

essays are really closer to local history than regional history. They have taken the advice of Gillian Marie in the introductory essay, "Writing Women into British Columbia's History," only in a limited way.

The above comments are not intended to discourage others lacking a strong background in history to embark on such projects as *In Her Own Right*. On balance this book is a flawed but credible contribution. Being reminded that Canadian women's history is only in its infancy, nonetheless one should also benefit from other's mistakes. To convincingly write a Canadian women's history which will endure, meticulous research, careful analysis, non-polemical interpretation and clear writing are a must.

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Divine Rebel: The Life of Anne Marbury Hutchinson. Selma R. Williams. *New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981. Pp. 246.*

Lifts of Power: The Writings of Rebecca Jackson, Black Visionary, Shaker Eldress. Edited with an introduction by Jean McMahon Humez. *Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981. Pp. 368.*

On the surface, these books have little in common. One is a popular biography of a well-known rebellious member of the seventeenth century Boston elite; the other, a scholarly edition of spiritual writings by a poor and little-known nineteenth-century black American. What these books share are female figures who were persecuted for their unorthodox behavior and authors who successfully bring a feminist

perspective to their respective subjects. To read these books together is to be impressed yet again by the visibility of women's struggle for equality over the centuries and the success with which patriarchal history has distorted or obscured this struggle.

Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) has suffered more from distortion than obscurity. Drawing upon the evidence of her chief adversary, misogynist John Winthrop, historians have judged Hutchinson's behavior variously as unfeminine or a menopausal aberration. No such interpretation, of course, is necessary. The doctrines of Familism, later dubbed anti-nomianism, as taught by Hutchinson, challenged the Puritan patriarchs of the Massachusetts Bay colony on many levels. It pitted the Doctrine of Grace against the Doctrine of Works, unbridled individualism against hierarchical authority, separation of church and state against quasi-theocracy and equality for women against the patriarchal family. It is little wonder that within four years of her arrival in Boston in 1634, Hutchinson was expelled from the colony and excommunicated from the church.

Author Selma Williams usefully devotes the first section of her book to an examination of conditions in England which influenced Hutchinson's world view. The cult of womanhood fashionable during the long reign of Elizabeth I, the brutal anti-feminist reaction under the Stuarts and the growing radicalism of Puritan theology gave women in seventeenth century Britain a challenging environment in which to define their role in society. Hutchinson's early socialization and exposure to Puritan doctrine, coupled with her exceptional mind and rare skills as a mid-wife, would make her a formidable person wherever she lived. Well before she left England, Hutchinson was accepted within the charmed circle of the Rever-

end John Cotton, began conducting classes for women in her home and was offending male divines by her outspoken pronouncements.

Arriving in Boston in 1634 at the age of 43, Anne quickly developed a wide following, especially among the women to whom she ministered as midwife, but also among merchants who were chafing under the authoritarian strictures of the colonial leadership. Anne Hutchinson was not the only person persecuted by colonial authorities but she was one of the most articulate and popular. It is therefore unfortunate that because she was a woman it has been customary for historians to discount her legitimate aspirations in almost the same words as her contemporaries who accused her of having “rather been a husband than a wife, a preacher than a hearer, and a magistrate than a subject”.

Williams has asked most of the right questions concerning Hutchinson’s life and her careful attention to context—including Anne Bradstreet’s poems which offer a rare insight into Puritan feminism—has resulted in a more balanced picture of Anne Hutchinson than has hitherto been the case. One wishes, however, that Williams had taken a more scholarly approach to her material. What the author gains in readability she loses in a too-general approach to the complexities of religious doctrine and the limitations of the Familist theology which Hutchinson seems to have espoused. These limitations are evident during Hutchinson’s trial when she justifies her public role by citing “inspired” interpretations of Biblical texts. These same texts were interpreted literally by her detractors leaving her dangerously exposed. Moreover, she defended her public power, adequately explained by her abilities as a teacher and doctor, on the shaky grounds of religious vision, a phenomenon easily dismissed by authorities whose power rested on

the solid foundations of patriarchy. Whether Hutchinson could have developed a more reliable feminist philosophy in the context of her times is difficult to determine. In exile she suffered a difficult miscarriage during her sixteenth pregnancy and a brutal death at the hands of hostile Indians and incidents such as these only served as proof for sign-seeking Puritans that Hutchinson had indeed been the instrument of the devil. The modern reader can only regret that she was not permitted the solitude of an old age to develop further her philosophy, or at least write her own account of what happened.

