

restrictive concepts to extend and exert their power in society' (p. 167).

At first glance, Parr's article appears to have little relationship to the Canadian women's movement; however, by drawing attention to the importance of theological doctrine in influencing social action among Victorians, and by specifically demonstrating the difference in approach to social issues between the moral rescue workers and the social reformers, Parr makes a definite contribution to the debate about the degree of conservatism of the Canadian women's movement. Were not groups like the WCTU radical for their time not only in their conviction that social problems were not essentially individual, moral ones but rather the result of an interplay of political, social and economic forces, and also in their transcending of various divisive theological concerns?

Even those articles which most strongly denounce maternal feminism provide evidence conducive to a different interpretation. As Wayne Roberts points out, 'women's identification with a mothering role . . . did not preordain women's acceptance of subordination within the family or state,' and that in the name of maternal feminism, women advocated 'the modern concept of an active citizenry' and 'subverted patriarchal norms governing women's access to certain kinds of knowledge' (pp. 18-19). More fundamentally, according to Linda Kealey, the maternal feminists 'challenged the private/female and public/male dichotomy that characterized much of nineteenth century middle-class life' (p. 8). However, in their haste to stress repeatedly the class bias of the female reformers and to measure their feminism by present day standards, most of the contributors brush aside the more radical characteristics of the reform movement. To dismiss all progressive reform as class biased is not conducive to an improved understanding of the complex dynamics of social reform.

The editor is to be commended for her efforts to tie together the essays in her general introduction. The comments preceding each chapter are generally helpful but there is a glaring inaccuracy in at least one instance. In the introduction to the article on Quebec, she states that in 1917 Quebec women were excluded from the federal franchise for fear they would vote against conscription, and that they so remained until 1940. This was not the case: the full federal franchise was granted to Quebec women in 1918 although they did not obtain the provincial franchise until 1940.

The length of this review, and the criti-

cisms set forth in it, will not, I hope, discourage potential readers. They attest rather to the significance of this collection of essays. In their attempts to synthesize and to systematize, these stimulating essays identify issues fundamental to understanding early Canadian feminism. Clearly 'a not unreasonable claim' may be made that this is one of the most important books to appear in Canadian women's history.

*The Sisterhood of Man*, by Kathleen Newland, W. W. Norton, 1979, pp. 242, paperback, \$3.95.

#### Sybil Shack

The tone of this overview of the progress towards equality of women of the world is set in the first two paragraphs:

The role of women in society is changing all over the world. The highly visible women's liberation movement of the industrialized West finds its muted parallel even in remote rural villages. In some places positive, concrete changes are occurring in the way women live. In others the changes are elusive, no more than a heightened awareness of the circumstances of women's lives, a rejection of old assumptions about dominance and submission, a vague sense of instability.

There are shifts and cracks in the bedrock of tradition, tiny compared with its mass; but, like changes in the level of well water before an earthquake, they may portend seismic shifts. Already some of those shifts in women's roles have registered on a global scale, sending repercussions far beyond their areas of local impact. The major fault lines run through all the important areas of human activity, including education, employment, health, legal structures, politics, communications, and the family.

As the author deals with these seven areas she retains an appreciation of the inequities under which women labour and the injustices to which they are exposed in all parts of the world. At the same time she shows an awareness of the changes that are taking place, and an understanding of how difficult change can be for the oppressed as well as the oppressors. Above all, she manages to keep and frequently to document her optimistic opinion that the shifts and cracks in the bedrock of tradition will bring not destruction and chaos, not bewilderment and disappointment, but a better, more just, more equitable way of life in the societies that are

undergoing what she perceives as inevitable change.

It is this optimism and the large numbers of sources from which Newland draws her examples that differentiate this book from the many that have in the past few years described women's condition on this continent. In her chapter on women and the law, for example, she mentions not only the American Equal Rights Amendment but also the situation in Morocco, China and Somalia. In the chapter on politics she comments on the failure of enfranchised women to use effectively their right to vote in many of the 125 countries in which they have the right; she also remarks on the fact that Lichtenstein and seven Muslim states are the only countries that now withhold that right, at least in terms of law. In discussing women in employment she draws on the experiences of women in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and quotes figures from states as different as Japan and Peru. The references highlight the universality of as well as the sharp differences among the problems she presents.

