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

circumstance or internally generated. Goodman establishes the thesis that changes in individuals depend 'as much on the times we live in as on our own psychological time clock,' and uses the case histories of both women and men — obtained through personal interviews — to support her arguments. She tries to identify the people who are most unlikely and most likely to change from traditional patterns of the female-male relationship and comes to the conclusion that even those most set in their ways and seemingly content in the traditional roles have changed as a result of changing attitudes in the surrounding society and frequently as a result of changing economic conditions.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the beginnings of change, with people who thought of themselves as 'normal', with 'normal expectations'. Two were men, three were women — all conservative in the sense that they did not deliberately seek change. In many ways they are representative of the 30 or 40 cases Goodman includes.

Lillian, who had always deferred to her husband's wishes and who thought of herself primarily as a wife and mother, was suddenly abandoned by her husband and thrown on her own resources. Utterly devastated to begin with, she was fortunate enough to be offered a job and, in her mid-50s, was able to make an independent life for herself. Now she can't imagine going back to living as she had before. She realizes that what happened to her probably would not have happened in her mother's day, be it for better or for worse.

Jane's life and her husband's were affected directly when Jane's growing discontent with her increasingly empty life at home led her to read feminist literature and then to form a consciousness-raising group. She and her husband began to see choices for both of them, self-development for her, a guiltless opting out of the corporate jungle for him and a greater involvement with his children. The change was gradual and sometimes painful but, in the end, rewarding for everyone.

Nicholas, a psychologist, came to an understanding of himself. He was sacrificing his own children in building up his practice by trying to solve the problems of other people's children. Eventually he made the decision to earn less money and spend more time at home. His wife, with some early difficulty, accepted his new role of fathering, took training in counselling and now works with him out of an office in their home. He deliberately changed his life and, in the process, helped his wife change hers. A male re-play of Jane.

Molly, on the other hand, is not likely to change. She is one of the superwomen. She juggles a super career in business, looks after husband and family in super fashion.' Frankly I don't see why I should ask my husband to change his ways. I'm the one who wants to live this way . . . I'm the one who wanted to work. So it's my responsibility to make sure that (everything) gets done.' She has never challenged traditional society and so she has felt no conflicts and has made no changes.

All of us have met Paul in one guise or another. He once said that 'a working wife meant a failed husband'. But the cost of living has gone up faster than his pay cheque. There simply was no extra money to save for the children's education or family contingencies. When he discussed with his wife the possibility of his taking a moonlighting job to help balance the budget, she persuaded him, with difficulty, that a better solution, one that would not take him completely away from his children, was a part-time job for her. Ultimately she got a job, and faced him with a *fait accompli*. Gradually, with her working, he began to take over some of the chores that had formerly been hers. Still, he has not accepted the situation totally; he feels that it has been forced on him by economics. But he does recognize that changes have taken place in the relative positions of the two adults in the household and that the same thing has happened in other households among his friends and acquaintances.

As Goodman points out, there is a scale of change: minor or light-weight change, as she calls it; middle weight change where serious decisions have to be made; and heavyweight change that can produce both loss and pain, the kind of change that carries heavy risks. She relates as an example of the last kind of change the story of Mary, who went through a divorce, and, later the break up of what she had thought was a good relationship with another man, as she worked her way up a career ladder. (She had been offered a challenging job in another city; her lover would not hear of her accepting it; she left him for the job.) Eventually she recovered from the experience, but she told Goodman she would never want to have to go through it again. 'It would be great if someone discovered a cure for change', she said. At that point, I wondered what would have happened if the man had had an out-of-town offer and she had wanted to stay in her established job. Would she have given up her job and followed him?

Part II of *Turning Points* investigates the Shuttle Zone, the No Man's Land of change. At one end are the change innovators, usually people who have little to lose in making changes. At the other end are the change resisters, who perceive any change as a threat. The Middle Grounders inhabit the Shuttle Zone, in which change becomes 'a process of resolving the most painful kinds of ambivalence.'

