance, agreed to take part [560]. By the end of the nineteenth century, far more women than men were receiving help in Britain [561]. On the other side of the Atlantic, in New York around 1820, there was a whole series of relief organisations specifically designed for women. Needless to say, there were no similar organisations for men; even the largest 'mixed' charity, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, helped 27% more women than men [562]. In the 1880s, the Charity Organization, which had become the largest of its kind in New York and which, like the others, was run mainly by women, assisted four times as many women as men. This difference can be explained in part by the fact that women were more likely to have dependent children. In addition, a survey conducted after the Civil War showed that, of all the single women receiving assistance in New York State, less than a quarter had more than one child. Of the remaining three quarters, many had no children [563].

One method of helping women in need was to reserve certain professions for them, a practice that is still widespread today. At the lower end of the social scale, this practice was common in the service sector. The feminisation of domesticity was such that male domestic servants virtually disappeared. The

same was true of teaching. Like domesticity, teaching was a safe, clean and moderately arduous activity. Like domesticity, it was often seen as an extension of the traditional role of the housewife. Certainly, one of the reasons why women were preferred to men in these two professions was that they earned only half or two-thirds of what their male colleagues did. However, this very fact protected the women in question from male encroachment. It could be said that this work was seen almost as a form of welfare for women.

As one editor of a nineteenth-century American women's magazine wrote, women teachers were not rolling in money, but neither were they "obliged to pay part of their salary to the government or the state" [564]. The tendency to see certain professions as sinecures for women, particularly those who were unmarried, may help to explain why women tended to suffer less from unemployment than men. Even at the height of the Great Depression, almost guaranteed employment awaited black American college graduates in segregated schools [565]. This also explains the ban on married women teaching. Far from being discriminatory against women, this ban found its strongest supporters among unmarried women teachers. They wanted at all costs to avoid competition from their married colleagues. The latter, they said, had a man to look after them [566].

Today, forms of assistance that favour women over men are still very much alive. Whether in the form of hostels for single mothers, shelters for abused women or legal aid for divorcees, women receive considerable attention and financial support from society. On the other hand, there are no public institutions reserved exclusively for men. Indeed, any attempt by the State to create a charitable institution reserved for men would certainly be crushed by the courts, if not by society as a whole. In many countries, religious organisations continue to provide dowries for women so that they can marry. While men are not entitled to benefit from the many forms of financial support provided to women, women are almost always entitled to benefit from all forms of financial support provided to men. This is true even of single women, even of divorced women, even of abandoned or widowed women, and even of those with a brood of young children to support.

Even in the best of circumstances, it is never pleasant for most people to be dependent on charity or to receive financial assistance. That said, even in the worst of circumstances, it has always been easier and less humiliating for a woman than a man to obtain financial assistance. Assuming that the Pentateuch was compiled around 500 BC and describes, as it claims, the situation as it existed several centuries earlier, this difference between the sexes is almost as old as the world itself. It still exists today and is likely to continue to exist as long as there are men and women.

#### 4. Within the welfare state

Helping people in need is one thing. It is quite another to create a country-wide category of people who, because they meet certain conditions, are entitled to financial assistance. The first form of assistance is charity, also known as philanthropy or "poor relief". Charity existed in all societies until the end of the 19th century. Its ramifications, although eclipsed and consolidated by the welfare state, still exist today. The second form of assistance is characteristic of the welfare state. One depends on individuals and goodwill, the other on the supposedly impersonal provisions of the law and the rights and obligations it creates.

The ultimate cause of the transition from charity to the welfare state was the industrial revolution. As large numbers of people migrated to the cities in search of work, those who could not find work, lost their jobs or were unfit for work became so numerous that private organisations could not cope. The transition from home help to public assistance made the situation even worse. To protect against impostors - in 1838, one writer estimated that in London alone a thousand false applications for assistance were made every day [567] - and to cut costs, the conditions for admission to workhouses were tightened. Their occupants were obliged to work. In the case of women, however, this requirement was sometimes waived. Not surprisingly, especially in summer, when there was work elsewhere, workhouses were occupied almost exclusively by women [568].

