

Laurence began in the late 1970s to attend the United Church" (p. 25), a move Morley clearly approves, since the one major distortion in her criticism is the reading of a more conventional religion into the novels than is there. For example, there is nothing in *The Stone Angel*, despite the images of transformation and grace at the end, to suggest that after her death Hagar "confronts her Self and her God" (p. 82). The very ambiguity of the last words of the novel, "And then—", leaves the matter far more convincingly unresolved. The kind of spiritual vision Laurence implicitly conveys in the first four Manawaka books, and powerfully asserts through the images of grace in *The Diviners*, is diminished by being forced into the narrow confines of a conventional creed. Indeed, Morley elsewhere agrees that "Laurence humanizes the religious myth [of the search for the Promised Land], freeing it from its specifically Christian implications" (p. 79). This is acknowledged also in the useful section on the history of the Métis, which, incidentally, is essential background for appreciation of the full significance of the Tonnerre family in the Manawaka cycle. Here Morley refers to Laurence's awareness that we need to learn "to pay homage to the earth and its creatures" (p. 145), though she does not apply this to her reading of the novels, where the land itself, and especially water, offer a source of illumination and healing. Stacey, of *The Fire-Dwellers*, and Hagar find their temporary peace on the shore of the Pacific, with the great brooding forest as backdrop, and Rachel, in *A Jest of God*, sets out for the coast in search of her salvation. For Morag, rivers and trees are a spiritual necessity and she is instinctively responsive, even as a child, to the native Indian sense of the numinous: "Not that clouds or that would have human feelings, but that the trees and river and even this bridge might have their own spirits. Why shouldn't they?" (*The Diviners*, p. 103). Some indication of this persistent theme would have given Morley a more balanced argument.

It is a pity that over-emphases and omissions spoil Morley's book. The same faults mar the bibliography, which should be reliable and reasonably comprehensive in a handbook of this kind. I do not think Morley's own one-page notes and reviews merit inclusion, or that David Blewett's article on "The Unity of the Manawaka Cycle," which she has drawn on heavily, should be listed, without title, only in an entry under her own name. This article appears in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 13, one of two excellent periodical issues of recent years devoted to Margaret Laurence, the other being the *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, 27: it is quite absurd to list these volumes under Morley, Patricia. The author has some reason to be proud of her contribution to Laurence studies, but not quite to this extent.

Joan Coldwell
McMaster University

Women and the Constitution. Audrey Doerr and Micheline Cormier, eds. *Ottawa: The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1981. Pp. 223.*

Finally, a book has been published which is devoted to women and the constitutional issues that are of special concern to them. Not only does *Women and the Constitution* deal with issues of concern to women but it reveals how little input women have had in the constitutional process in the past.

Unfortunately, however, the book was compiled before the extent of women's involvement in the current constitutional debate and subsequent resolution was realized. The specific non-discrimination provisions of the Charter owe their renewed force to the efforts and lobby of women's organizations through-

out Canada. In addition Clause 28 of the Charter of Rights, which promotes the equal application of the entire Charter to both men and women, was added after intense lobbying and written briefs by the women of Canada. Furthermore, when the governments tried to make Section 28 subject to the "notwithstanding" clause, women rose in protest and forced the government to remove Section 28 from the application of the "notwithstanding" clause. Thus, it became clear that Canadian women were not prepared to allow governments to bargain away their rights simply because it was politically expedient to do so. While it is only a beginning of greater involvement by women in the constitutional and governmental process, it is a significant beginning as is the publication of *Women and the Constitution*.

Women and the Constitution is a collection of papers prepared and presented by women across Canada. It is written in a style that is comprehensible to those who do not have specialized training in the law, economics or sociology but who are interested in how the constitution affects their lives. The book discusses the constitution in general, human rights and the Charter, family law and social and economic concerns of women.

The first article sets the stage for the remaining papers by discussing, in general terms, the process of constitutional renewal. A clear definition of a constitution is offered along with the past history of women's relationship to the constitution. One of the earlier cases discussed raised the question of whether women were "persons" under the British North America Act. The Canadian Supreme Court decided that they were not "persons" but fortunately Canada still had appeals to the British Privy Council. It was the Privy Council who made it clear that women were "persons" and therefore eligible to appointment to the Senate.

This article also raises and discusses the question of whether an entrenched Charter of rights will provide the guaranteed protection for women's right that has not existed in the past. Further, there is a discussion about the proposal to give jurisdiction over divorce to the provinces. This brings forward a parade of horrors to add to the already difficult process of having maintenance or custody orders enforced if the spouse against whom the order has been made leaves the province where the divorce was granted. If each province becomes entitled to make their own laws relating to divorce with no guarantee of reciprocal enforcement of these orders in other provinces, women would find themselves in a very unenviable position if they had to enforce an order against a spouse who had left the jurisdiction. These concerns and others are dealt with at length in part III of the book entitled Family Law.

