agenda of objectifying and brutalizing women, either symbolically, through the language of the game, or literally, through gang rapes.

Although Nelson has a tendency to universalize the categories of "men" and "women," she does attempt to address the ways in which race differences and racism play themselves out in the sport context. This is a key consideration in reference to campus gang rapes, where Black men are overrepresented in many team sports, in the ranks of male athletes who are convicted of sexual assault, and, indeed, in the American prison population. The fact that race was a variable in the Mike Tyson case and others cited by Nelson also needs to be considered.

In other respects, too, Nelson's category of "men" is somewhat problematic. The book focuses almost exclusively on men in American sport, which has been shaped by specific historical and cultural forces not necessarily shared by Canada or other western sport contexts. It would therefore be useful to develop some possible explanations for the "resisters"—those male athletes who do not objectify or assault girls and women. Why and how are they able to resist socialization into the misogynist and homophobic value systems and practices of sport?

Nelson is convinced that all women have the potential to grow physically and psychologically through physical activity—that sporting participation is the gateway to women's empowerment. While I generally agree with this premise, I'm not so sure about her statement that women "tend to acquire strength fairly easily." Initially quoting a middle-aged woman's newfound sense of her physical power, Nelson makes this claim in several places throughout the book, using "strength" both literally and figuratively. I suspect that having a physically active girlhood makes a significant difference to the ease with which an older woman can start or resume physical activity, confident in the knowledge that training will bring about certain bodily changes—enhanced cardiovascular capacity, muscular strength, flexibility, motor skills, etc. Many women, lacking these experiences in their youth, are, in effect, physically illiterate, and need to acquire and integrate some very fundamental physical skills before they can acquire strength. For many women, fear, self-doubt, embarrassment, and alienation from their bodies stand in the way of acquiring strength. The body represents different issues for survivors of child abuse, for women with eating disorders, for fat women, for women with disabilities, and so on.

This leads me to my final concern. Just as I have a few (small) doubts about the route to women's universal empowerment through sport, I also find the thesis about men, masculinity, violence and football (or hockey, or whatever) provocative but not totally convincing. I realize that football can usefully serve as a metaphor for a broader misogynist tradition, but I can't help thinking that gender relations in sport and elsewhere are more complex than the analogy suggests. If the issue is so simple—men's search for one of the few remaining outlets through which to celebrate misogyny and male brute force—why is the solution so elusive? For example, at the University of Toronto two years ago, the prospect of major budget cuts led the Department of Athletics and Recreation to recommend discontinuing a number of athletics programs, including football, which, as usual, commanded the lion's share of the budget. Needless to say, (male) support for football was vociferous. Wealthy male alumni formed a group know as Friends of Football (that is, Friends of Male Football) to raise the funds to reinstate the football tradition, while at the same time they threatened to withhold large donations that had already been promised to the university.

As a result of the subsequent Task Force on Gender Equity, an agreement was reached with Friends of (Men's) Football to develop a self-supporting football program by 1998. The Task Force Report (April, 1994) expressed concerns about an outside (men's) group's capacity to "circumvent" the university's equity priorities but concluded, rather lamely, that donors had the right to choose which program they wished to fund, and that "we can only encourage more alumni and alumnae to contribute to women's sport and recreation." These events certainly support Nelson's claims for the symbolic importance of football, even for a group of well-educated, wealthy white businessmen who presumably have plenty of other avenues for accruing status and prestige. Yet, even if football had been discontinued at the University of Toronto, the values represented by its 113 year history and tradition would probably have surfaced somewhere else, perhaps in the Engineering School. This is clearly a long struggle, and Nelson's courageous book helps us to move closer to its resolution.

SHOOTING STARS

Directed by Allen Stein. National Film Board.

by Ann Peel

"Ladies first, athletes second," is what Percy Page, coach of the Edmonton Commercial Graduates Basketball Club expected of his players. Maybe that wasn't such a bad idea.

With pro basketball now in the forefront, the creed seems to be "attitude first, athletes second." Money first. Sport second.

Shooting Stars is the story of the Edmonton Grads who always put sport first. The Grads was a women's basketball club based in Edmonton which dominated the game from 1915 to 1940. The team, we are told, played 522 games. They won 502, including sixteen world championships.