'Created Equal: Women, the Law and Change,' the title of Newland's chapter on women's relation to the law, indicates the importance she places on law as an instrument of change even as she recognizes its limitations. Can changes in the law seriously challenge deeply ingrained social customs and traditions? Should the law educate and lead or should it follow *de facto* changes in women's situation? She records the fact that even with egalitarian laws, economic and social disadvantages often prevent women from exercising their rights. Nevertheless she concludes that 'law can guide those working for genuine equality or prod the indolent and those are among its proper functions.'

In education as in law there are two sides to the coin. In most countries of the world girls stand a better chance of going to school than their mothers did; and in many places the educational status of women has been rapid and spectacular. In one Indonesian village, for example, two out of three women in their thirties had never been at school, whereas only one in twenty girls in their teens had had no schooling. On the other hand, almost everywhere parents still seem to give primacy to the education of sons. On every continent the majority of illiterates are female. As Newland points out, illiteracy handicaps a person almost as much as—sometimes more than—blindness or deafness. Yet the educational systems of most societies tend to perpetuate the sex-based myth that schooling is more important for

boys than for girls. The myth, accepted by both women and men, is, it seems, necessary in order to preserve things-as-they-are, an objective of the establishment in any social or political system.

Accordingly, even when states make a move to educate their women, what they teach tends to be practical knowledge of the kind that helps women survive in their present way of life. Rarely do teaching programs aimed specifically at women attempt to develop their critical faculties, or to give them skills that will make them employable in vocations still overwhelmingly reserved for men.

As at other levels of education the pattern of post-secondary education reflects accurately and protects carefully the occupational segregation of women. While enrolment of women in faculties of medicine and law is increasing in the United States and some other countries, generally women who aspire to post-secondary education are enrolled in two year institutions leading to teaching and other traditionally female occupations. And for many women who do attend colleges and universities, the experience has little relevance. 'For the middle classes, the educated daughter fills the same function as the leisured wife.'

Teaching in all parts of the world is dominated by the presence of women, but mainly at the elementary school level and in the lower ranks of the educational hierarchy. As Newland points out, the position of the woman teacher provides a powerful model of authority, not only for her female students but for all the future adults over whom she exercises influence; she is part of what all children learn at school.

Education for women has far-reaching effects. Educated women are more likely to be employed than uneducated or under-educated women. Educated women have fewer children, and the fertility rate in most countries is therefore proportional to the educational level of its female population. Since political leadership tends to come from the ranks of the educated, the low level of female education or its stereotyped nature militates against women's involvement in politics and so in government, an incalculable loss of talent and intelligence. (Newland cites as a positive factor the rising numbers of women students in faculties of law; members of the legal profession often enter politics and always exert influence on lawmakers.)

Only in and through schools, Newland says, can large numbers of women and girls transcend their roles as wives, mothers and daughters, and discover a new sense of

personal worth and identity.

Women's health: in spite of the statistical longevity of women in the developed countries, women's health problems and female patients are given low priority by researchers and the medical-care establishment. These health problems range from mutilation of the genitals in some parts of Africa to over-prescription of psycho-active drugs in Europe and North America. Everywhere nutrition, childbearing and changing lifestyles affect women's health. Newland quotes statistics to show that in India and Bangladesh, among other places, the preference in providing proper food to sons rather than to daughters has led to a startlingly higher mortality rate for girl children under five than for boys in the same age range. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are also subject to the debilitating effects of malnutrition. Where poverty imposes a low standard of nutrition for a large number of people, the women tend to suffer most for several reasons, only one of which is the fact that they make up the greater part of the chronically poor.

Selecting the increase in cigarette smoking as one aspect of changing lifestyles of women, Newland writes with a sharpness not generally characteristic of this book, 'If women's smoking rates come to equal men's, women will probably die younger than they do now. It will be a bitter irony indeed if women achieve equality in death before they achieve it in life.'

