

phase of one-dimensional "radical feminism." She was a doctrinaire leftist at the time (and probably still is). After warmly praising Women in the Canadian Mosaic, this young woman referred back to the period of our acquaintance around 1970. "Those were the good old days!" she exclaimed with an air of nostalgia. And then she added rather wistfully, "But things have never been so simple since."

**Linda Kealey** A REPLY TO GWEN MATHESON

It is unfortunate that Gwen Matheson (whom I have not met) takes my critical review of Women in the Canadian Mosaic as a personal attack. Her reply is indicative of the low level of critical thinking in feminist circles (academic and non-academic). My review addressed the problems in the analysis and organization of the collection, not her personal motives. The lead sentence of the review, to which she objects, does not question her motives but rather those of the present government. My point is that not every feminist publication deserves a pat on the back and a chorus of "well-done."

The review takes issue with a number of critical areas:

1. The simple identification with, and distortion of, Nellie McClung and the brand of feminism she represented, namely, maternal feminism. The book lacks a critical discussion of the

phenomenon of maternal feminism (except in Deborah Gorham's piece) and does not delineate the class roots of this type of feminism. Clearly maternal feminism was dominant in Canada and the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. That is not the issue. The issue, in historical terms, is why did such a large number of feminists adopt this model in this period? How did these women come to adopt a philosophy with strong evangelical and missionary overtones, and with all the negative aspects of fear of the foreigner, race-suicide, etc., rather than a philosophy based on equal rights. Why did they shy away from class struggle and opt for "Christian stewardship?" The idea of the woman as redeemer of capitalism fell flat on its face in the period after World War I. Ballots in the hands of women did not challenge the basic inequities. McClung and other feminists failed to see problems of working women, of women without children and thus provided no "model" for them. Maternal feminism, despite Matheson's inadequate defense, provides very little in the way of a rationale for modern feminists precisely because it is based on late nineteenth century ideas of sex differences. The male is aggressive and active; the female, passive and nurturant. It is certainly significant that the discoveries of endocrinology in the early twentieth century undermined the idea of a special social role for women while failing to challenge the idea that biology is destiny. Various scientific

theories have been put forward to explain female temperament in the course of history. Surely the lesson to be learned is to distrust social theories based on biological evidence and to place science within a social context. Men and women are biologically different in some respects but women's reproductive and hormonal differences provide no proven basis for a superior (or inferior) role.

2. The second point the review made was the need to be more precise about the influence of class on female experience. It is not sufficient to say that "all women are working women." This essentially mystifies the vast differences between women rather than shedding any light. The middle class women's movement, past and present, has not been able to bridge those differences. This is not to deny, however, the social welfare benefits brought about by the reform movement. Social reformers of both sexes in the period 1880-1920 were genuinely distressed by the havoc wreaked on society by the coming of industrial capitalism. At the same time, profound ambiguity is evident in the reformers' attitudes to the working class. Social control was an integral part of social welfare. Similarly, in today's movement, feminists from the professional and middle classes bring benefits to women in the working classes. This does not mean that the problems of working class women are understood and dealt with directly. The gap has yet to be bridged.

It is my contention that recognition of class is central to any discussion of social movements, including feminism. This is not the same as insisting on a "one-dimensional view" as Matheson asserts; nor does a recognition of class lead to an analysis strictly focused on working class women in "overalls and kerchiefs." The issue of class has to be addressed generally.

3. The third and final point the review makes is the need to recognize the important influence of radical politics (on both sides of the border) in the making of a Canadian feminist identity. I never implied that the Canadian women's movement was a simple offshoot of New Left activities; rather, I was attempting to point out the influence of political ferment in the late 60's and early 70's on the directions taken by the women's movement. Similarly, in historical perspective, the early Canadian feminist movement was not immune to currents from Great Britain and the U.S. These interrelations have yet to be investigated in a systematic fashion. It is sufficient to say for now that Matheson's assertion of Canadian nationalism vis-a-vis the women's movement is a weak answer.

I, too, hope that Women in the Canadian Mosaic inspires others to produce books on the questions raised here; but, I also hope that, in the process, future authors and editors will seek out and accept critical commentary in the spirit that it is offered. "Sister-

hood" must recognize the need for stiff standards of analysis and must reject the pervasive tendency to see criticism as personal attack. If we cannot be critical of each other's ideas, how will we make any progress towards an understanding of women's role, past and present, in Canadian society?

**Eliane Silverman** AND

**Margaret J. Osler**

WOMEN IN SCIENCE: A DISCUSSION

James Watson's The Double Helix (1968) and Anne Sayre's Rosalind Franklin and DNA (1975) cast new light on the social roles of scientists at work. The Double Helix, describing the process of the discovery of the molecular structure of DNA, a discovery which won the Nobel Prize for James Watson, Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins in 1962, challenges the popular conception of science as a rational and dispassionate search for the truth. Instead, we find the protagonists engaged in a competitive race, ruthless in their quest for a solution. One of the victims of their single-mindedness was Rosalind Franklin, a member of the King's College, London, research group and a colleague of Maurice Wilkins. The X-ray diffraction data she had gathered on the DNA molecule provided a key element in the ultimate unravelling of the problem. At a crucial juncture in Crick and Watson's

model building, Wilkins, unbeknownst to Franklin, provided them with her data. Throughout Watson's account of this intriguing story, his personal contempt for Franklin is unabashed: he disdained her intelligence and creativity and found her deeply unattractive, criticizing everything from her appearance to her personality. A perfunctory epilogue, which Watson wrote after Franklin's early death in 1958, is coolly polite but does not change the overwhelming impression given throughout the book of an unimpressive, uninspired, yet aggressive and hostile colleague.

In response to Watson's book, Anne Sayre, a novelist and a friend of Franklin, attempted to redeem her friend's reputation. Sayre described Franklin's early inclination to science, her training at Cambridge in physical chemistry, her large number of important papers in that field and her well-developed sense of self-respect. Portraying a more attractive person than Watson had seen, she ascribed Watson's perceptions of Franklin to his profoundly hostile and demeaning attitudes towards women.

The juxtaposition of these two books raises significant questions about the role of women in science and, more generally, the sociology of scientific research. In a recent review in Atlantis, Thelma McCormack undertook to discuss some of these problems, particularly in the light cast by Franklin's career on discrimination against women