The 'change innovators' whom Goodman interviewed were determined to make a complete break with all past traditions. Allyson and Rachel not merely asserted their independence of their parents; they made sure that their families understood why they were being abandoned. Like many change innovators, they believed in a completely fresh start, breaking all ties with the past, although the past was obviously responsible for the changes taking place in their new lives. Mara reacted to a puritan environment by becoming sexually promiscuous while looking for her 'Mr. Right', then decided that she liked women better than men. She, too, believed that she could and must break all ties with the past and with tradition.

By the end of the chapter on 'change innovators' Goodman had given me the impression that she found change innovators too radical for her taste. But not to worry, all would be well in the end. The innovators would settle down and resolve many of their ambivalences. Mind you, she objects to the suggestion that they will 'grow up' and become conservatives who might even resist change. She prefers to believe that the former innovators will show 'a maturing sense of complexity . . . These women don't want to wipe out the past, but to incorporate the best of it into the future.' Rachel, for example, has cleaned herself up, cut her hair, settled down to a semi-permanent relationship with Alan, and made a semi-peace with her parents. Allyson has moved into a management job where she makes enough money to live comfortably and Mara has decided that she is heterosexual after all.

What about the change resisters? Goodman categorizes them as people who

like their way of life and see no reason for altering it; women who are passive, having made marriage their choice and knowing what marriage entailed for them, and who are therefore committed to their way of life, good or bad; and women who are convinced that their role in life is to defer to their husbands, and so any change in traditional patterns is threatening to their security.

But even the staunchest resisters have not, according to Goodman, been impervious to change. Some are attracted to the possibilities opened by it. They see new roles developing for men and women in our society and are sometimes aware of losing out because they resist change. The resistance is apparently like the Maginot Line, not as strong as it seems.

'Most of us are neither radical change innovators nor hard-core resisters . . . (We live) in that vast territory called the middle ground (of the Shuttle Zone).' The middle grounders among women want the security of the old relationships and the old traditions along with the self-esteem and the vitality that come from change. Their partial commitment to change often comes from a development or circumstance that affects them directly, something they perceive as an injustice, a form of discrimination against themselves as women. They are the 'I-am-not-a-feminist-but' types. They do not particularly want to change their private lives, but are often willing to make a public statement: about equal pay, equal job opportunities, recognition of the value of their work.

I had the curious feeling through parts I and II of *Turning Points* that Ellen Goodman was interviewing herself in every one of her 'cases', that the book was a kind of self-justification. That feeling was reinforced in Part III, titled 'Inside Changes', with chapter headings 'Divorce', 'The Housewife's New Blues', and 'Choice'. In the last chapter, Goodman explores possible futures and discovers that there are not as many differences as one might expect between the attitudes of mothers and daughters towards change in spite of the noticeable differences in their patterns of living. Both mothers and daughters, for instance, want security through commitment, the former through marriage, the latter through a career. Though mothers seem to have had fewer choices than their daughters as to the kind of commitment they might make, both have the same kinds of anxieties arising from the commitments and have come through similar decision-making crises. So, says Goodman, 'There is no way one can protect oneself against change . . . The most important security in the midst of change comes from understanding, not resisting, the process of change with all its risks and pleasures.' Everyone is in the Shuttle Zone.

Turning Points reads easily. It is interesting in the sense that gossip is interesting. We like to have glimpses into the lives of our neighbours and the interview-case approach that Goodman uses gives life and colour, and a touch of soap opera, to the book. She is a journalist. She writes in an easy-flowing, readable, journalistic style, personal and conversational. We are taken into her confidence. Finally, if we ourselves are not too daring, she leaves us comfortable and reassured, hopeful that, unforeseeable as the future is, it won't be too bad as long as we stay somewhere safely in the middle.