In the chapter on women and the media she makes the point—not always noted—that the wide dissemination of American television programs helps to keep alive, strengthen and impose on other populations a poor and stereotyped image of women. In conservative societies—and few societies are not conservative in the sense that they want to maintain themselves as they are—treatment of women by the media is limited, reflecting women's unimportance in policy-making and the media's poor view of what constitutes news. Even the 'new' women's magazines (some of them distinctly unliberated, according to Newland), show an obsession 'with the art of attracting and manipulating men' often accompanied by 'a casual, almost mercenary attitude toward sex,' what she calls, at its worst, 'a sad capitulation to the male ethic.' Radio, still a powerful educational medium especially in the developing countries, is more often used to reinforce old values than to inculcate new ideas, and like the school systems aims to help women cope with their traditional situation rather than to change it.

All over the world—Canada is no ex-

ception—the media are in the control of men. In a few countries, where the state controls broadcasting, it has been used to sell the idea of equality of the sexes. Where there is commercial control—television is a prime example—the response to women's changing aspirations has been slow or non-existent. It is obviously not in the interest of advertisers of detergent, for example, to have large numbers of women employed outside the home when their advertising is geared to a home-based audience of women; nor is it in the interests of the broadcasters whose daytime advertising revenue depends on the numbers of home viewers. Newland foresees no major change in the image of women projected by the media as long as discrimination against women is widely tolerated in the real world.

In politics, as in other decision-making areas of life, though prominent women are often 'show-cased,' women generally have little influence and almost no power. In this arena, however, Newland sees improvement coming, as more women move into the professions. Unfortunately, the figures she provides do little to make her optimism credible.

The story of women at work—at domestic work and at work outside the home—has been told many times, not always with this book's interesting tidbits of information from Kenya, Thailand, South Korea or the Cameroon, but always carrying the same message: low status, low pay, little security. Only recently has much attention been given to the effect of the technological revolution on women's work. On the one hand it has created white-collared jobs, low paid, semi-skilled, clerical and service jobs, therefore typically women's work. Technology at the same time has released large numbers of women to take on this work by replacing time-consuming household tasks with time and labour conserving devices. On the other hand, where machines have taken over the back-breaking manual work of planting and harvesting they have made unimportant women's tasks that were recognized as essential in pre-technological times. Furthermore, since traditionally only men were considered capable of coping with machines, operations such as palm-oil pressing in Nigeria and rice-milling in Indonesia became male prerogatives. It is not difficult to find parallels of this situation in industrialized economies.

Newland's solution to the problems of women at work is not original: the sharing of responsibility for domestic work between men and women, of opportunities for paid employment and of access to

the basic factors of productions, all of which will require fundamental changes to every society and every economy in the world.

Newland might well have dealt first with the last area of concern she identifies: women in families. She draws attention to the diversity of family forms, within a single social system such as the United States, and from one society to another; to the change particularly on this continent from the extended to the nuclear family, and from the so-called typical family of male wage earner, female homemaker and young children, to a variety of structures among which the family headed by a woman has become fairly common. She discusses the changes in relationships within the family, and the shift that seems to be taking place in responsibility from sons to daughters. She restates the axiom that poverty and dislocation will continue to be unhealed sores on the body politic until policy-makers concentrate honestly on finding a cure.

The selection of readings at the back of the book is extensive, but is somewhat disappointing in that American materials predominate, no doubt because more has been written on the subject of women's rights and present condition in the United States than anywhere else in the world.

*The Sisterhood of Man* reads easily, is free of the jargon of the statistician and the sociologist, and presents its message reasonably and moderately. If it lacks the passion of the great liberators, it convinces with its ability to present more than one side of a case and its understanding that great results can come from small beginnings. It is neither a jeremiad nor a doctoral thesis. It does draw together and give shape to what is known of the place of women in widely different cultures, economies and political ideologies; and it looks toward a better future.

*Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, by Susan Griffin, Harper & Row, 1978, pp. 264.