Following the introductory article, part II contains a more detailed analysis of women's human rights and the constitution. The past history of protection of women's human rights in Canada is discussed. The author points to the deplorable lack of strong guarantees in the past with respect to equality rights. When a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada deprives an Indian woman who marries a non-Indian man of her status as an Indian but permitted an Indian man under similar circumstances to retain his status, there is definitely something wrong with a system which then denies that this is discrimination on the basis of sex. The author also criticizes the initial version of the non-discrimination provision of the Charter as not providing adequate safeguards against the kind of decisions that have been made in the past. Since her article, however, the non-discrimination provisions have been changed to take into account many of her criticisms and those expressed by women's groups across Canada. However, a major flaw was introduced in the final accord

between Ottawa and the provinces when they agreed that some of the provisions would be subject to an opting out clause. That is, if a legislature chose to enact legislation which they did not want subject to the Charter they could make a statement to that effect, thus exempting the legislation from the application of the Charter. The non-discrimination section was one that was subject to being excluded by a legislature or Parliament. It is clear that women will have to continue their strong lobby to ensure that the legislatures never use this opting out provision to deny women's rights.

Section III of *Women and the Constitution* focusses on family law problems. There is a more detailed discussion here of the difficulties that will confront women if the federal government decides to decentralize the divorce provisions. The governments of Canada have obviously failed to heed the lessons offered by an examination of the American experience where their fifty separate divorce and property regimes have created havoc and untold suffering to thousands of individuals caught in the system. The concept of a unified system and reciprocal enforcement is vital at a time when divorces are increasing and families are splitting apart geographically. If the government does not provide adequate mechanisms for ensuring that spouses support their families then the ultimate burden of support will fall on the state itself. In addition, the already difficult problems of child kidnapping become more acute when you have an increasingly divided jurisdiction.

From the problems of divorce, the section moves to a discussion of matrimonial property regimes. Most provinces in recent years have changed their legislation to meet the need for 50-50 property splits—a concept that recognizes that a marriage is a partnership even though one of the spouses may not be working outside of the home. The authors also make suggestions about a more effective system

which could be established with the cooperation of both levels of government. Following this are two papers which discuss the special concerns of women in the Province of Quebec.

The remainder of *Women and the Constitution* is a look at some of the economic and social issues that affect women. The authors point out that far more women than men live below the poverty line, particularly elderly women. Added to these are women with children who are divorced, separated or unwed and must depend upon social services for their livelihood since the fathers of their children have never been compelled to pay or are unable to pay child support.

At every corner women encounter obstacles on the road to equality and the attainment of their full potential as human beings in this country. Women are victims of assaults not only by strangers but by their husbands in the supposed sanctuary of their own homes. When other women try to establish refuges to protect these women, they find themselves having to struggle for financial support from municipal councils who are not totally sympathetic to the problems nor able to fully comprehend the terrible situation a battered wife finds herself in. These are just a few of the social problems discussed in Part IV.

In the work force women still face tremendous obstacles. Many of the service industries where women tend to be employed are low paying—often not enough to support a family and to pay for day care facilities if they can be found. It is still not recognized that women are as capable as men and should be encouraged and supported to enter careers or acquire skills traditionally dominated by or learned by men. Women who choose to stay at home and raise their family are given little recognition for the contribution they make to Canadian society and are often cheated when it comes to pen-

sions and other benefits acquired by those in the "workforce". These women must depend totally on the man who supports them and if he leaves or dies they are left in a precarious situation.

Women and the Constitution discusses all of these questions and many more. These are all directly or indirectly related to the constitution and the current power structures in Canada. It shows why women have not been able to operate fully as equal partners in our Canadian society and strives to encourage women to become more activist as it relates to their rights and to the governments that are making decisions which affect their lives. The book contains a wealth of information which will be valuable not only to Canadian women but very revealing to many Canadian men who may not be fully aware of the difficulties on the path to true equality.

C. Beckton
Dalhousie University

Women, Power and Politics. Margaret Stacey and Marion Price. London: Tavistock Publications, 1981. Pp. 208.

Stacey and Price pursue two goals in *Women, Power and Politics*. The first is to provide a descriptive account of the evolution of the social and political status of western women, particularly since the rise of capitalism. Here the authors succeed in compiling a useful and often revealing summary of the development of gender relations in Britain in particular and western society more generally. The second apparent goal of this volume is to, in their words, "develop a distinctive feminist theoretical position" which links changes in political economy to the nature of the family and ultimately to the balance of political power

between the genders. Most people concerned with the interdependence of gender-based, economic and political subjugation, undoubtedly are familiar with the numerous conceptual dilemmas posed by such a theoretical undertaking. Unfortunately, the approach developed in this volume is unconvincing.

The book begins with a promising chapter concerning the study of women, power, and politics. The authors draw innovatively on numerous sources to demonstrate that mainstream political science, especially the behavioural-pluralist approach, has been too narrow in its conceptualization of political power and too formal in its focus to explain (let alone to ask the right questions about) the political status of women in western societies. As an alternative to traditional approaches, Stacey and Price adopt the concepts of public and private domains so that the impact of familial institutions is included in the study of women and politics. Few can take issue with the inclusion of informal power relationships in the study of politics or with the authors' hypothesis that the institution of the family and the ideologies which support it effectively exclude women from the public sphere. The authors, however, grasp the notions of public and private domains to pose a rhetorical question which guides their research in subsequent chapters: "How can it possibly have come about in so short a period of time that so many women have become involved in politics?"

Stacey and Price essentially turn the familiar question of "why so few women in politics" on its head. Their reasons for doing so emanate from the distinction between public and private domains. Extending their analysis back to the Roman period, they argue that "women shared power with men until the state was separated from the household, when it [the state] became the private domain of men." In other words, the balance of power between women and men was dramatically altered with