Margaret W. Rossiter — *Women Scientists in America: Before Affirmative Action, 1940–1972*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. Pp. 584.

Following chronologically and thematically her 1982 *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940*, Rossiter traces the social, political, economic, and scientific factors that affected the careers of women scientists in America for the years 1940 to 1972. Once more, her broad definition of science, ranging from anthropology to home economics to psychology to zoology, allows her to include a diverse group of women with wide-ranging experiences in the scientific world. The attention that she accords to race further strengthens this element of diversity in her work.

Picking up the reins of her argument at the Second World War, Rossiter begins by evaluating the impact of this event on the work experiences of American women scientists during the war years and after. As historians in other fields have discovered, apparent gains were fleeting as men scientists returned to their pre-war positions. Unlike in other fields, however, women were still encouraged, because of fears generated by the Cold War, to enter science to act as a reserve of ''scientific womanpower''. Yet within the institutions of science, universities, government, industry, and scientific societies, women continued to be marginalized. They were channelled into service-oriented professions as librarians, editors, abstractors, educators, and association staff members. Well-paid and responsible jobs were difficult to locate and land. Anti-nepotism rules in many cases further reduced the opportunities for women. To survive in ''Siberia'' (p. 186), many women found that they had to leave traditional areas of employment to seek fulfilment of their potential in non-profit institutions and self-employment.

Although women were entering science in increasing numbers in the 1950s and 1960s, Rossiter found that statistical data, a significant primary source, did not reflect fully their patterns of employment. While the data measured some aspects of their experience, it had ''many major gaps and failed to probe very deeply or meaningfully into certain other aspects of the women's situation'' (p. 94). Women were clustered in residual categories, such as ''other'' or ''miscellaneous'', which were ''insufficient in many respects, revealing in others, and politically repressive overall'' (p. 96). Rossiter concludes that government statisticians constructed data in such a way that women could be held responsible for their own lack of success in the scientific profession.

Rossiter focuses some attention on the restructuring of the field of home economics. Beginning in the 1940s it underwent a series of changes that increasingly masculinized the field. Universities felt that it held too few doctorates and too many women who were often older and single and who had no understanding of what the field entailed. To reflect supposed improvements, the name was changed to the more gender neutral one of ''nutritional sciences'', ''human development'', or ''human ecology'':

> By 1968 the old college of home economics, built up over the decades by a succession of devoted deans, was being forcibly, often brutally, renamed, restaffed, and reconstituted. To a large extent these ''reforms'' were symptomatic of the sexism, ageism, and misogyny of the age. (p. 166)

Similar changes were happening on a larger scale in the women's colleges. Women were ousted from their teaching positions as men with higher degrees were hired. Through a process of masculinization the leaders of women's colleges, both men and women, felt that they were upgrading their institutions. After three decades of prosperity, women's colleges were at an impasse. ''Although their purpose was still to train women for meaningful lives, because of their thinly disguised ageism, sexism, and perhaps even homophobia they refused to hire them'' (p. 234). Rossiter notes that, ironically, married women and their scientist spouses were finding opportunities in new state colleges that were also attempting to upgrade their programmes. Knowing that anti-nepotism rules in the established universities barred many women from scientific work, the new institutions specifically invited scientific couples to entice them away from more prestigious schools.

More than a record of the wrongs suffered by women scientists in America, Rossiter's research illustrates that women have been proactive in their attempts to ameliorate their marginalized and subordinate status. At all stages of this study she clearly documents the strategies advocated by women scientists to overcome their difficulties and to carve out rewarding careers in an indifferent if not hostile environment. Rossiter discovered, however, that some of their tactics created what she calls ''partial palliatives''. The clubs and associations that they formed provided women scientists with the opportunity to ''be as active as they had the time or the propensity to be, hold office or not, support certain (especially scholarship and fellowship) projects, and perhaps even run a major activity, such as an international congress for women'' (p. 334). The companionship and support afforded some women scientists by this involvement justified their existence. As well, the prizes offered by these organizations provided well-deserved recognition to women scientists. Rossiter emphasizes, however, that the reach of most of the women-only clubs was not extensive and that many of the women most in need of support, such as graduate students, did not benefit from their efforts. Moreover, the clubs endeavoured to coexist with, rather than to reform, other more dominant scientific groups. As such, these clubs and the prizes that they awarded were easily marginalized by men.

Rossiter maintains that, with affirmative action, women ''struck the path to liberation'' (p. 361). The efforts of women like Alice Rossi stirred greater consciousness among many women scientists. They began to recognize the detrimental effect of discrimination upon their careers and began to lobby for change. ''[F]rom 1968 to 1972 many women scientists, especially social scientists and research associates, found first their individual and collective voice of protest and then allied to press for political change'' (p. 361). Alliances were formed with other women's groups also advocating the formulation of legislation to improve women's rights. Their combined efforts resulted in ''a legal revolution in women's education and

employment rights'' (p. 382). The stage had been set for a more equitable treatment of women in science in America, although, as Rossiter correctly concludes, there were still battles to be fought and won.

Throughout this study, Rossiter presents an evenhanded discussion of the problems faced by women in science and the solutions advocated by them as well as those men and women who supported their efforts. Her elegant prose and cautious and well-documented analysis are strengthened further through judicious use of photographs and statistical charts and tables. Although dealing with one country, the United States, Rossiter raises issues and questions that can and should be applied to any study of the condition of women scientists in other countries, including Canada. Once more, Rossiter has provided a valuable contribution to the growing body of literature about women in science. She has again published a work that acts as a model for those historians studying the conditions of women in science as well as any potentially contentious topic. Once more, Margaret W. Rossiter leaves her reader waiting for the next installment.

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Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron, eds. — *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Pp. xiii, 376.

During the mid-1950s two South African tabloids, the *Golden City Post* and *Drum* magazine, ran articles about Gertie Williams. Gertie, aka ''Johnny'' Williams, was a Black, cross-dressing, lesbian gangster. The Gertie Williams story is only one of many fascinating historical fragments to be found in *Defiant Desire*, a wide-ranging anthology on lesbian and gay experience in South Africa.

Fragments figure prominently in *Defiant Desire*. In his very useful overview of South African lesbian and gay organization from the 1950s to the 1990s, editor Mark Gevisser explains that ''given the sparse documentation of lesbian and gay history in this country, I have had to construct a narrative from fragments'' (p. 17). Despite the hurdles, Gevisser and several other contributors sketch an outline of lesbian and gay history in South Africa.

Beginning in the 1920s with the migration of people from rural areas into cities and gathering momentum during and after World War II, we begin to see the emergence of homosexual subcultures in urban centres such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. Revolving around bars, private parties, public cruising areas, health clubs, and café-bios, these urban subcultures were populated primarily by white, middle-class, male homosexuals. Among white men, class divisions prevailed, as in the erotic system in which white, middle-class men paid for sex with ''rent boys'' who were usually working-class Afrikaner male youths. White, middle-class lesbian communities also began to form during this period, often organized along professional lines, through venues such as sporting clubs.

Arguments about the crucial roles of urbanization and the war, as well as the