didactic fiction was resumed in the late nineteenth century with the "new didacticism" of the radical New Woman authors. While scrupulously situating her study in relation to other scholars' work, Wood mostly relegates her disagreements to the notes, which makes for attractive reading, as do the clarity of her arguments, the economic use of her evidentiary material, and her judicious conclusions.

DIVINE FEMININE: THEOSOPHY AND FEMINISM IN ENGLAND

Joy Dixon
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001

REVIEWED BY SAMUEL WAGAR

Although there is an academic and left political bias in favour of the secular which has shaped historical analysis of the feminist movement of late Victorian England, Joy Dixon argues eloquently and effectively that this movement was seen by many of its participants as primarily a spiritual crusade expressed through political means. It was not, however, a Christian spiritual crusade and, give the bias of Western Euro-American cultures to equate Christianity with religion, the spiritual base of large parts of the feminist movement—in the occultist new religion of Theosophy—has been rendered effectively invisible to historians.

Dixon has opened up a great new avenue of investigation in her excellent book by challenging the secularist bias of analysis of the feminist movement. In addition to the benefit of broadening our understanding of the influences which persist from these predecessors to the modern feminist movement, Dixon effectively demonstrates that Theosophy was a key link in establishing the feminists as anti-Imperialists (though bringing the ideas of Hinduism into Euro-American culture as honoured and valued sources of insight), that it was highly involved in the key debates of the time around sexuality, defining femininity and masculinity, and that Theosophy was a vital aspect of the third strand of socialist thought—ethical socialism, which was largely eclipsed by social-democracy and Marxism in the 1920s.

She traces the various stages through which the Theosophical Society developed, pointing to the contradictory aspects of notions of the 'essentially feminine', 'Great Mother' and the type of immanentist spirituality and 'Orientalist' Hinduism brought forward by the TS. Many of the debates and developments in the late Victorian feminist movement are stages that the modern movement has also passed through and by demonstrating a spiritual as well as political continuity between the feminist movements of the later Victorians and the present day, Dixon opens up the history of the contemporary movement as well. Theosophy is an ancestor of Wicca and its occultism is directly ancestral to the ritual magic of Goddess spirituality.

The spiritual wing of the modern movement is in danger of danger of detaching the spiritual from the political much as the TS did in the 1920s (although the strong presence of neo-Pagans in Gaia Resistance and the Pagan Cluster at the G8 protests in Calgary in 2002 indicate that the separation is by no means complete), and Dixon's history of those developments, bringing in the racial discussion, the sexual politics, and sexuality debates of the time, offers a valuable perspective on our own movement.

The links between the different left-wing, counter-cultural, and occultist communities were not limited to the UK in this period. In Canada the two leading feminists of the day Emily Stowe and Augusta Stowe-Gullen, together with a feminist associate of theirs, Margaret Denison, were among the founding members of the Canadian Theosophical Society in 1891. Leading members of the Canadian TS formed five of the eight members of the founding Council of the Socialist League in 1894, and many prominent intellectual and cultural figures through to the 1930s belonged to the TS.

By reintroducing the spiritual and by broadening out the term to include the occultist and non-mainstream religions Dixon has explained aspects of the analysis and activism of British feminists in the late Victorian period that were hitherto less clear. The research remains to be done in other countries by my own research in Canada indicates that very similar factors were in operation here and that, if anything, Theosophy was even more important in the Canadian feminist left of the time.

THE BITCH IN THE HOUSE: 26 WOMEN TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT SEX, SOLITUDE, WORK, MOTHERHOOD, AND MARRIAGE

Cathi Hanauer, Ed.
New York: Perennial HarperCollins:, 2003

REVIEWED BY SHARON FERGUSON-HOOD AND MARIE TOVELL WALKER

The Bitch in the House, a collection of essays from 26 women, is an intriguing exploration of love, sex, work, motherhood, marriage, divorce, and growing older. Contributors are from a wide range of

ages but most are in the young to middle adult range. They are all feminists and they explore what that means to them, and how they arrived at their current understanding of both meaningful feminism and its limitations or pitfalls. In spite of its apparent general appeal, this book is limited by the fact that the writers are all privileged and almost exclusively heterosexual.

