through the slow process of bringing the book to publication. In 1949 nineteen years after she had begun to write of Topaz, the story's central figure, *The Innocent Traveller* was published. It was preceded by *Hetty Dorval* in 1947, the first of a total of six books as well as many published short stores. All of them are memorable for her distinguished style, perfected by years of painstaking rewriting and revision. Collectively and individually her works are unique in their display of a keenly observant eye for people and place and a compelling combination of humour and irony. Among her contemporary writers only Gabrielle Roy's work has a comparable grace and humanity.

Both Ethel Wilson and Constance Lindsay Skinner are well served by their biographers. In his Preface David Stouck traces his interest in Wilson, her life and work, to 1966 when he read her novels in preparation for joining the English Department of Simon Fraser University. When he first tried to see her she was in seclusion and unapproachable because of her intense mourning for her husband, recently deceased. He did not meet her until 1976 when she was already in a nursing home and plagued by the gradual decline of her mental powers.

Meanwhile he had become well known in academic circles as a sensitive critic of her work. He has given us a wonderfully complete study of a woman who became one of our finest writers almost in spite of herself and certainly in spite of the very real traumas and repressions of her early years and the crippling arthritis of her maturity. Until she was completely disabled she continued to be, as Stouck terms her, a "grande dame," although she avoided centre stage and the well-deserved recognition that her constantly growing reputation offered. To a very few young writers, especially Margaret Laurence, she was a revered mentor and encouraging advocate.

Jean Barman is a Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. She is a sociological investigator, not a literary critic, and her work centres on Skinner's career in the light of her time and place as well as her gender. Barman found a wealth of material, both biographical and literary, on Skinner, especially in the mass of papers stored after her death by her publisher in the New York Public Library. The delineation of Skinner's life and work is meticulous. Barman writes with a sympathetic honesty that readily acknowledges the limitations of Skinner's work but also vividly sketches her circumstances: "There was no family money, no spouse, no patron to smooth over the rough patches ... Constance always had to direct her energies to the marketplace." She is a powerful advocate, persuasively linking Skinner with multitudes of others whose careers perforce followed the same path, a path that was so radically different from Ethel Wilson's. She deserves respect and remembrance as a foremother of women writers today.

SHE WHO CHANGES: RE-IMAGING THE DIVINE IN THE WORLD

Carol P. Christ
New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

REVIEWED BY JOHANNA H. STUCKEY

Carol Christ has done it again! Her recent book, *She Who Changes*, is yet another exciting examination of our understanding the divine as female. In it Christ explicates the works of process philosophers, primarily Charles Hartshorne, to produce "a feminist philosophy of religion." In the introduction, she professes herself surprised to be "waxing eloquent about a male philosopher, white and dead, old enough to have been [her] grandfather." So am I, since, for most of her career, Christ has been firm in rejecting male-dominated religions and philosophies. However, this new book, which Christ sees as "the fruit of a love affair" with Hartshorne, shows why the latter's work so entranced her.

According to Christ, process philosophy regards life as "in process, changing and developing, growing and dying," and, as feminists like Carol Gilligan have tried to show about the female self, it sees the self "as relational, social, embodied, and embedded in the world." Not only that but the divine is "the whole world." No wonder thealogian Christ finds this philosophy both satisfying and implicitly feminist!

In Chapter One, Christ outlines six "problems with God": absolute perfection and immutability, unsympathetic goodness, omnipotence, omniscience, immortality after death, and infallible revelation—all of which contribute to the creation of the gods of patriarchal monotheisms. In the rest of the chapters, she discusses process philosophy's solutions and demontrates that, in the main, they are compatible with feminist theology. Indeed, process philosophy agrees with most "feminist thealogies and theologies" in validating "change and embodiment, touch and relationship, power with, not power over, the world as co-created, this life rather than hope for another, and the fragmentariness of all knowledge." Still, Christ points out that the process philosophers she cites did not name their philosophy as feminist, a "rather serious oversight," but "no other way of putting things occurred to them." It is significant that, in a collection of Hartshorne's earlier essays published when he was almost one hundred

years old, the author changed only elements that were sexist.

