

ers, artists, and collectors, and their stories show us who they were, why and how they worked, and the adjustments they had to make in order to pursue their scientific interests. Throughout, Shteir's emphasis is on their agency; what they were able to do and the choices they made as they pursued their botanical interests.

The idea that men and women were essentially different came to dominate early industrial society, and by 1800, gender categories were sharply drawn. Woman's "different" nature assigned her firmly to domestic space, and female education was designed to make women better wives and mothers: they were to learn basic science so that they could teach it to their offspring. The need for books to help mothers teach science provided an opportunity for female authors, and Shteir introduces us to the many women writers who made maternal and domestic ideology work for them: Frances Rowden combined botany with moral lessons, using science to teach domestic ideology; Priscilla Wakefield's *Introduction to Botany* (1796) provided a systematic introduction to botanical science, written for mothers and children. Works such as these helped to legitimize female involvement in science, while at the same time giving voice, authority, and an important role in scientific education to mothers and teachers.

Eighteenth-century attitudes toward botanical culture had allowed women both authority and access at many levels; in the nineteenth century, a newly-professionalizing science would deny women entry. It is with this exclusion, and with a detailing of the areas of botany left open to women, that Shteir concerns herself in the second part of *Cultivating Women*. As male interest in botanical science increased, women's science, based in the home and shaped by available resources, was pushed to the margins. In 1814, self-educated researcher Agnes Ibbetson found her serious experimental work virtually ignored by the Royal Society, despite an impressive publication record. In 1829, John Lindley's inaugural speech

as first professor of botany at London University called for a new masculinized and professionalized botany for a new age: scientific botany would not include women.

Shteir's use of gender as an analytic tool reveals the process by which the masculine "culture of experts" removed botanical authority from women's practice and female space, leaving them botany as sentimental, polite, or practical accomplishment. Popular texts by women authors, such as Jane Loudon's *Botany for Ladies* (1842, reissued as *Modern Botany* in 1851) did provide basic botanical knowledge to a wide audience; other texts, floras, manuals, and children's books proliferated, but these works, however subtly, acknowledged gender as the pervasive factor shaping participation in nineteenth-century botany.

By presenting the history of botany from the perspective of gender, with such a wealth of supporting detail, Shteir opens this important area to our consideration, and at the same time offers a fascinating account of women in all the complexity of their botanical involvements. She also illuminates the pervasiveness of gender in shaping the scientist, science education, and science writing—and this is surely an area demanding our further and significant attention.

*Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science*, by Ann B. (Rusty) Shteir is the 1996 winner of the American Historical Association's Joan Kelly Memorial Prize for the best book in women's history and/or feminist theory.

## WOMEN, WORK AND SEXUAL POLITICS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Bridget Hill. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.

by Miriam Jones

This volume is a re-issue of the 1989 hard-cover edition published by Basil

Blackwell. Since its original publication, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* has become recognized as a major work on the social history of women in the eighteenth century. The new paperback edition is most welcome, particularly for course lists.

Social history of working women in the eighteenth century is still an under-researched area, and Hill's initial literature survey indicates how much we need scholarly work on eighteenth-century women of the labouring classes. She begins by crediting Ivy Pinchbeck<sup>1</sup> for making visible the fact that working women did not spring into existence with industrialization; that women have always worked. She herself deals mainly with rural women; she examines the shift in economic production, from cottage-based industry to factory production, and its effects on women and the family.

Hill pays attention to women's *patterns* of work, as much of labouring women's work was not what we would consider "full-time" by current standards. This has made research difficult in the past, for if women did not fit into rigid occupational roles then they were in danger of becoming invisible to scholarly investigation. Hill explores the extent to which women worked, frequently at unwaged occupations. She highlights a narrowing of the occupations open to women as the century progressed: for example, women were progressively shut out of most apprenticeship programs and pushed into the less skilled (and less well-paid) types of agricultural work. Concurrent with this trend, of course, was the feminization of housework throughout the century. The text traces the important shift towards the sexual division of labour, for with the disintegration of the family economy, women and men were thrown into direct competition. There is an excellent chapter on domestic service, described by Hill as "by far and away the most important occupation for women after agriculture." Hill traces a process of "feminization" in this,

one of the few occupations still open to women.