Until recently, Rebecca Cox Jackson (1795-1871) who did write an autobiography, has been condemned to virtual obscurity. Jean McMahon Humez is to be congratulated for bringing the writings of this remarkable woman to a wider readership. Jackson was an illiterate, free black woman, working as a dressmaker and living with her husband, brother and his children in Philadelphia, in the first decades of the nineteenth century. In 1831, at the age of 36, she had a “religious experience” after which she forsook her family obligations to begin a career as a preacher and ultimately became the founder and leader of a Black Shaker community.

Jackson’s straightforward account stands on its own, but is made more complete by the carefully researched, fifty-page introduction provided by the editor. Humez describes the African Methodist Episcopal tradition which predisposed Jackson to her religious preoccupations, making the important point that spiritual experience was one of the few roads to power for blacks—and women—who were denied other avenues for advancement in American society. Quite clearly, Jackson’s ability through dreams, visions and oratory to predict events, defy the laws of nature and in-

fluence people around her, was a vehicle for power in a society where people were impressed by such "gifts". Like Ann Hutchinson, Jackson soon found that her power extended beyond her own social group. While she earned the enmity of her confused husband and of the racial and religious bigots who opposed her public ministry, she was the object of awe by both white and black, male and female, in the evangelical circles in which she found acceptance. Moreover, Jackson settled upon a theology that did not contradict her feminism. Shakerism, with its female deity, the Holy Mother Wisdom, and her earthy messenger, Mother Ann Lee, sustained Jackson as few other religious doctrines could.

The reader will find in Jackson's spiritual odyssey much elusive but exciting evidence of women's culture and struggle for independence. The paradox, as Humez points out, is that Jackson's rigorous self denial in responding to her increasingly feminized "inner voice" gave her the opportunity for the most extraordinary manifestations of personal power, ranging all the way from predicting deaths to miraculously learning to read. Her inner voice also counselled a life of celibacy and sexual and racial separation, not surprising advice given the sexism and racism of the society in which she lived.

Jackson's spiritualism and her unorthodox lifestyle were viable personal solutions for survival in a world of civil war and economic revolution; but though her community survived her death in 1871 by nearly 40 years, it did not produce a lasting model either for blacks or women. Like Ann Hutchinson, Jackson's power had its limitations in the larger context but the experience of both women document the early dream of equality which found expression in dissenting religious doc-

trines but which, in the twentieth century, still seeks a functional reality.

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The Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies. Barbara Rogers. *Tavistock Publications, London and New York: 1981.*

This hard hitting and powerfully written book offers a major contribution to the study of women and development. It is well ahead of its field in the scope and depth of theoretical insights presented.

Rogers begins her analysis squarely in the backyard of Western societies, tracing the devastating impact of patriarchal ideologies, spread by all-male colonial administrators and enshrined in the emergent legal systems of third world countries. This ideology defines women's place as in domestic service within the home, both as practical reality and moral duty. This same ideology is institutionalized in the virtually all-male staff in higher echelons of international development agencies; to the degree that planners reacted with genuine surprise to any suggestion that women's work might have relevance for their projects. Statistical data banks devised by Western economists to guide and monitor development, obliterate from consciousness the enormity of women's contribution in food production for subsistence.

Rogers goes on to expose the crushing effect which well meaning development programmes, based on these assumptions, are having on the lives of women. Legislation designed to