

# Feminism: redundant or still relevant.

## Some reevaluations.

By Jeffery Czopor, Brunswickan Staff Writer

**S**emonides, a lyric poet of Ancient Greece wrote "In the beginning God made various kinds of women with various minds....in unlaundered clothing sits unwashed herself among the dunghills, and grows fat.....No act of wickedness unknown to her; no act of good either.....good for nothing like her mother.....Day in, day out, she keeps that senseless yapping up....A woman such as this knows nothing good and nothing bad. Nothing at all....For women are the biggest single bad thing Zeus has made for us; a ball and chain."

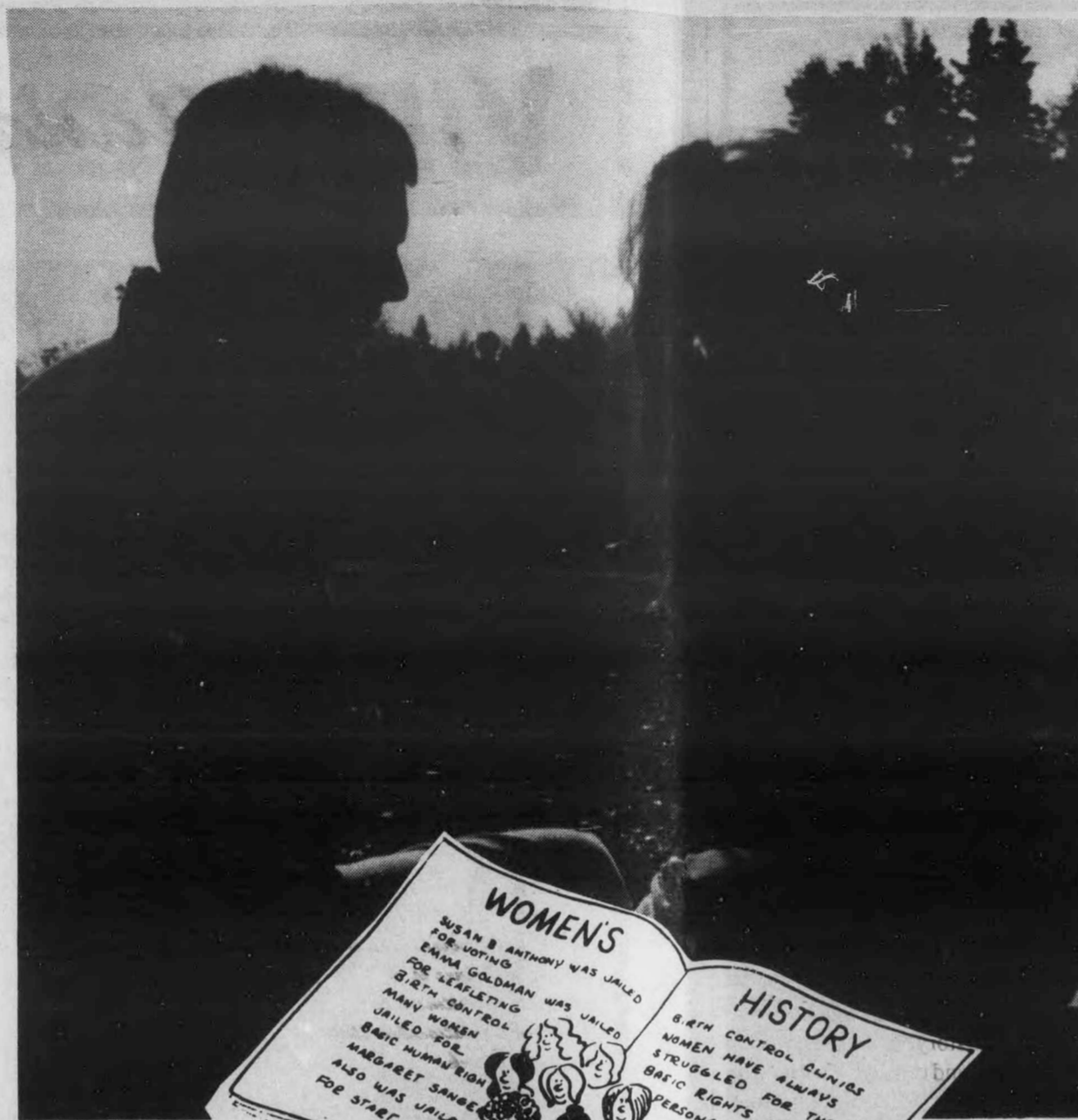
Obviously, Semonides along with many of his other Greek contemporaries found woman to be evil, manipulative, and cunning. Remember Pandora in Greek mythology who opened the forbidden box which released all the evils into the world? The Greeks were not alone in their perception of women. Isn't it Eve who earnestly encourages Adam to eat the apple that brought the fall of "MANKIND"???

Needless to say, the role of women has undergone a number of changes over the past few hundred years. They seemed to fall so "nicely" into the role of the "fair and gentle sex." But then.....Lady Godiva went on her famous ride, Joan of Arc got burnt at the stake for her war-like activities, and Susan B. Anthony helped to bring about unprecedented reform and change in the nineteenth century. And what about those unconfirmed reports of Amazon societies a few centuries ago? Eventually, women went to college, gained suffrage, dressed as they pleased, held executive jobs, ran for and filled public office positions, went out in space, went to war, and set out to prove that they could do anything they pleased as well as a man.