In both socialist and capitalist states, the government was sooner or later forced to intervene in order to alleviate the plight of the poor. In the United States, for example, women already constituted a privileged group at the turn of the twentieth century [569]. Some of the first measures that enabled women to constitute such a group were taken in 1906, when several California counties began to provide assistance to 'deserving' housewives. Between 1908 and 1911, Oklahoma, New Jersey and Michigan began to provide mothers with financial assistance. By this time, the idea of a "mothers' pension" was in the air and spreading fast. Like other pensions, those received by mothers were supposed to be continuous and permanent. Unlike other pensions, they did not require the contribution of capital and did not depend on contributions: the pension was paid according to need. In 1911, Missouri became the first state in the United States to introduce pensions for mothers. By 1935, all but two of the US states had introduced them.

These programmes were based on the belief that the mother was the best guardian of her children and that, in order to look after them, she should stay at home. As late as 1968, Charles Schottland, President of the National Association of Social Workers, stated that it was against "universal belief" for a young mother to work [570]. This also applied to the mother who, although perfectly fit for work, deliberately avoided it. Worse still, she often passed the same attitude on to her offspring, paving the way for



generations of welfare recipients. Initially, in most US states, only widows were eligible for the programme. However, as had also happened with charities, the provisions were gradually relaxed.

By 1921, the programmes in all but six of the US states that had them were also open to divorced women, abandoned women, married women and the wives of prisoners. Initially, to be eligible, a woman had to prove her 'fitness' by demonstrating efforts to provide a clean and orderly home for her children. Over time, however, this requirement also tended to be abolished. As long as it was not formally proven that they were suffering from a mental disorder or had abused the programme, benefits were granted to virtually all mothers below a certain income level. In order to receive these benefits, all a woman had to do was have unprotected sex, conceive and have a child.

In 1935, Congress was asked to consolidate the various state welfare schemes and pay for them under the Aid to Dependent Children Program. Capitol Hill dragged its feet, for the simple reason that children cannot vote. It was only after explaining to members of Congress that the programme was in fact another form of granting pensions to mothers that legislators understood the political utility of the programme and passed the corresponding legislation. The real purpose of Aid to Dependent Children was to attract the female vote. If Congress had been truly concerned about the plight of disadvantaged children, it could have helped them directly by providing free school meals or medical vouchers. At the time the programme was launched, millions of men were unemployed. As eligibility depended on a woman not having a man to support her, it became clear to more than one man and woman that some wives had everything to gain from not having a husband. Some women looked forward to the day their husbands died so that they could receive widow's benefits. If only to oblige their wives, some husbands left the marital home and disappeared [571].

Over the years, the Aid to Dependent Children programme has saved millions of American women who could not, or did not want to, work from starvation. Needless to say, divorced fathers and fathers whose wives had abandoned them or were dead or in prison got nothing. In fact, in the United States as a whole, the only state that did not discriminate against men in such situations was Colorado. The other states exacerbated the injustice by reserving the payment of benefits for a mother who was unable to collect them for her female relatives rather than her parents. In certain circumstances, fathers were obliged to hand their children over to their grandmothers, aunts or sisters. It was not until 1975 that the courts finally allowed men to obtain benefits as well. However, this victory was short-lived. In 1980, Ronald Reagan returned the Republicans to power. In an effort to cut costs by forcing recipients of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children programme, as the programme was known at the time, to work, the administration began to raise eligibility criteria and reduce payments. Apparently, the fact that men had become eligible for a welfare programme was enough to make drastic cuts to its budget.

The other major programme created in 1935 was Social Security. Like Aid for Dependent Children, Social Security favoured women from the outset. This was partly due to its contributory nature. Men only received benefits if they worked and paid contributions. However, married women - the vast majority of adult women - received benefits whether they worked or not. Like Child Benefit, Social Security was built on the idea that the man of the family was the main breadwinner. As a result, a widow over retirement age would be entitled to benefits, while a man over retirement age whose wife had died would get nothing. Given that the system discriminates against men, it might have been expected that it would be men who would turn to Congress for help. As it turned out, it was actually women who fought to change the original structure of benefits provided by Social Security. Their reasoning was that, even if some women earned more than their husbands, in the event of their spouse's death they would only receive the benefits derived from their husband's contributions. And within three years of the creation of Social Security, the rules were changed to favour women even more. Widows who had worked and contributed to the system for as long as they had been married could now obtain benefits indexed either to their own contributions or to those of their husbands, whichever was higher. As is often the case, women were able to have their cake and eat it too. The higher their income in relation to their husband's, the more likely this was to be the case. Widowers, as usual, got nothing [572].

