

Editorial

"... faintly the inimitable rose"

As we go to press with this issue devoted to "Women and Education," we hear rumours that a number of women's groups are disavowing International Women's Year. The reasons apparently range from an ideological rejection of a temporary year for an ongoing human problem, to dissatisfaction with the Canadian I.W.Y. slogan, "Why Not?", to disgruntledness over failures to win grants for special projects. Such stories might prompt the cynic to conclude that women are, typically, squabbling among themselves, scratching at each others's eyes. We repudiate these clichés.

We note that, even though there are healthy differences of opinion and innumerable different approaches to the academic study of women, there remains an extraordinary corporate spirit among the women involved, a sense of community, a spirit of sharing. This is felt, for example, among the faculty members and students currently working toward the establishment of Women's Studies at McGill. It may be true that some people find the term "sisterhood" slightly cloying, yet there can be little doubt that a kind of collegueship grows among women who are working so that members of their sex may have fuller access to education and professional recognition. This may not deny the dogma of "male bonding," but it should assert that women, too, band together in common cause. Thus, in this *Journal*, Marna Darragh shows how our predecessors at McGill came together to form the Alumnae Society, Nora Lozovsky describes the communal spirit among women seeking higher education in Tzarist Russia, and other writers examine how organizations may be formed for the solidarity of contemporary women students.

But despite the feeling of well-being that comes from successful co-operative effort, the tone of our papers is far from smug — we have touches of humour and we have much concern. Greta Nemiroff's expansive survey of women and education shows that much still has to be done before women have full educational equality, while

Margaret Gillett's paper, "The Seahorse Society," warns about slipping back into role stereotypes, and Madelaine Préclaire's contribution cites the aim as being "Non pas prendre la place du mâle mais trouver la sienne 'en tant que femme'" Christine Garside Allen offers details of an extremely well-conceived course in Women's Studies, the kind of course that should help bring academic credibility to the field, and Olga Favreau, scrutinizing empirical studies on sex differences in behavior, discovers biological determinism and bias. Paddy Webb, Deborah Eibel and Olivia Rovenescu add insights through their poetry and pictures.

While this is a fashionable time to be treating "Women and Education," these are not the first papers we have presented on the subject. Readers may recall, among others, F. R. Wake's "Changing Sex Role: Implications for Education" (Fall 1968), Louis Feldhammer's "The Liberation of Women and the Educational System" (Spring 1970), and Margret Andersen's "A New Subject: Women's Studies" (Spring 1974). Readers may also note that in the present number there are papers by three men — Michel Laferrière, Leo Ferrari and Richard Townsend. We point this out because, though this issue offers a particular opportunity for women to write about themselves, we have not precluded men from the roster. We do not want to exclude men, nor do we desire merely to imitate them, nor do we want to conform to the old domestic roles, fulfilling ourselves vicariously through others or by taking traditional "women's" subjects, or by doing "ladylike" things such as flower arranging and handwork. We hope it is clear from the material that follows that women do not want to be pale copies of men, but neither are they willing nowadays complacently "to compose faintly the inimitable rose."

m. g.