was challenged by the women in his London congregation and mentions this challenge in the second edition of his classic work, *Of Domestical Duties, 1626*? In the Hutchinson case, it matters that the author was a widow, highly sensitive to family life, who lived in insecure times, even before the Civil War. She completed the work for children in the decade after the Restoration recalling the virtues of some of their female ancestors. These were neither examples of dependent, submissive housewives nor obsessive mothers (117, 155), even if they were eminently devout (Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson with the fragment of an Autobiography of Mrs. Hutchinson*, James Sutherland, ed. and introduction (1973), xviii-xix, 18-20, 284-5, 287).

Without a sensitivity to context in the works she has consulted, Cahn cannot savour important subtleties of domestic life and overlooks patterns of kinship, friendship and the still very real overlapping of spheres — public and private, secular and sacred, male or female. This interpenetration negated any powerful tendency toward the kind of rigidities and sharp boundaries of gender and social relations of public and private, outside and inside that Cahn's study of protovictorian ideology in the early capitalist era proposes. While carefully argued within its own terms, *Industry of Devotion* is chiefly a provocative study in gender and social theory rather than a convincing historical synthesis. The time is only just approaching for a new synthesis based on new paradigms. Regrettably, Cahn's interpretation too much resembles that of the pioneers in women's history. It cannot accomodate the new landscape of early modern history that is much more fully populated with both sexes and in which women from all levels of that complex society are far more visible than they were just a decade ago.

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Robert Colls — *The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield: Work, Culture, and Protest, 1790-1850*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987. Pp. xvii, 386.

The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield focusses on the transformation of a "hereditary caste of skilled pitmen" into a "market of Victorian labourers" (10). Working-class consciousness did not come readily to a group of men who saw themselves part of the aristocracy of labour, and the pitmen fought tenaciously against the Coal Trade's efforts to demean their craft and regulate their work. Yet, despite the success of the owners in establishing a system of free-wage labour in the mines, it is misleading, Colls believes, to portray the pitmen as passive pawns of the captains of industry. For with working-class status came a sense of solidarity, a collective force and discipline, which gave the pitmen renewed control over their work and culture. Indeed, the very factors which the workers perceived as degrading — "closely supervised labor, standardized bonds, uniform rates of pay and cross-coalfield negotiation — produced a new system which aided the development, in consciousness and practice, of trade unionism" (100).

As the story of the making of a community's working class, *The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield* clearly owes considerable debt to E.P. Thompson's germinal work on the English working class. Colls, currently a lecturer in History at the University of Leicester, traces the genesis of the book to "a doctoral thesis stung into life by outrage and perplexity at Edward Thompson's view of Methodism..." (xii). Having grown up in the vicinity of the northern coalfields, Colls sensed that the Primitive Methodism which predominated in the region had far greater cultural repercussions than Thompson delineated in *The Making of the English Working Class*. Although Methodist membership did rise in the coalfields after the collapse of political radicalism in 1819-1820, Colls does not think this necessarily represented a "chiliasm of despair". First of all, the proportion of Methodist members was always much smaller than those who attended society meetings, making the size of the membership rolls misleading. Secondly, there seemed to be no oscillating pattern between the growth of Primitive Methodism and the spread of Chartism and the National Miners' Association, which

Thompson argued should be the case. Rather than serving as an opiate of the people, religion often assisted the pitmen in their temporal protest, and Colls' examination of the culture of the northern coalfields suggests a much more complex interrelation than Thompson posited.

In patterns of culture as in the organization of work, Colls argues, appearances can be deceiving. Middle-class commentators were quick to praise the Primitive Methodists for their "pacification of the coalfield" (201). The hard-drinking and fast-living men and women who populated the coalfields of the eighteenth century were replaced by the sober and serious-minded men and the chaste and domestically-oriented women of the late nineteenth century. "Control of the body indicated moral discipline, and moral discipline indicated the state of the soul" (187); hence, converts to Methodism appeared more passive and complacent than the uninitiated. But these same characteristics may also have helped working-class organization by instilling in pitmen the self-discipline necessary for successful union action. Preachers who inspired the sinful to convert could use the same rhetorical skills to convince the exploited to unite against their oppressors.

Colls believes that patterns of coalfield protest were affected by the changes in worker status and the growth of Primitive Methodism in the years between 1790 and 1850. Eighteenth-century protest was marked by direct community action. Crowds took to the streets; buildings and machines were destroyed; distribution of hewn coal was disrupted; individuals were intimidated. By the mid-nineteenth century, forms of coalfield protest resembled those of labourers elsewhere in the Kingdom: "Machinery was no longer destroyed, troops were rarely required; the new accent was on union, benefit, education, the regulation of labour by labour" (306). The development of a working-class consciousness made pitmen more receptive to union appeals; the development of a Methodist temperament made them more amenable to union discipline. The Methodist pitmen possessed the inner strength and determination to fight, individually and collectively, for what was right.

Colls' discussion of the women of the coalfields is far less substantial and persuasive than his treatment of the pitmen. He claims that the "reformulation of women as model wives and mothers was as eargerly sought as the parallel reformulation of men as labourers" (137), but concludes that women did not show the same resistance to such social changes as their menfolk. The narrative simply does not support the rapid transformation of the women of the coalfields into the docile and passive ladies of middle-class England. Women who were actively involved in providing for the well-being of the community in the 1830s could not have been suddenly turned into model wives and mothers by the *Mines' Act* of 1842. "It was only a matter of time", Colls asserts, "before the ideology of 1842 came up from underground and applied itself beyond work practices" (140). It is difficult to imagine that this social change could have been effected in the eight years between 1842 and 1850, the closure date for Colls' study. The impact of class consciousness on the women of the coalfields is a story which still needs to be written.

Colls would like his work to be read by twentieth-century miners; indeed, the book jacket claims that it is "written for the men and women of the coalfield, past and present." The text was designed, the publishers assert, with these individuals in mind: "avoiding specialist language or jargon, it will be of interest to specialists and non-specialists alike." The preface includes a glossary of terms and acronyms and a series of maps, graphs and tables which familiarize the novice reader with the location, language and demography of the coalfields. Although these inclusions are useful to the social historian, it is hard to believe the terms would have to be defined for someone who has lived all of his/her life in the coalfields. It is not the jargon which would deter would-be readers from the working classes but the price. Thirty-five pounds is rather steep for any professional publication, but for a book that claims to be aimed at the working man, it is preposterous. *The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield* is a well-written and persuasively argued social history, but it is highly unlikely that it will be read beyond the hallowed halls of academe.

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