Unfortunately, though all that keeps the reader from being bored, it is not enough. After a while the thumbnail sketches of Goodman's cases become unsatisfying. The resolutions of the problems are too pat. I wanted to know what were the long term outcomes of the changes. The interval between interviews with individuals is too short to permit a definitive assessment of the effects of change. Nor do I know enough about the people Goodman is describing to make valid judgments about their decisions. I am also uneasy about her selection of cases. As she has forewarned us, most of the people she talked to came from the reasonably well-to-do, well-educated middle class. The choice of independence or of any change in a woman's lifestyle is less harrowing and much easier if she has marketable skills or a convenient connection through which she can get a job that pays a reasonable salary or wage. It is easier for a man who is earning good money or knows that he can earn it not to be threatened in his masculinity by his wife's earnings. The narrow range of Goodman's selection of examples also makes for a sameness and repetitiveness. But my most important reservation comes from her tendency to evaluate positive change in simplistic terms: Had the woman left her home for work outside? Had the man accepted fathering or housework as part of his share in the change?

In summary, *Turning Points* provides pleasant reading, principally through its glimpses of other people's lives, but contributes little new either to the subject of change or to an understanding of what happens when women move out of their traditional roles.

A Reckoning takes place at that most important turning point in a person's life: dying. Laura Spelman is 62 years old. Her marriage to Charles had been good. When the children left home, she followed a path of change that Ellen Goodman would have approved of; she took a low level job at a publishing house and worked her way up to the respected position of fiction editor. The job had been her salvation when Charles died three years ago, and she realized that she had not had the time in their busy life to make many 'real connections'.

Now her doctor has told her that what she thought was a low grade virus or infection is inoperable cancer of both lungs. She chooses not to have more than a minimum of medical intervention, to die in her own way and to use the short time left to examine her relationships with the people in her life — to take a reckoning.

The novel, then, is not so much about dying, though that is central to the development of the theme, but about a woman and her perception of the bonds that hold women together. Laura's 'real connections', as she calls them, are with women: her remarkable mother, her Aunt Minna, her sisters, her daughter, her nurse-housekeeper, and above all, her friend Ella.

As she grows weaker physically, she knows that to give her living and her dying meaning she must understand her mother who is now a vegetable-like inmate of a nursing home. In trying to solve the enigma of her mother, she also comes to terms with her sisters, both casualties of her mother's envelopment. Jo, an unacknowledged lesbian, is incapable of attachment to anyone because her mother had destroyed her first and only love, and Daphne, who rejected the beauty she had inherited from her mother but had slowly and painfully grown into a warm, accepting human being.

Reluctantly, Laura admits her own three children into the privacy of her dying: Brooke, her eldest son, loving and dutiful, so like his father; Ben, artist and homosexual, in many ways dearest to her; and her non-conforming daughter, Daisy, with whom she forms a better connection during the process of her dying than during the years of their living together.

Closest to her and most understanding of her needs as she lives her dying are her Aunt Minna, her

father's sister, unmarried, 80 years old, actively involved all her life in causes, especially in the fight for women's rights and Mary O'Brien, the practical nurse-housekeeper, who looks after her physical needs and supports her emotionally as she grows weaker and less able to do things for herself.

In the final reckoning, however, it is Ella, the girl with whom she shared a year at the Sorbonne before either one was married, who means most to Laura. Their passionate attachment to each other, which had never had a physical consummation or even a tacit admission of its physical overtones, has survived the years of separation and of widely different lifestyles. When Ella arrives unexpectedly, it is obvious that Laura had been waiting for her coming to make her final reckoning and at last to understand her mother. She dies content — but not before she and Ella have made a statement about the bonds between women, their strength and enduring quality. Unfortunately, the intrusion of the final statement makes for an awkwardness in the book's ending. Sarton had already conveyed her message. As Laura tallied her relationship with each of the women in her life, the message grew clearer and clearer. It did not require a deathbed proclamation beyond the moving fact of the reunion of the two friends. In an earlier conversation with Aunt Minna Laura had said, 'What I begin to see is that women have been in a queer way locked away from one another in a man's world. The perspective has been from there . . . All that is changing and perhaps women will be able to give one another a great deal more than ever before.' Laura's 'real connections' had led her to know the importance of women to one another, the power and the wonder of love and friendship between women, the need to share the experience of being women, the difficulty that mothers and daughters had in sharing that experience.