In 1950, another change took place. The rules discriminating against men who supported their families were relaxed to some extent, but only for husbands who passed the 'support test', proving that they were financially dependent on their employed wives. To do this, they had to show that, in the year before their wife's death, their income had not amounted to more than a quarter of their wife's income. The bar was set so high that most men were excluded from the scheme. Needless to say, the possibility of subjecting women to a similar test was not considered. Unless they were divorced, women continued to benefit automatically and without restriction from the advantages acquired by their deceased husbands. Having maintained their wives throughout their lives, these husbands were expected to continue to do so after their death.

It was not until 1975, forty years after the introduction of Social Security, that the Supreme Court finally abolished all these forms of discrimination in favour of women. But, as in the case of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children programme, the victory proved to be in vain. Coincidentally or not, 1975 was also the year in which Title XX of the Social Security Act was enacted. This legislation consolidated a large number of welfare programmes and marked the apogee of the welfare state in the United States. A few years later, however, the Reagan administration was already working to reduce welfare benefits. As with Aid to Families with Dependent Children, an invisible hand seemed to be at work. As soon as the benefits reserved for women were extended to men, they were considered useless - further proof, if any were needed, that men have always been workhorses throughout history.

The space available does not allow us to examine in detail the way in which the other welfare states of the twentieth century favoured women over men. However, an overview of this issue gives a fairly clear picture of how the situation has evolved. In Norway, the 1909 Health Insurance Act granted maternity allowances and benefits to the wives of insured men. Six years later, the state began providing financial assistance to single mothers. In Italy, the very first effective national welfare programme was the Maternity Insurance Act of 1910. In France, maternity allowances were introduced in 1913, fifteen years before the first social insurance scheme was introduced. In all cases, women began to receive benefits years, often decades, before men. Some of the first programmes were designed to help women who had lost their husbands, while others were aimed at women who had never had one. Over time, however, these distinctions have tended to disappear [573].

Today, most countries have family allowances, the United States being one of the few exceptions among the major countries. Insofar as the stated aim of child benefit is not to please parents but to help them bring up their children, it is accepted that the system which grants child benefit to mothers and not to fathers clearly discriminates against the latter [574]. In some countries and in some circumstances, it may be doubly discriminatory. For example, widowers who bring up their children alone may be denied benefits. A divorced mother may even continue to receive benefits while her former husband, having been awarded custody of their children, brings them up and provides for them. These inequalities and others like them are remnants of the period between 1900 and 1980, when most people in most countries still took it for granted that women were better suited to parenting than fathers.

The tendency of welfare states to give preferential treatment to women over men is reflected in their official accounts. Take Sweden, for example. A study submitted to the Ministry of Labour in 1997 showed that, between 1975 and 1994, Swedish women saw an increase in both their income and the benefits they received from the state. Over the same two decades, men, who carried the financial burden on their shoulders, saw their earned income fall by an average of SEK 14,000 (\$2,000) a year [575]. Although there are officially almost as many women as men in the Swedish workforce, in the mid-1990s, men paid 61.5% of taxes and women 38.5% [576]. Consequently, in 1994, as in 1975, men were contributing more to the system than they were receiving.

In 1994, Swedish women received three quarters of all advances on maintenance payments, parental allowances, housing allowances and study grants paid by the State. Even though women worked fewer hours per year than men, they managed to receive more sick pay. Women received four times as much parental allowance and seven times as much advance child support. If all family allowances are taken into account, the difference is two to one. Women received 29% of their income in the form of benefits, men 19%. Although women paid only two-thirds of the tax paid by men, they received 23.5% more in tax-free benefits [577]. It is therefore not surprising that the taxable income of Swedish women is more than one and a half times higher than that of Swedish men [578]. In Sweden, as in most other countries

today, pressure from feminists has led to the corresponding laws being rewritten in gender-neutral language. And in Sweden, as in most other countries today, this has not changed the fact that men pay for women.

It is impossible to list all the ways in which the welfare state has favoured, favours and is likely to continue to favour women. Some of their advantages are minor, even symbolic, such as reserved parking spaces, which could just as easily be reserved for elderly men and women. Sometimes they are considerable, since women receive the lion's share of all social benefits and entire bureaucracies are set up both to provide jobs mainly for women and to look after their interests almost exclusively [579]. What they all have in common is the fact that, if public or even private money were to be used to grant similar benefits to men, one can only imagine the outrage that would ensue.