In her final chapter, Christ tackles the issue of symbols, the lack of which constitutes, in Hartshorne's words, a serious limitation in a "purely philosophical religion." It is in the area of symbol making that Christ sees a feminist process paradigm as being of immense help. It can provide a framework for evaluating symbols for their "life-affirming imagery" and assist in defending usages. Christ then examines some actual symbols, such as goddesses Kwan Yin, Kali, and Sophia, and she explores ways of re-imagining deity symbols in prayers, hymns, and such. In her introductory chapter, Christ had decided to call the deity "Goddess/God," a practice that she employs throughout the book. She explains: "I understand the divine power to be beyond gender or inclusive of all genders." In this Christ seems to be opting for a kind of monotheism, called by process philosophy panentheism. It means that "the world is 'in' Goddess/God," and, like monotheism, it has an "intuition of unity."

In *She Who Changes*, Christ would have accomplished much if all she had done was to elucidate the arguments of process philosophy to make them accessible to feminist readers. However, she has made another major contribution to spiritual feminism in arguing that what both spiritual feminists and process philosophers need is "a new creative synthesis," a "feminist process paradigm." Though process philosophy shares with feminist spirituality a sense that restoration of the body and "the world body" is necessary, it has often failed to realize how crucial this is for women. Christ suggests that adding feminist insight to process philosophy will move its understanding of the body, the world body, and the divine body from the metaphysical plane to the physical plane. Going back to the six problems with God of her first chapter, Christ states that they are all "based in denial of the changing body and the changing world" and are "rooted in a way of thinking that is inherently anti-female." A feminist process paradigm helps with re-imagining the divine as in and of the world.

She Who Changes is an important addition to spiritual feminism and feminist theology from its foremost thealogian and should be essential reading for anyone interested in the latest thinking in the area.

DOMESTIC DEVILS, BATTLEFIELD ANGELS; THE RADICALISM OF AMERICAN WOMANHOOD, 1830-1865

Barbara Cutter
Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003

REVIEWED BY SHERRILL CHEDA

Seldom is history as captivating and illuminating as it is in Barbara Cutter's fresh look at antebellum women. Using original U.S. and Canadian sources newspapers, essays, poetry, lectures, sermons, books and illustrations—as well as extensive secondary sources, both African-American and white, from the antebellum era, Cutter analyzes the subtle shifts in gender and race relations in America during this crucial period.

Cutter's catchy chapter headings—"Drunk with murderous longing; the problem of the respectable murderess" and "The 'Fallen Woman' in Antebellum America"—are full of novel insights and make for most interesting reading. Cutter explores fascinating cases of white and African-American women accused of murder and how the gender ideology of women as being more moral, religious and nurturing than men (i.e. redemptive), deter-mined their guilt or innocence. Her exploration of actual cases and references to so called "fallen women" discloses a counter principle. "Just as women's duty as redeemers made them responsible for the nation's virtue, women who were not properly redemptive actively destroyed the nation's moral fibre." Cutter's brilliant research and feminist analysis of the complex prevailing gender ideology of the time turns many of our previous assumptions upside down. She finds underlying evidence that within this ideology, attitudes towards fallen women slowly changed until they were no longer seen as "evil" so much as women who needed protection. And then the question arose as to who would protect them and it was obvious that it had to be other women. How this gender ideology of redemptive womanhood impacted African-American women in the culture of racism is fully explored.

The ideal of redemptive womanhood was used in a number of ways by both races. Cutter's analytical skills bring a fresh eye to gender relations in antebellum U.S. as she points out the interdependency between the images of white women and slave women. The notion of redemptive women slowly changed from the 1820s/1830s until the 1850s when it seemed possible for both white and African-American women to be active in the public sphere as well as the domestic. They were able to bring their redemptive skills out of the home and into the public and to advocate against slavery and for women's rights, as these were moral issues within their domain. Those believing in Women's rights and African-American's rights often yoked them together under the "redemptive woman" rubric.

Studying various historians, Cutter