

FALL 2011! FROM FERNWOOD PUBLISHING



MEN & WOMEN AND TOOLS

Bridging the Divide

Marcia Braundy

Although there have been many equity initiatives to encourage women to train and work in the trades, Canadian women still represent less than 3 percent of tradesworkers. Why does this disparity continue to exist? In *Men & Women and Tools*, Marcia Braundy — herself a tradesperson — explores this issue by focusing on male resistance to the inclusion of women in technical work. Early in her research, Braundy conducted an interview with several male and female tradespeople. Finding this interview rich with deeply ingrained notions of masculinity and female roles, Braundy constructs a short play from their words. Deconstructing the play line by line, this book weaves together scholarly research and lived experience to explore the historical and cultural origins of the ideas expressed.

“We know that class is gendered, and that often upper class professionals and blue collar working men set the highest barriers to women’s entry. In her careful and erudite book, Marcia Braundy brings together the tools of the trade and the hands that hold them. By exploring men’s resistance to equality, this book explodes the myths on which that resistance is based.”

— Michael Kimmel, author of *The Gendered Society*, Stony Brook University

“This is a singular book—academic and accessible, critical and creative, political and passionate. With a lifelong commitment to feminism, social activism, and education, Marcia evokes and provokes transformative possibilities for living with imagination, intellect, and heart.”

— Carl Leggo, poet and professor, The University of British Columbia

Contents: Preface • Prologue • Data as Evocation • Dataplay: Men & Women and Tools • Gender, Masculinity and Work • Difference in Gender and Class Analysis • Epilogue • Appendices • References

MARCIA BRAUNDY is a multidisciplinary academic/feminist who keeps her hand in as a construction carpenter, multimedia project manager, educator, author and social change activist.

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Men & Women and Tools – Bridging the Divide
From Fernwood Publishing

by Marcia Braundy

In trades and technical work, when masculine assumptions and feminist idea(l)s collide, the right to bear tools becomes a contested site. *Men & Women and Tools – Bridging the Divide* is an exploration of these strained and complex gender relations, providing an in-depth historical and cultural overview with a challenge to find resolution.

The play “*Men & Women and Tools*” is the foundation of Marcia Braundy’s new book, which has emerged from an interview process with male and female trades and technical workers and trainers talking about male resistance to women in trades and technology. It theatrically provokes an emotional understanding of the fears which lead to the resistance often experienced by men and women as they train or work together in trades and technical settings. The book *Men & Women and Tools – Bridging the Divide* deconstructs the lines of the play using historical, cultural and psychological literature. The author reflects on the possibilities for change through a narrative study of a culture from the inside. The video of the play, performed by professional actors during the Brave New Play Rites Festival at UBC, is located on the publisher's website, <<http://www.fernwoodpublishing.ca/Men-Women-and-Tools/>>. It is a foundation for many interesting and challenging discussions.

As a construction carpenter and PhD in Technology Studies, in the book, Braundy explores the question “Where do they get these ideas?” The themes arise and are explored, illustrating how they have become embedded in our psyches and social realities. New knowledge is created in the interplay of voices: narratives of lived experience; a dataplay of workers’ voices; research and reflection in the literature; and what emerges in the space between the reader and the text.

Challenges unfold as the underlying themes of resistance are named: sexuality in all its manifestations; the need to be essential, to be in control, to be competent, and to be the breadwinner; understanding what it means to have been socialized; and the deep fear of being asked to change. When it becomes clear that the meaning of tools in their lives is similar for women and for men, and it puts them in conflict, the book poses the question: Is there a willingness to find a resolution?

Michael Kimmel, from Stony Brook University, one of the founders of the Men and Masculinities movement in the United States and author of *The Gendered Society* has said:

“We know that class is gendered, and that often upper class professionals and blue collar working men set the highest barriers to women’s entry. In her careful and erudite book, Marcia Braundy brings together the tools of the trade and the hands that hold them. By exploring men’s resistance to equality, this book explodes the myths on which that resistance is based.”

Harry Brod is the Editor of *The Making of Masculinities* and *Theorizing Masculinities* and a renowned pro-feminist and anti-racist educator:

Men & Women and Tools is a creative and enlightening blend of experiential and analytical learning and teaching. With a discerning insider’s insights, the links between men’s mastery of tools and their attempted mastery of women are skillfully illuminated in a deconstruction of the pervasive constructions of gender in the gendered construction trades.

This book will be of interest to trades and technical workers, trainers, instructors, advocates and employers, as well as historians & sociologists; those interested in men and masculinities; women’s and gender studies; labour studies, technology studies, creative writing and theatre studies; as well as arts-based and qualitative researchers and the general public.