Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang. (Harper & Row, 1976; Pocket, 1977.) *

Of all the women writing serious science fiction, Wilhelm is probably the best read for women who have always wanted to find out about science fiction, but found the jargon, mood or style forbidding. The style is highgrade mainstream; the content is superior science fiction extrapolation; the themes, most often, are familiar contemporary issues (scientific, social, political) carried into a near-foreseeable future. Wilhelm won one of the first awards ever given to a woman in the field (Nebula short story in 1968) and *Sweet Birds* took the Hugo novel prize in 1977. In addition to 14 novels and two short fiction collections, she has edited two anthologies.

Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. *Cautionary Tales*. (Doubleday, 1978.) (C) *
False Dawn. (Doubleday, 1978.)
Time of the Fourth Horseman. (Doubleday, 1976.) *

Another startlingly good young '70s writer. *Cautionary Tales* describes her work best. Yarbro's feminism is more concerned with near-future extrapolations of problems facing contemporary women than with the visioning of female fighting heroes of the far future or far space (Charnas, Lynn). Closer to McIntyre, but (probably more realistically) less positive in her future visions.

ANTHOLOGIES

In 1975, Pamela Sargent produced an anthology of women's science fiction which proved an immediate and enduring success. In the last five years, there have been at least a dozen more. I am listing seven of these, plus another that does not purport to be 'women's', but does fill the same functions: namely, an opportunity to sample the wares *and* (in most cases) to learn much more about the writers, the context in which they write and the prevailing (often conflicting) feminist viewpoints within the field.

Many of the writers listed above are represented in one or more of these collections, as well as four other significant authors omitted above because they have not yet published books.

Pamela Sargent (ed.). *Women of Wonder*. (Vintage, 1975.)
More Women of Wonder. (Vintage, 1976.)
New Women of Wonder. (Vintage, 1978.)

Sargent was the first and the most, and also provides long scholarly essays on the history of women in science fiction. The first book includes Bradley, Emshwiller, Le Guin, MacLean, McCaffrey, McIntyre, myself, Reed, Russ, Wilhelm, and Yarbro, as well as Sonya Dorman, doubling as storyteller and poet. *More* . . . has Brackett, Le Guin, C.L. Moore, Russ, Saxton, and Wilhelm. *New* . . . includes Dorman, Emshwiller, McIntyre, Reed, Russ, 'Tiptree', Yarbro, and as well Pamela Zoline's unique 'Heat Death of the Universe'.

Vonda N. McIntyre with Susan Janice Anderson (eds). *Aurora: Beyond Equality*. (Fawcett, 1976.)

An anthology of original stories (and one essay by Le Guin), which includes a couple of male authors: its focus was on stories about women's futures rather than *by* women. Includes Piercy, Russ, and Sheldon 'Tiptree' (one each).

Alice Laurance (ed). *Cassandra Rising*. (Doubleday, 1978.)

This offers concise biographical information about each author with each story. A good catholic collection, with Coulson, Davis, Henderson, Le Guin, MacLean, McCaffrey, Norton, Paul, Saxton, and Yarbro, plus a story by Raylyn Moore, a fine short story writer who has yet to produce a book.

Virginia Kidd (ed). *Millennial Women*. (Dell, 1979.)

The densest and best-textured of the anthologies. Only six stories, but they work together to create a branching vista of women's futures. Lynn and Le Guin.

Ursula K. Le Guin and Virginia Kidd (eds). *Interfaces*. (Ace, 1980.)

This book claims only to represent the s-f tastes of the editors, but besides being a fine collection, nine of the 19 authors represented are women. You'll find Davis, McIntyre, 'Tiptree', as well as a grouping of Dorman's s-f poems and the only inclusion in any of these books of the fine British writer, Hilary Bailey.

Jessica Salmonson (ed). *Amazons*. (Dell, 1979.)

A collection devoted to fighting women — largely heroic fantasy. The authors I don't know well enough to annotate adequately are all here, along with an introductory essay both scholarly and impassionate. Includes Cherryh, Lee, Lynn, Norton, Saxton (and a surprise appearance by Emily Brontë).

Childless by Choice

Jean E. Veevers, Butterworth & Co. (Canada) Ltd. 1980

Nancy Jackson

An 'intense curiosity about a fascinating and neglected minority' is how Jean Veevers describes the origins of her work on voluntarily childless couples. Her book is based on interviews with 156 men and women in southern Ontario who have remained childless in marriage.

Veevers explores the personal circumstances and the reasons for the choice not to bear children. She examines the impact of childlessness on the marital relationship, with particular emphasis on the struggle to maintain what she describes as a 'variant world view' in the face of pervasive pronatalist social pressures. She surveys the implications of the childfree lifestyle for the organization of work and leisure and in terms of its financial ramifications. She describes as her most important finding that 'at least some voluntarily childless couples *do* achieve high levels of personal, marital and social adjustment.' (p. 159)

Veevers also indicates an interest in the social policy implications of childlessness. Here she is concerned with constructing typologies ('rejectors' and 'aficionados') and predicting rates of childlessness in marriage. To this end she stresses the need for research funds to support work in this area, as opposed to her own work which, she points out, was funded 'out of pocket'.