My reservations about *A Reckoning*? I have already mentioned the forced nature of the last few pages, the driving home of the point already well made. I also found myself being annoyed by the stereotypes: the homosexual son who was, of course, an artist — or to put it the other way around, the artist who was, of course, a homosexual; the young lesbian writer who was afraid to publish her first novel because it would endanger her lover, a teacher, and who was encouraged by Laura to publish, whatever the sacrificial price; Daisy's young Jewish lover and her discomfort in the presence of his parents because she was gentile. (Why is it necessary to have a token Jew in every novel?) In spite of these reservations I found the book interesting. The story is told totally from Laura's point of view. As a result, it is easy to empathize with her, to pass the last months of her life with her. The absence of mawkishness compensates for the bits of rough writing at the beginning and the end. I am an animal lover and I appreciate the way in which Sarton treats Laura's feeling for her dog, Grindle, and her cat, Sasha, from whose companionship she derived love and comfort. There is no irony, condescension or attempt at Freudian interpretation. Sarton uses music effectively and Laura's love of poetry as part of both setting and characterization. Throughout there are sketches of characters and events that are instantly recognizable as being real: of Daphne, untidy, once beautiful Daphne, who had wanted to be a veterinarian and ended up as an aide in an animal hospital; of a children's birthday party at Brooke's home; of Ben's embarrassment when Laura tries to tell him of her feelings for Ella. The minor characters who appear briefly are presented as Laura sees them: Cousin Hope who is irritatingly good, kind and self-effacing; Jim Goodwin, the doctor who admires Laura and helps her over the rough spots; Harriet, the young author; even Laura's colleagues at the publishing house. They illustrate Sarton's skill in quick portraiture, one line drawings.

And so *A Reckoning* is not depressing. It is about a turning point in the life of an intelligent, humane and courageous woman. It could have been cloying; it could have been horrifying; it could have been clinically detailed. It is none of these. Instead, it differs from many of this decade's novels by introducing us to people who genuinely care for one another and for other living things and who are kind because they care. It has been criticized as 'a woman's book'. What's wrong with that?

And They Took Themselves Wives: The Emergence of Patriarchy in Western Civilization

David Bakan,
San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979.
Johanna Stuckey

'Patriarchy' is a word much used today to mean 'male domination'. However, it actually means that and much more, for it comes from two Greek words meaning, respectively, 'father' and 'rule'. 'Patriarchy', then, signifies 'rule by father or fathers'; it is a system under which fathers, actual or representative, dominate and control women, children, and younger men. However modified it is in actual practice, it is one of the prevailing myths of our modern Western world. Patriarchy structures not only marriage and the family but also our societal institutions — educational, medical, economical, political, and so on. Teachers, doctors, company presidents and executives and politicians function (and are treated) as paternal authority, even in the rare instances when they are women! And religion validates the whole structure by appeal to the Judaeo-Christian 'God the Father' and the patriarchal Bible.

David Bakan's book, *And They Took Themselves Wives: The Emergence of Patriarchy in Western Civilization*, examines patriarchy as it is presented in the Hebrew Bible. His reason for his interest in 'the notions of marriage and the family in the Bible' (p.1) stems from his conviction that the Bible is the '"written constitution" for the institution of marriage' in Western civilization (p.2). In pursuit of this aim he examines certain 'beneath-the-surface themes', which, he maintains, 'are gaining dominance at the present time' (p.3). These 'themes' lead Bakan to argue that 'there are strong traces of a prior matrocentrism, with matrilineality and perhaps even matriarchy, in the text' (p.66).

Undoubtedly, he is right about there being traces of matrocentrism in the Hebrew Bible. Not only is it full of explicit references to the Goddess-centred religion of Canaan, clearly a rival religion to that of the Hebrew God, but also it contains passages that point to an original importance of mothers, especially in matters of marriage and descent. These 'themes' justify Bakan's subtitle, though I should be happier if he were to substitute 'the Hebrew Bible' for 'Western Civilization', for there is, to my mind,