

<p>the basic factors of productions, all of which will require fundamental changes to every society and every economy in the world.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>The Sisterhood of Man</i> 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.</p>	<p>most articulate of us all, <i>Woman and Nature</i> 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.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>Yes, nature is merciless and insatiable, it is said, red in tooth and claw, it is written.</p> <p>(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.)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>And the scope and movement of her desires and virtues are said to be incomprehensible.</p> <p><i>And we learn to be afraid</i> (“Woman! The very name's a crime,” it is written.) <i>of our nature.</i></p>	<p>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 <i>as we speak to each other of what we know: the light is in us.</i></p> <p><i>Woman and Nature</i> 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).'</p> <p>Griffin is attempting and ultimately succeeds in restoring to us our common language. <i>Woman and Nature</i> 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.</p>
<p><i>Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her</i>, by Susan Griffin, Harper &amp; Row, 1978, pp. 264.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p><i>Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions</i>, by Naomi Goldenberg, Beacon Press, 1979, pp. 152, hardcover, \$13.75.</p>
<p><b>Jean Wilson</b></p> <p>The dedication to this book declares:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>And appropriately, for she is perhaps the</p>	<p>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</p>	<p><b>Merle Wallis Bolick</b></p> <p>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</p>

God' as His priests? And her answer is the same as Pope Paul's: it is impossible.

As a result of the feminist movement, Goldenberg perceives that society will no longer be willing to allow men exclusive access to key positions within the church. Protestant seminaries are graduating increasing numbers of women who will be visible and powerful within their denominations. Eventually, Catholics too will ordain women as priests. But Pope Paul, using 'an impressive knowledge of how image and symbol operate in the human mind,' argued that the priest is a sign to the faithful, and a sacramental sign must bear a 'natural resemblance' to that which it signifies, according to St. Thomas. Christ was a man; therefore His minister must be a man. It may be easy for Protestants to pooh-pooh this logic, but once the male prerogative to exclusive spiritual authority falls, what happens to God the Father?

The nature of Judaism, the tradition from which Christianity is derived, 'lies in the interplay between a father-god and His sons.' And, according to Goldenberg, 'When Jewish women take a central place in their religion, they will no longer be practicing Judaism.'

Traditional Western religions have changed over the centuries, but not on the fundamental point of equality for women. Religions do not spring out of the air. Scriptures are written by a hand belonging to a human being living in a given society at a given point in time. A patriarchal society like ours must have a male god. Conversely, a society with a father-god and male prophets, with a son-god and male disciples is not predisposed to like women in high places. Every age has interpreted biblical texts in the light of its own needs and perceptions. In the Sixties' search for 'relevance,' all authority was subjected to the scrutiny of individuals who used their experience as the measure of its legitimacy. When we leave the church it is often because nothing in it resonates with our own personal experience. As experience becomes the measure of things religion becomes increasingly akin to psychology.

When father-gods die and we look to psychology for an account of our inner nature, we run up against Freud and Jung. Carl Jung wanted to make psychology into a living religion, to replace the dead ones of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Goldenberg sees that even Jung, however, could not simply allow individuals to create their own patterns and myths. He had to theorize that a set of archetypes, out there in the beyond (where God used

to be), are the transcendent, unchanging forms that our own minds can only approximate or participate in. Since these archetypes are derived from history and myth, all that can be imagined has in some sense been imagined before. Therefore what woman has not done in the past she cannot do in the future because it is against her nature. We know it is against her nature because she has not done it in the past and there is no mythological figure who has done it, etc. Any woman who does go against the feminine is doing herself psychic damage. Basically, although Jung adds history and non-Christian myth to the scriptures against which we are judged, he insists that individual imaginal processes be sanctioned by something in the great beyond, the collective unconscious or whatever.

This is where Goldenberg goes a step beyond Jung. Jung suggested that modern man could find spiritual insight in his dreams and fantasies. Goldenberg believes that through the exploration of these processes an individual can find the meaning for her or his own life. The process of myth and symbol-making is a human activity we are all engaged in. It is this *process*, not its content, which is universal. Through several suggested techniques we could individually or in dream-study groups learn to understand our spiritual life without recourse to distant, prescribed archetypes.

Another alternative to traditional religions at the moment is feminist witchcraft, a religion that does not divide body from soul, 'man' from nature, time from eternity, good from evil, and play from 'serious' worship. Since the Goddess is not a supernatural deity outside the self, there is no substitution of one idolatry for another. (Feminist witches are encouraged to use a mirror on their altar to represent the Goddess.) Rather 'women control their own inner space by seeing themselves as divine and rejecting the notion of a male god'; by exercising their will they transform themselves and the world around them. There is much strength to be gained from the practice of a religion that advocates self-creation, the constructive exercise of the will and a primary place for women in worship.

This book is highly recommended to any feminist who believes that religion is just a peripheral issue for the movement and to anyone who believes that feminist goals can be reached by means of cosmetic changes to society and society's beliefs. Our challenge to male authority in patriarchy must not stop until we have challenged the top-god Himself.

*Women's Creation: Sexual Evolution and the Shaping of Society*, by Elizabeth Fisher, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979, 484 pp.

### Meg Luxton

This book poses the fundamental feminist question:

How did civilized man come to be dominant over women?

How did it get to be the way it is between the sexes? (p. 4).

Fisher draws together evidence from a wide range of sources and presents us with an answer. The result is a compelling book, provocative and bold in its scope.

The main contribution of this book lies in Fisher's understanding of the importance of sexuality as a crucial material force in human existence. She has amassed extensive empirical data demonstrating an active sexuality for women and a free sexuality for humans. She has also integrated this data into a general reconstruction of human history.

Fisher's main argument is that male dominance/female subordination is not a universal fact of human existence, is not rooted genetically in our biology. Instead it is an historical development that occurred relatively recently in human history. The book begins with a careful reconstruction of the slow process by which hominids evolved into humans and argues that for the first two hundred thousand years of human life, the relations between the sexes were non-oppressive. Along the way she develops a biting critique of those theorists who argue that human nature is innately aggressive and that male dominance is a biological universal. Instead she demonstrates that a complementarity between the sexes prompted human development and shows the ways in which women have made a special contribution.

That being so, how did modern day inequalities develop? Fisher believes that the transition from gathering and hunting to agriculture and animal husbandry established the conditions that led to women's oppression. Essentially she argues that two factors became relevant for the first time. The economics of farming required more labour so there emerged a social need for women to have more children. At the same time, the changed relationship with animals led to the 'discovery of fatherhood.' These were eventually combined and resulted in the repression of female sexuality, male control over women's ability to have children and ultimately male dominance over women.