Her objectives for the study are that it will 'contribute to the description of the social meanings of childlessness, and to the explanation of the dynamics of entering and defending the childless lifestyle.' (p.2)

As a feminist and as a sociologist, I experienced considerable disappointment with Veevers' book. I was bothered by at least three major limitations which I want to discuss at least briefly. In outline, they are: 1) that the target population for the research seriously restricts the topic; and 2) that the analysis treats significant features of the social world as merely aspects of personal biography and personal plans. The net effect of these two procedures is that the work lacks a sense of the social relevance of the issue of childlessness. 3) I will argue that the work does not represent a woman's perspective and, thus, is of dubious interest for a feminist readership.

Let's consider first the target population for the study. The subjects of the research are highly educated, legally married couples in southern Ontario. Part of this restriction was purposive, as Veevers' stated research interest was ' not in childlessness in general, but only in deliberately childless couples . . .' (p. 173) Other aspects were the product of a procedure for obtaining a voluntary sample. The significance of these restrictions is of course in the narrowly middle class focus which is the result. My concern is that the topic is an issue of much wider social significance than the treatment that it is given.

Women in a wide variety of situations have been left out of Veevers' work. Most obvious are women in partnerships with men other than marriage. Childbearing, however, is also increasingly a consideration of women who prefer to remain single but want to have a child and of women in partnerships with women who also want to parent. Even more pressing is the need to recognize any individuals and partners who do not have the earning power to support both a child and someone to care for a child. None of these voices are heard in Veevers' study. The restriction of her population to middle class marriages is to explore only one narrow version of the 'social meanings of childlessness'.

Second, the analysis which Veevers presents doesn't take up the full range of implications of childlessness even within a given social group. She leaves out many ramifications for individual lives, she overlooks the social implications of childlessness as an option for more than a few individuals and she misconstrues the connection between individual choice and societal or even global interests in childbearing. Let's look at each of these.

Veevers' interest in marital fulfillment leads her to overlook the ways that a shift to a childless lifestyle transforms the social relations which organize women's lives. It changes our relationship to a private or domestic life, our relationships with men, our relation to the economy through earning power and career potential, our political relations through increased ability to participate in the decision-making processes that affect our lives in the community or in the workplace. A simple reminder of these differences is the popular bumper sticker which reads, 'I wanted to change the world, but I couldn't find a babysitter.'

In the area of social policy, Veevers' conception seems to be hollow, despite her stated interest in the topic. To give an indication of the possible magnitude of the childless lifestyle, she writes, 'It would not be surprising if one couple in 10 were to reject parenthood and to decide to remain childless' (p.2). Ten per cent of 'couples' is a diminishing percentage of the population. However, let's assume that her intention was to suggest that a statistically significant number of people could decide not to bear children. It is clear that Veevers' work does not provide the necessary tools to consider the impact of such a change. The resulting concerns would be far more concrete than personal and marital fulfillment. They would include changes of consequence to employers and economic planners, such as shifts in the size and age of a work force, or changes of consequence to government and other social planners, such as shifts in the basis of social benefits and services, like UIC benefits or senior citizen pensions. Indeed, such a shift would directly oppose the recent attempts to gain public support for the old concept of a family wage.

Childbearing is also a concern for large and powerful national and international interests. The most outstanding example is the Catholic Church which makes policy concerning such private choices. In a different vein, the World Health Organization and others concern themselves with childbearing and sterilization as aspects of managing the demand for food and other resources for the World's people. Different again are the large scale corporate interests who rely on renewed markets for their products (such as baby food) and on renewed labour for production (coffee). Closer to home, there is the concern of certain industrialists (such as asbestos) who protect their own interests through the 'voluntary' sterilization of women as a precondition to employment in hazardous mining and other operations.

When we consider some of these implications of childbearing, we are reminded of what Veevers' work makes invisible, which is that childbearing, like other aspects of personal experience, is embedded in an economic process in which we participate through our individual choices. These connections are part of the ground on which social policy implications can be examined and policies formulated. In leaving them out, Veevers undercuts her own argument about the pressing need for work such as hers to be funded.

Third, I want to argue that the interests of women are systematically excluded from Veevers' study. The most striking illustration of this is her failure to take up and make integral to her work the essentially different relevance that the topic of childbearing has to the organization of men's and women's lives. Instead, she collapses the distinction between mothering and fathering into the term parenting. Thus her work falls short of representing the interests of women. She explores such categories as 'moral obligation', 'civic responsibility', and the 'meaning of marriage' without questioning whose interests they represent.

There is little mention of the Women's Liberation Movement, except to say that it doesn't seem to have much to do with voluntary childlessness. As evidence of their separation, she quotes the Committee on Population and the American Future which describes the movement as 'not usually anti-marriage or anti-children' (p. 151). This seems a round-a-bout form of disclaimer.