## 5. Conclusions

The number and variety of mechanisms that society has invented to ensure that women are looked after by men is simply staggering. Many of them were informal in nature, but they were often enshrined in positive law. Whether or not legal structures were put in place, these mechanisms were often accompanied by sanctions ranging from ostracisation to imprisonment. Today, as in the past, the only way for a man to avoid such sanctions may well be to give up everything and leave the country. However, this may not be allowed or may not work.

In the past, every man was obliged to look after his female relatives, mainly, but not exclusively, his wife or wives. Very often, women were married off by their parents or chose to marry in order to be looked after. Very often, some form of financial support was or was supposed to be provided, even after divorce. This was the situation in some of the earliest known societies and it still prevails in many societies today.

At most times and in most countries, women who had no male relatives to look after them depended on charity. Like men, women could be forced to work in order to receive financial assistance. If not, they had to prove that they were unable to work in order to receive assistance. Yet, on the whole, women had it easier than men. This was particularly true, but not only, of those who had children and those who avoided promiscuity. Sometimes women could get charity even if they were fit to work, even if they were promiscuous and even if they had no children. On the other hand, most men could only obtain charity if they had wives to support.

With the growth of modern welfare systems, many forms of financial support that were once the responsibility of husbands, male relatives or charitable organisations have been taken over by the state. As before, it was easier for women, particularly lone mothers, to obtain benefits than men. In fact, many schemes are deliberately designed to benefit women exclusively or almost exclusively. Meanwhile, men's role as living DABs has remained unchanged. However, the conditions under which they are required to pay have, in some ways, deteriorated.

As long as the family was the main support mechanism for women, it was the men who made the decisions and it was their own female relatives who benefited from this arrangement. Men could still choose whether or not to make charitable donations and who could benefit from them.

The advent of the welfare state removed any pretence of voluntarism. The public purse took over, taking the necessary funds in the form of taxes or 'contributions' of a fiscal nature to Social Security. As a result, today many of the beneficiaries are women whose men knew nothing about it and perhaps wanted nothing to do with it. The less contraception a woman uses on her own, the more she will benefit. At first glance, there is nothing in common between a husband, a charity and a modern welfare system. In fact, although they differ in detail, their principle is the same: all are designed partly - and some would say mainly - to transfer resources from men [580], who are seen as more able to earn a living, to women, who are seen as being more able and very often claim to be less able. Historically, the price that women have had to pay, or at least that they have been asked to pay, has been to have morals and to bring up their children properly. Now that the welfare state has taken over, very often we don't even ask them to do that any more.

Even little girls who play with Barbie dolls easily understand who consumes and who pays [581]. It is not surprising that "many women in the United States today do not understand feminism". Contrary to what some claim, these women are neither weak nor crazy. Upper-class women know and resent that their tax dollars and their husbands' tax dollars primarily benefit other women. Women on welfare know who is footing the bill. Both groups understand that the arrangement under which they are taken care of economically, in return for their role as mother and housewife, is often "inequitable" [582] - inequitable, that is, from the point of view of many men.

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[578] *Ibid.* appendix A, table 40; p. 74.

[579] If you want something done right, do it yourself. At the start of the current bio-psychological warfare operation "Covid19", more than one person on television seemed to discover with dismay the "cumbersome" nature of the administration (since the departure of de Gaulle, of course), but no one has dared to point out - it is true that, in the case of the male guests, such a remark would have meant returning to the marital bed under escort - that the 'heaviness' of the administration has been accompanied by its feminisation by the greatest of coincidences. In France, whereas in the mid-1930s women represented "only" 30% of civil servants, they now account for almost 65%, and this figure is rising steadily. The champions of the infamous "parity" race are currently the Hospital Civil Service (78%), the National Education Service (71%) and, chutzpah of chutzpah, the Labour Service (70%).

[EDITOR'S NOTE]

[580] The husband, the charitable institution and the modern welfare system are designed primarily to transfer resources from men to women and, let us not forget them, to invaders imported from the Third World by the Republic, a diversion of funds facilitated by the obscene over-representation of women in

the staff of the charitable organisations and the administrative bodies responsible for implementing the measures taken by the welfare state. [N.D.E.]

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