#### Jean Wilson

The dedication to this book declares:

These words are written for those of us whose language is not heard, whose words have been stolen or erased, those robbed of language, who are called voiceless or mute, even the earthworms, even the shellfish and sponges, for those of us who speak our own language.

And appropriately, for she is perhaps the

most articulate of us all, *Woman and Nature* is also dedicated to Adrienne Rich. Susan Griffin has realized Rich's dream of a common language in a heady, incantatory brew of poetry and prose that brilliantly parodies patriarchal thought with respect to nature.

This is prose that literally sings, though the song is at first subdued because mainly the cold, logical, monotonous patriarchal voice is heard in a description of its perception of the world and of man and woman's otherness. At first, woman's voice is heard only in ironic parenthetical asides:

Yes, nature is merciless and insatiable, it is said, red in tooth and claw, it is written.

(And it is also written that nature lives and breathes by crime. Hungers at her pores for bloodshed. Aches in her nerves for sin. Yearns for cruelty. That she kindles death out of life, and feeds with fresh blood the innumerable and insatiable mouths suckled at her milkless breast. That she takes pain to sharpen her pleasure. That she stabs, poisons, crushes and corrodes. That nature is weary of life. That her eyes are sick of seeing, her ears heavy with hearing. That she is burned up with creation. That she labors in the desire for death.)

And it is stated that woman's nature is more natural than man's, that she is genuine with the 'cunning suppleness of a beast of prey,' the tiger's claw under the glove, the naiveté of her egoism, her uneducability and inner wildness.

And the scope and movement of her desires and virtues are said to be incomprehensible.

*And we learn to be afraid*  
("Woman! The very name's a crime," it is written.)  
*of our nature.*

Gradually, however, woman's voice becomes loud and impassioned, overwhelming the patriarchal one until it climaxes in a solo at the end of the book.

And she wrote, when I let this bird fly to her own purpose, when this bird flies in the path of his own will, the light from this bird enters my body and when I see the beautiful arc of her flight, I fly with her, enter her with my mind, leave myself, die for an instant, live in the body of this bird whom I cannot live without, as part of the body of the bird will enter my daughter's body, because I know I am made from this earth, as my mother's hands were

made from this earth, as her dreams came from this earth and all that I know, I know in this earth, the body of the bird, this pen, this paper, these hands, this tongue speaking, all that I know speaks to me through this earth and I long to tell you, you who are earth too, and listen *as we speak to each other of what we know: the light is in us.*

*Woman and Nature* is divided into four main sections. In the first, Griffin simply catalogues patriarchal speculations, discoveries and judgments about the nature of matter, 'or the nature of nature,' simultaneously and chronologically cataloguing how woman has been categorized throughout history and then comparing patriarchy's treatment of natural resources and of various animals to its treatment of women. The pieces on cows, mules, and the show horse are particularly revealing and amusing in this connection. Griffin goes on to demonstrate how, by carefully contrived logic, woman has been set apart from nature, from herself and her own power, and thus, of course, from man, since woman has been 'proven' to be inferior physically, socially and intellectually. But then there is a description of the 'passage' of woman from passive acceptance of man's vision of her and nature's roles, to where she begins to recognize her need to recreate the world and history in her own words and her own image. Finally, she does just that. Patriarchy's judgments are systematically overturned, eroded in the description of 'her vision: now she sees through her own eyes (wherein the world is no longer his).'

Griffin is attempting and ultimately succeeds in restoring to us our common language. *Woman and Nature* is an idiosyncratic and personal book, but it is also an eloquent assertion on behalf of all women that we do have our own language and our own vision.

*Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions*, by Naomi Goldenberg, Beacon Press, 1979, pp. 152, hardcover, \$13.75.

#### Merle Wallis Bolick

Certain changes cannot be made in a religion without changing its basic structure. According to Naomi Goldenberg, who teaches religion at Ottawa University, extending equal rights and privileges to women is just the kind of change that would undermine the entire structure of Judaeo-Christian belief. She asks the question, 'How could women represent a male