The text traces the presumed stages of a woman's life: courtship, marriage, and widowhood. There is also a chapter on spinsterhood, as the eighteenth century saw a rise in the number of women living alone; Hill indicates how difficult a time this was for single or widowed women, given restricted economic opportunities.

Hill explores the consequences of the law on labouring women. Feminist scholars are no doubt familiar with the subordinate position of married women in general under the law, but a lot of working people were never legally married, and so their relationship to the legal system was a very different one from that of the middle and upper classes. For instance, Hill makes a comparison between the costly divorces of the upper classes, and the working-class "wife sales" that continued well into the nineteenth century.

The implications of Hill's conclusions are far-reaching: as for the contraction of women's economic role in the period, Hill quotes one commentator who maintains that women had not even recovered by 1975.<sup>2</sup> In closing she addresses the relationship of women's history to the rest of history and strongly argues the need for integration. Hill contextualizes her study within the historical tradition; in the preface, she writes that the text "is an attempt to bring [social and women's history] together." Such a project is especially important now in light of renewed interest in the eighteenth century. Solid, grounded, and scholarly, this is the type of text to which one returns again and again. It is rich in fascinating detail, and presents a fine model for an integrative approach to class and gender. Hill begins *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* with reference to Pinchbeck's influential 1930s text. No doubt her own work will fill that niche for years to come.

<sup>1</sup>Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*. Rpt. London: Virago, 1981.

<sup>2</sup>Eric Roberts, "Women in the British Economy Since About 1700: An Interpretation," cit. Hill 261.

## CARING AND CURING: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN AND HEALING IN CANADA

Dianne Dodd and Deborah Gorham, eds. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994.

by Sara Leiserson

*Caring and Curing* provides a long awaited collection of contributions on women and health care in Canada. This book reproduces seven historical accounts from 1880 to the present. Caring is linked to the domestic role of women and motherhood which later evolves publicly into nursing, while curing, on the other hand, is related to men. The term "medicine man," is far more common than that of "medicine woman." At present, these restricted ideas are beginning to change and empirical research is showing that the only success stories in healing are the ones where "caring" and "curing" work together.

Academic feminist research on caring has been showing the transition from unpaid informal care to a paid formal one, beginning with the unpaid informal care within the family networks based on marriage. The domestic realm of caring moved openly into the public realm during the First World War when women were needed to take care of the injured. From the start these women "... challenged mainstream medicine by giving nursing care, midwifery and prevention a more prominent place."

The book begins with three authors who explore nursing history. Beverly Boutilier, Meryn Stuart, and Kathryn McPherson offer an enlightening approach on modernized, professionalized nursing and its contribution to health care in Canada. Among other things, their work ex-

poses the fact that professionalization in nursing offered middle-class Canadian women a role in the public sphere with compensation and some degree of publicly authorized skill and authority. However, while nurses' self-identity was challenging mainstream medicine, nurses remained subordinate to physicians.

The next three papers recount the evolution of midwifery in Canada. J.T.H. Connor peruses the views of male physicians on midwifery in the nineteenth century; Dianne Dodd's chapter is interested in the views of the pioneer female physician Dr. Helen MacMurchy on maternity care; and lastly, Denyse Baillargeon surveys a group of working-class Montreal housewives of the 1930s who responded to the medicalization of maternity care.

These accounts show that contrary to popular belief women at the turn of the century were resisting the male chauvinistic medical system. Both Meryn Stuart's examination of a public health nursing project, and Denyse Baillargeon's analysis of a group of working-class Montreal housewives, demonstrate that those women did not passively adopt all the new ways that modern "experts" attempted to impose upon them.

The next chapter talks about an important but neglected group of women, the laywomen health reformers who were the connection between medical professionals and their patients. Their advocacy of health reform, and their advancement of the medicalization of child and maternal health, stresses the origin of public health. Baillargeon notes that the modern version of women's visiting is a result of public health with the emphasis on living a healthy lifestyle, religious commitment, prevention of illness, and a focus on education within the family. We owe to women reformers the visiting nurses' organizations, born to prevent infant and maternal mortality.

The last chapter by Deborah Gorham shows facets of women's experiences as physicians in training and in practice during the second half