Finally, I want to argue that most, if not all, of these social and feminist concerns are organized out of Veevers' work by her attention to academic terms of reference. That is, she locates the work within the sociological study of the family and builds much of her argument against a backdrop of categories of social deviance. These frameworks delineate and legitimate the topic of childlessness in academic terms at the same time that they commit her to a procedure which renders invisible the organization of social relations in which childbearing is embedded.

I have heard reports that Veevers' book has been received with enthusiasm in classrooms of middle class women. For me, this

does not redeem the work but points to its dangers. To provide for these women a view of their futures which focuses on exciting new aspects of personal choice is to contribute to the ideological barriers which obscure the ground on which their privilege is built.

This is a book that will sell to an affluent readership of middle class, childless couples who read with their free evenings. Score one for the publishing industry.

Woman, Church and State: The Original Expose of Male Collaboration Against the Female Sex

Matilda Joslyn Gage. Watertown, Mass.: Persephone Press, 1980 (Reprint from the original, 1893)
Shirley Davy

I used to think that as grey began to salt my hair I would become mellow in my view of things. Perhaps that would be true in an 'unfallen' world. As things *are*, however, there is only a growing rage— generalized and intense — at what have been passed off as 'true' accounts of our collective human past. Of course, the concept of *history* has become academically suspect in the past few years, with the realization that there is, in the long run, only *cultural narrative* told from a particular point of view. *Women* — always historically invisible and inconsequential — have known this all along.

Woman, Church and State is the closest to a history of woman that I have ever come across. The author, Matilda Joslyn Gage, is impeccable in her scholarship, lucid and astute in her analysis and courageous in her choice of targets which include virtually every cultural institution in the Western world. What angers one so is that her book was written and published in 1893. How is it that an advanced student of religion, such as I, could not have heard of it until a review copy — a 1980 reprint — arrived in the mail last month? It should *already* have become part of every curriculum dealing with church history and an essential part of the library of any person, male *or* female, who has attempted to understand the patriarchal power relationship between men and women on both an ecclesiastical and a temporal level.

Woman, Church and State reminds us how radical the women's movement was in the United States until it '... was replaced by a conservative caricature of feminism committed only to achieving the vote.' Most of the windmills Gage tilts at are positions that oppose the current Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.) advocates. In fact, the contemporary state of American affairs regarding women gives Gage's work a curiously prophetic tenor which, undoubtedly, accounts for its re-issue at this particular time.

There is much to interest Canadian readers apart from the generally similar circumstance of women in their relation to church and state. Gage writes, for instance, of Rev. Charles Chiniquy, a French-Canadian priest who left the Church in 1856, taking 5,000 of his followers with him to Illinois. The main reason for his renunciation was the abuse of the confessional which, in his experience, degraded and demoralized female parishioners. Gage also includes a letter written by 49 Montreal women to their bishop in 1877 to protest 'against the abuses of the confessional of which their own experience had made them cognizant.'

It is difficult in the scope of this brief review to convey the richness of both information and argument in *Woman, Church and State*. The first chapter, 'The Matriarchate' deals with the development of patriarchal ideology out of an original female-dominant, mother-oriented world view. In the chapter entitled 'Celibacy', Gage analyzes the political and economic implications of that practice within the church and demonstrates very convincingly how celibacy contributed, in fact, to the further degradation of women within the church and to their persecution, finally, as witches during the Inquisition. There are also chapters devoted to the subject of witchcraft itself, marquette (the right of feudal lords to the 'first night' with the brides of their serfs), Canon law, wives, polygamy, woman and work and the Church of today (1893).

In all my feminist readings I have come across nothing tougher, nothing more painful, nothing more enlightening than *Woman, Church and State*. It documents the underside of history and gives us a glimpse into the corrupt dungeons of those magnificent phallic edifices that have provided woman with little real sanctuary over the past two millennia. That Gage herself understood how important her mission was is evident in her last chapter, 'Past, Present, Future':

'The most important struggle in the history of the church is that of woman for liberty of thought and the right to give that thought to the world.
...
During the ages, no rebellion has been of like importance with that of Woman against the tyranny of Church and State; none has had its far reaching effects. We note its beginning; its progress will overthrow every existing form of these institutions; its end will be a regenerated world.'

I wish I had read it ten years ago.

Turning Points and A Reckoning

Turning Points
by Ellen Goodman, Doubleday, 1979, pp. xiii and 290, cloth.
A Reckoning
by May Sarton, Norton, 1978, pp. 254, cloth.
Sybil Shack

Let me admit immediately that when I received *Turning Points* and *A Reckoning* to review I felt a good deal less than interest and no anticipation at the prospect of reading them. So many writers have dealt recently with the effects of change on people's lives that another book on the subject was not exactly titillating; and a whole novel about a woman dying of cancer was not my first choice for summer reading. It is only fair, therefore, to say at once that I was not bored by the first nor unduly depressed by the second, although I have reservations about both.

The subtitle of *Turning Points* is 'How People Change, Through Crisis and Commitment.' The turning points of the title are the points in the life of a person at which change is initiated, in the case of the book, the points where changes in traditional sex roles are either forced by