I-you) also suggests liquid identities, becoming others, impersonation ("But what of a woman who tells another woman's story and believes herself to be her?"). A similar purpose is served by doubling and repetition (for example, images such as mirrors, skin on skin, echoes, eye/I—conflating desire and writing), or the way her name is inscribed on top of every other page: "nencenathalie." Interestingly, the idea of flow is paralleled by the format of her poems which are not discrete units but a narrative continuum of poems.

Voyeurism as a metaphor of writing is only one aspect of self-mirroring that characterizes her poems. Another related trope of self-reflexivity is the body/text metaphor, where reading the body equals reading a book of poems and skin/page become interchangeable, as in: "her body is covered in words i cannot read. of a language i do not understand." The images of the tongue as both an instrument of love making and the maker of poems underscore the eroticism of this poetry. The poem is a route to erotic pleasure, to amorous conquest:

> I have imagined myself to be
> the words they read aloud from
> a book that they
> cherish. Wet under their tongues.
> But to be spo-
> ken by them.

She celebrates both lust and poetry—sexual and creative passions, "bending her body elaborately to create interesting sounds to wrap around her lover's tongue." At the same time, writing can be worn like a layer of skin ("all that separates my flesh from the wind"); it can be a means of controlling madness and pain—her "demons" and "flies."

For Stephens, poetry exists in the repeatedly performed acts of translation—from the body into language and back into the body—binding the poet to the poem to the reader:

> I know the translation into words
> to be dangerous
> in telling of the pressure of her
> hand on my arm.
> And what of her lover who would
> have seen
> everything and surely had something to say. The
> adaptation imperfect from
> mouth to ear I am sure.

The reader and the speaker are both haunted by the unbridgeable gap between seeing and telling, the inadequacy of words, the impossible "entanglement of interpretation and truth," and the "what if" of a failure to translate experience into words.

Stephens rewrites in the lesbian imaginary the classic dilemma of life versus poetry, legitimizing the lesbian gaze in the process. Poetry and life are entwined in the title of *This Imagined Permanence* and again, when the speaker

> dreams of carving her lover's initials into her leg
> this imagined permanence nothing but a string of
> knotted contradictions...

Semantic substitutions of skin/paper, carving/writing, pain/contradiction, or words/scars clearly signal that Stephens practices writing on the body, "one of ink on skin." Ultimately, her poetry is "this imagined permanence," as opposed to "the impermanence of trust engraved in promises and park benches."

CULTIVATING WOMEN, CULTIVATING SCIENCE: FLORA'S DAUGHTERS AND BOTANY IN ENGLAND, 1760–1860

Ann B. Shteir. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

by Verna Linney

As we attempt to convince both ourselves and our daughters that science need not be gendered male, we can rejoice to find support for our position within the historical record. In *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science: Flora's Daughters and Botany in England, 1760–1860,* Ann B. Shteir richly offers such support. Shteir has applied the lens of gender analysis to a detailed examination of women's place and contributions within the developing science of botany, indicating how women were able, quite successfully, to "edge" into early science—and then how the increasing professionalization of science in the nineteenth century edged them out.

Women's extensive involvement in the early years of natural science has largely been missing from the record. As Shteir states in her prologue: "Conventional histories of botany, in line with traditional disciplinary assumptions, report on heroic (male) individuals and scientific advances; it is a historiographic style that excludes the kinds of botanical work women did and could do in earlier periods." Shteir's purpose is to remedy this omission, and her extensively researched and exciting exploration offers us the pleasure of discovering the lives and work of the many women who contributed to the development and dissemination of botany, both those who worked within gendered space, and those who pushed against its boundaries.

The eighteenth century saw the establishment of a firm linkage of women and femininity with nature and gardens. Botanical study and practice came to be associated with women, and encouraged as desirable activity. After 1760, the simplicity and clarity of the newly-accepted Linnaean system of botanical classification encouraged women's participation in scientific botany. Shteir's account skillfully interweaves theory and explanation with extensive detail and anecdote, bringing us into the living space of many women whose involvement with science was very much an integral part of lives lived as women. Of necessity, these women combined creativity and accommodation: they were practitioners, writ-

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 agenc; 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[1] 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,