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Double Jeopardy: Motherwork and the Law (Women's Issues Publishing Program)

Lorna Turnbull

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Many women today have broader life choices than previous generations of women. Yet, despite the advances made, women who become mothers still find that their social and economic realities are severely constrained. If women have children, they are faced with the question of how to provide for their children's care while also satisfying their own interests and maintaining their economic security.

In *Double Jeopardy*, Lorna Turnbull takes a close and critical look at the positions of mothers in contemporary Canadian society. Many mothers in paid employment face the challenge of the double shift, the constraints on career imposed by family responsibilities, a reduction in earnings and the restricted availability of childcare. Mothers who care for their children full-time face isolation, the devaluation of their motherwork and a loss of income if they have withdrawn from paid employment. The law plays a major role in defining the situation in which women mother and at the same time overlooks the different experiences of single mothers, lesbian mothers, divorced and married mothers.

Drawing on current legal cases, Turnbull demonstrates how income tax law, including the childcare deduction and child tax credit, as well as pension and family law, affect mothers' choices and economic security. Turnbull believes that the law can and should serve mothers better. By changing taxation policies and other laws it is possible, she argues in *Double Jeopardy*, to bring about progressive measures that will benefit mothers both in the home and in the workplace.

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