Their entertainment value rested in the beauty and finesse of their

game—"fast passing and fast breaking," as the team members describe it. They didn't need to resort to other tactics to draw the crowds.

And draw the crowds they did. For 25 years, the Grads packed stadiums around the world, becoming a phenomenon in the process. They were magic.

They burst onto the scene at a time when women's sport was just becoming accepted. Not too accepted, mind you. These women were stars at the same time as my grandmother, also an Edmonton resident, was told that women don't speed skate.

It was a time of change, however. Canadian women, in particular, dominated the world sport scene—Velma Springstead and Myrtle Cook among them.

Shooting Stars manages to capture the excitement of the times for these young women and for the country which cheered them on. Combining interviews with players, voice-over narrative and some original footage, we come to understand what these women accomplished. But their accomplishments, though spectacular, are the least of the story.

What is to me truly remarkable about the team is the commitment of these athletes to each other. They lived and played the sporting ideals of fair play and the pursuit of excellence. Their absolute commitment to the game, to their coach and to their fans made these athletes superstars.

In the video the players speak of the pressure of their fans' expectations. Their response to that pressure was always gracious and remarkable. To thank their fans, in the spring the team would travel to small towns for exhibition games. Team members also speak in the video of sneaking young girls into their games so they could watch without having to pay. One simply can't imagine either of these things happening now.

Watching *Shooting Stars*, one can't help but wish for a return to the days when sport stood for higher ideals. Maybe films such as this can help bring us toward those days again.

CANADIAN FAMILIES: DIVERSITY, CONFLICT AND CHANGE

Nancy Mandell and Ann Duffy, Eds. Toronto: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1995.

by Rina Cohen

The growing diversity of household and relationship configurations on the threshold of the 21st century challenged feminist scholars and researchers to develop new conceptualizations of contemporary families. This challenge was successfully met by Mandell and Duffy in their excellent new text—*Canadian Families: Diversity, Conflict and Change.* The choice of the plural "families" reflects the postmodern nature of Canadian families in the 1990s as well as the recognition and inclusion of all committed relationships among individuals and their children. Multiplicity of voices and experiences are presented, exploring sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism and ageism that impede different family experiences.

The book is a collaborative collection of nine clear and well written chapters, providing a comprehensive feminist critique of traditional family sociology. It is divided into three broad sections: a) the historic and social context of change, b) diversities in Canadian families, and c) policy issues.

The first section includes two chapters that lay out both the historical context of modern Canadian families and the process of changing gender patterns. The historical journey, in the first chapter, starts with hunting/gathering egalitarian families, through horticulture-based Native families and agriculture-based patriarchal European families. The chapter skillfully explores the profound effect of industrialization on family life and ends with modern diverse family relations.

The second chapter in this section documents gender inequities in Canadian families in the past 30 years. It analyses these changes in light of political and economic developments in Canada since the sixties.

The second section provides students with three chapters reflecting diversity in family experiences. The first chapter examines how Canadian families have changed since the early 1930s. Focusing on women's roles in families, the chapter identifies both diverging as well as converging trends in family lifestyles. The second chapter presents same-sex intimate relations inside and outside conventional families. While atypical, the inclusion of a chapter on contextualizing same-sex relationships within family sociology is mostly desirable. This chapter examines the marginalization of lesbians and gay men from family networks. It documents the pervasive homophobic and heterosexist ideology that presents lesbians and gay men as threats to families. And, most important, it uncovers the vulnerability of lesbian and gay youth, their isolation and suicidal behaviours, their families' rejection and their victimization and harassment at school. The last chapter in this section provides the reader with a rich account of racist policies and exploitative practices which affect the family life of Native peoples, immigrants, and visible minorities.

The last section of the book offers the reader three chapters on family policy. The first one describes the history of the Canadian welfare state and the contradictions within and among social policies, paying particular attention to legislation that perpetuates women's dependency, marginalizes aboriginal women and women of colour, and discriminates against lesbians. The second chapter in this section displays the personal, social, and political consequences of persistent poverty. It demonstrates to students the structural inequality in Canadian society and shatters their belief in a mythologized meritocracy. The last chapter in the book documents and theorizes family violence. This chapter powerfully links human agency and social structure, revealing the connections between personal