excellent survey of the false ideas which collectively composed the mythology of woman's place in Victorian America, she fails to go one step further to address the question of why the mythology existed in the first place. Why, for example, would women believe professor of gynecology Dr. Goodell who said that if girls studied too much it would lead to "energy [being] withdrawn from the trophic and reproductive centres, and physical development [being] arrested." Collins Donnelly states that "since... medical doctors were considered major authority figures on many subjects women accepted the[ir] pronouncements." But she does not tell us *why* some women believed these so called authority figures. Were male "authority figures" involved in a conspiracy in order that a patriarchal society be maintained? Further, what connection can be made between science and the mythology of women's place in society? Collins Donnelly points out that the women who enjoyed sex used birth control; therefore there is a connection between science and women's freedom. But she does not elaborate upon this connection. Myths about Victorian womanhood did, and still do, exist. Collins Donnelly is able to show both the reality and the myths, but the book would have benefitted by some discussion about why the myths existed. The book is strongest in the sections where the author focuses on specific reform-minded women who rejected this Victorian mythology.

Mary "Mother" Jones, who was involved with organizing miners and railroad workers, and Sojourner Truth, a black woman who after being freed from slavery dedicated herself to winning the vote for women, as well as other reformers including Harriet Beecher Stowe, Catherine Beecher, Isabella Beecher Hooker, Victoria Claflin Woodhull, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman are some of the women around whom Collins Donnelly builds her book. Even among these articulate women there were those, like Catherine Beecher, who campaigned against discrimination in education yet at the same time held the view that "Woman is the chief master of the family estate in the Christian family." Although there was often infighting and disunity among these reformers, ultimately they too felt themselves imprisoned by the myth of the woman's sphere. This feeling bound them together into a sisterhood which fought, through various methods, as Collins Donnelly states, to "sweep away the myths" of Victorian womanhood.

The Victorian American Woman provides a refreshing interpretation of Victorian womanhood. No longer do we see Victorian women as sexually repressed and spiritually unstimulated. Instead we see women who in reality were beginning to free themselves from the shackles of a patriarchal society. Interesting and original sources, as well as a neat categorization of issues pertinent to women's experience, contribute to a unique view of women in Victorian America.

AFFILIA: JOURNAL OF WOMEN AND SOCIAL WORK

Vol. 1, Nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 1986). Feminist Press, City University of New York.

Elspeth Heyworth

Social work is a female profession led primarily by men. This statement, found in the conclusion of an article which examines differing ways of conducting social research, sums up succinctly the rationale behind starting up yet another academic journal. The call of this new journal, *Affilia*, is to move women's concerns from the periphery of the profession to its centre.

The articles in these first two issues struggle with developing feminist values, theories and knowledge as they relate to social work research, education and practice. They argue that the profession is over 62 per cent female and, not by chance, two-thirds of the people it works with are women. The problems of social work are the problems of women: the profession ought to be in the forefront of the understanding of women's issues, intervening on their behalf. Instead, these issues have become relegated to the status of a special-interest group.

The figures used are American but the situation is no different in Canada, where the perception of social work as a profession of soft-hearted, soft-minded women who rely on attributes of caring and intuition has frequently led to a countervailing emphasis on quantitative data, verifiable practices, formal and hierarchical structures. Not only have the contributions of women's particular strengths and values disappeared with this shift, but they have carried with them such issues as the global feminisation of poverty which have been de-emphasised to the point of becoming marginal.

And yet women were actually centre-stage both as workers and as focus in the profession's beginnings. In the Settlement House Movement, Jane Addams in Chicago and Sarah Libby Carson in Toronto put their considerable energies into social action and reform. Working with immigrant women and the conditions in which they found themselves meant that gender, race and class became central and inseparable issues. The journal would have done well to refer to these antecedents of the profession — no soft-minded women in that lot — and examine why the focus changed. A historical approach is used in articles on alcoholism and world poverty, but not to trace what happened to those feisty early women workers.

Affilia's content moves to and fro from the large-scale to the particular. The introductory article is rousing and quotable:

> *Women are an international class — the problems they face are basic, universal, timeless. Women are socialised to nurture, but no-one is socialised to nurture them. The ethic of self-determination has become a euphemism for women's oppression at worst and their invisibility at best.*

But it is in the particular and specific that we are drawn into the struggles of how to create change, how the female voice might get heard: instances of pay equity, rural unemployment, a mother's need to care whatever the cost to herself. As each article describes the particular subject and its connection with both writer and larger context, easy certainty is always avoided. The voice of definition and assurance is seen as the male voice; that of uncertainty and creativity leaves room for diversity and individual answers.

Many articles stress the need for a range of perspectives. Feminism has many meanings and there are many strategies for moving towards feminist visions. *Affilia* intends to provide a vehicle for these unheeded voices providing help for those whose style is lacking in grace or clarity; a role model is suggested by the female lawyer who drew up a legal contract for the journal in plain English. For my taste even more jargon can be jettisoned and more articles written by those who practice social work and not just those who teach it. Meanwhile *Affilia* has made an exciting start to showing how social work could make a difference to women, to men and to itself as a profession.