At first, many people became fascinated

by the idea of the heroine. The 1920's "flapper" became inspirational for the feminists of the 1960s. They wrote books about women and rebellion, made movies about how woman had to overcome great obstacles, and how women have often been the victim of social circumstances. But soon, it became the opinion of many that one or two touching movies about rape and abortion turned into twenty or thirty. People of both sexes began to see redundancy- "Women and Rape," "Women and Oppression," "Women Coping With Men," "Women in the Workplace," "Women Without Men," and "Women As Victims" to name a few publications. In the day of "Oprah Winfrey," and "Women's Issues," many began to see the idea of the WOMEN'S MOVEMENT as oppressive itself.

In the past few issues of "The Bruns," I have written purely objective articles regarding sexist professors, the UNB Law Faculty's report on Gender Related Issues, and even an update on a daycare center that would be particularly advantageous to women students and faculty. In my efforts to make something out of the issues of the sexes on campus, I can safely say that one predominates - confusion and uncertainty. Is discrimination and chauvinism still blatantly alive or has feminism become a dead and hackneyed issue? Is UNB a sexist university? Whom of the sexes feels more manipulated at this point and time? Do people really understand the concept of the feminist movement? Do members of the opposite sex tend to unfairly stereotype each other? What are the underlying goals of the gender related issue? Are people just fed up with it all? Is there a place in society for ignoring the differences of gender and focusing more on being human?



## The Women's Studies Programme at UNB.

Dr. Wendy Robbins, an English professor here at UNB, was recently appointed coordinator of the Women's Studies program. She has been very instrumental in the development of this program and is attempting to dispell misconceptions that people have against feminists and the program. In 1987, she became the second Chair of President Downey's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women which published *Of More Than Academic Interest: Women At UNB* (1990). President Armstrong (current UNB president) has promised to respond to the proposals made in the publication. She feels that the objective of feminists here on campus is to reform (not dominate) a "male-centred curriculum." This means that women's views should be fairly integrated into the curriculum. She encourages members of both sexes to enroll in Women's Studies courses to broaden their minds and be educated about the underlying issues in feminism. She also feels that education is the best means to understanding.

## Random Survey on feminism.

The Faculty of Law's Report on the Gender Related Policy stated that "UNB found a disturbing level of antifeminism and stated that UNB does not promote an environment that is woman-friendly." I decided to do a little investigation about this topic and interview various students regarding various aspects of the "Gender Issue."

**FEMALE:** Getting the job is really no longer the problem, but advancement in the work field still is.

**MALE:** Women and Men have to come to a point of mutual respect of one another.

**FEMALE:** I don't care about gender neutral language. I can't be bothered.

**MALE:** Men have developed an inferiority complex because they have become conditioned that they can do "nothing right" and must walk on eggshells around women.

**FEMALE:** I can safely say that oppression towards women is not completely extinguished when your boss tells you that having children will be detrimental to your career (e.g. we cause him problems because of maternity leave).

**MALE:** I think that the hard core issues that could be addressed and really help women are being hindered by obscure and unnecessary technicalities of the radicals. I wonder what group of women the radical feminists are really representing.

**FEMALE:** Drop the articles on FEMINISM - enough already - fed up!

**MALE:** Men are being brainwashed to hate themselves.

**FEMALE:** Equal pay for equal work. I appreciate having doors opened for me, but I also feel I can open a door for myself.

**MALE:** Despite me being a male, I stand for everything that the Women's Movement has to stand for.

**FEMALE:** I feel we have come to a time where we should stop judging each other on the basis of sex, but the calibre of character.

## Some concluding remarks.

It would be entirely impossible for me to attempt to answer all the questions that I posed before. Besides, it would put me in a position where my personal viewpoint would shine entirely through. It is not an issue of whether I can write a rhetorical piece convincing you that you should feel a certain way about the "Gender Policy." It is a matter of examining the evidence you see in your everyday lives to determine what you can do to bring a harmony among the sexes.

As students here at UNB, you should never feel that you are being discriminated against because you as a particular sex have enrolled in a particular faculty or class. Also as students, it is your right to make it known if you feel that a professor's bias (whether female or male) has inhibited your right to an education.

Many feel that we have come to a time when we should start examining "HUMAN ISSUES." - issues on the basis of being human. Although it is essential to continue much awareness about women and their role in society, it is also essential to address the various relationships between men and women and how we fit together as "people." It was addressed at a human rights seminar in the 1970s: "It is as ridiculous to make assumptions about people because they belong to a particular sex, as it is to make assumptions about people because they belong to a particular race, nationality, religion, or creed." The Women's Issue's Department uses a wonderful quote in the back of their awareness booklet from a lecture of Judge Abella. "And, lastly, that the optimistic spirit is the indomitable spirit. Fear neither failure, success, controversy, originality, nor change. Be open to differences-in people and ideas-experience literature, culture, politics, scholarship-and remain convinced always that everything is possible." I feel that this can apply to everyone.

## Some Comments Regarding Gender-Related Issues:

- Both men and women can be feminists.
- There are many different degrees of feminism, and it is wrong to associate all feminism with radicalism.
- Sexism can be defined as any discrimination or prejudice based entirely on sex.
- Everyone has the right to be concerned and complain when they feel they have been discriminated against based entirely on sex.
- Women still do not get equal pay for work of equal value.
- The Equal Rights Amendment has still not been passed in the United States of America.
- Employment should be based entirely on credentials and past performance, not sex.