The title is great. The mere mention of it generates conversation. All of us, every woman out there, have thought at some point: "Yes, I feel like such a bitch." Or our friends remind us that, "Yes, you are a bitch". This book holds up the goodness of being a bitch. It gets us to a place we need to be. It forces us to look at our own anger and resentments.

The essays are reflective. The writers tell their stories with humility, sharing what worked for them without prescribing for others. For some, confronting their own issues led to deconstructing their parents' relationships with a consequent surfacing of compassion and acceptance. For readers, too, following the writer's life events can be an invitation to a reflective path. The reader can think again about her own relationships, marriage, divorce, or motherhood, what it has meant to be a feminist and what it means yet again in the present.

One of the most revealing, honest and poignant essays was Elisa Schappell's piece, "Crossing the Line in the Sand, How Mad Can Mother Get?" It will comfort others to read and be reassured that they are not the only mother out there who came close to hurting her children and later feeling the pent-up emotion that comes with the knowledge of what could have happened in those moments of anger, resentment, and frustration. And then even later realizing how much they love those same kids and how repentant they are for their actions. Parenting is an emotional roller coaster ride and this is a gracious and compassionate essay that offers the reader reassurance she is not alone in the struggle to be the perfect parent.

Chitra Divakaruni, the award winning author of the novel, *The Mistress of Spices*, tells of the struggle she encounters living in sunny California and the expectations placed upon her by Indian relatives every summer, all summer long. Expectations and perceptions that grow out of our cultural background are a theme here.

"A Man in the Heart," by Hazel McClay, calls us to the task of asking that all-important question: what is really important for my life, what can I live without and what is it that I really have to have? McClay says that, "I look at the kinds of passions Charlie and I do have...a passion for high jinks and laughter, for music and the open road. For truth. For courage. Integrity. Imagination. And each other.... This is something that has never happened to me before. And it means more to me than a hundred breathless fucks." Tellingly, honesty at this level still isn't quite acceptable. McClay is one of three contributors who use pseudonyms.

Halfway through the book it felt like heavy reading. The theme that appeared to have taken over was getting a bit wearying. However, 3/4 of the way through the interest peaked again. At the end the reader will be grateful for the stories and the reflection that they stimulated.

MODERN WOMEN MODERNIZING MEN: THE CHANGING MISSIONS OF THREE PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN ASIA AND AFRICA, 1902-69.

Ruth Brouwer Comptom
Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002

REVIEWED BY CLARA THOMAS

Ruth Brouwer's subjects, Choné Oliver (1875-1947), Florence Murray (1894-1975) and Margaret Wrong (1887-1948), became professional women, missionaries in the broadest sense, in the years when the entire missionary enterprise was in transition. Growing concerns about professional training and a broadening and secularizing of missionary activities gradually replaced the early narrow, church-oriented ideal. No longer would it be taken for granted that women missionaries would work primarily, or solely, with women. These three women spent their careers in a mission world that was changing: each one of them was an important agent of its change.

Oliver, whose father was a business man and the first mayor of the town of Ingersoll, Ontario, became a Medical Missionary in India in 1902. Her sponsor was the Presbyterian Church of Canada (later the United Church). In 1929 she was appointed the first full-time secretary of the Christian Medical Association of India. For the rest of her life the upgrading of medical education in India became her project and crusade. She was fervent in her expressions of Christian faith, but she was also thoroughly secular and, indeed, ahead of her time, in her determination to improve medical training. She could not and would not be contained in any narrow definition of women's place in the practice of medicine: Brouwer quotes one colleague, "probably male," who spoke of "her manly sense joined to her female tenderness." The rising tides of Indian nationalism encouraged her in the task she had already set herself—the training of native Indians to the highest standards in medicine and nursing. She was a gifted and efficient bureaucrat who learned to navigate successfully the many roadblocks she encountered in achieving her goal. Her work left its lasting imprint on the entire medical missionary enterprise.

Florence Murray, a Presbyterian minister's daughter from Atlantic Canada, was the superintendent of a large mission hospital in Japanese-ruled Korea from 1921 to 1942 when,