

changes in the academy, in terms of equity hiring and the establishment of new fields such as gender history. Iacovetta credits her successes to her approach; she assumed her colleagues were reasonable and would make the right decision if presented with compelling facts in a respectful manner. Van Kirk also helped many students battle marginalization through her work as a feminist teacher and mentor, as Valerie Korinek describes. And of course, as detailed by Elizabeth Jameson's historiographical chapter, Van Kirk's research was extremely influential, even outside of Canada, in fur trade, western, indigenous, and women's histories. Finally, Adele Perry writes that Van Kirk can inspire all scholars with her skillful interweaving of intimate and political histories. Perry argues for replacing the impossible goal of scholarly objectivity with a "located, embodied, and empathetic" history. (Incidentally, the chapter by Katrina Srigley admirably succeeds in this, delivering both a well-researched argument about the effects of Bill C-31 on indigenous women as well as a sense of connection to the women she interviews.)

The second part offers a taste of the latest research made possible by the path-breaking work of historians like Van Kirk. The essays are valuable, filling gaps in our knowledge or offering needed corrections to established views. Robert Alexander, for example, argues historians have been overly fixated on "tribal" histories, which obscure the multicultural composition of most bands of the northern plains. Some of the essays consist of straightforward well-developed research, such as Angela Wanhalla's chapter about intermarriage among the shore whaling communities in Southern New Zealand, and Patricia A. McCormack's portrayal of Fort Chipewyan's "fur trade mode of production" and pluralist fur trade

society. Others seem more embryonic or speculative: Robin Jarvis Brownlie's comparison of settler and indigenous understandings of race in Upper Canada and Victoria Freeman's exploratory essay on attitudes towards miscegenation in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, for instance. Similarly Kathryn McPherson's chapter may not answer the question of how white women actually interacted with indigenous people, but it effectively analyzes "domestic intrusion" narratives—white pioneer women's stories of surprise visits by indigenous neighbours. She finds these stories follow a particular convention: the visits initially produced fear, but the women survived with their dignity intact (usually helping the stranger), deploying the pioneer woman archetype of respectable nation builders (through the civilizing power of their domestic realm).

The essays are generally written in an accessible style, which makes them suitable for upper year undergraduates. Some readers may think the two sections of the book might be discordant, but they are kept harmonious by their connection to Sylvia Van Kirk. While the research essays are informative and introduce the type of exciting research we can expect to see more of in the near future, the book's most unique contribution is its self-reflective look at changes in the academy and the discipline of history, a useful reminder of the giants' shoulders that we historians stand on, which is both inspiring and humbling.

Jennifer Hayter is a fourth year Ph.D. student in history at the University of Toronto. Research interests include ideologies of race, gender, and the family, particularly the cultural and intellectual foundations of identity regimes. Her dissertation examines laws, policies, and everyday state ac-

tivities to reveal how the Canadian state understood and categorized the Métis in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

THROUGH FEMINIST EYES: ESSAYS ON CANADIAN WOMEN'S HISTORY

Joan Sangster
Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2011

REVIEWED BY MARLENE MENDONÇA

Through Feminist Eyes: Essays on Canadian Women's History includes an extensive compilation of essays, all written by distinguished historian Joan Sangster over a thirty year period. These carefully chosen essays are used as a gateway to reflect the changing concerns and debates that have not only shaped feminist historiography in Canada throughout the past thirty years, but are also a reflection of Sangster's past work and ideas. In addition to a number of essays previously published by Sangster in the past three decades, it also includes some new scholarly work published for the first time.

Sangster's book provides a wealth of information on different methodological and theoretical approaches to the history of Canadian women. In her explanatory introduction, "Reflections on Thirty Years of Women's History," which was written specifically for this collection, Sangster documents the significant work that has been done by prominent feminist historians in Canada since its emergence to the academic scene in the 1960s. In addition, she sheds light on new ways of thinking about

feminist scholarship and despite the varying subject matter in her essays, she seems to be concerned about how power relations are sustained and experienced. The following questions seem to drive her new work and the reexamination of her past publications:

does our writing effectively uncover and understand power relations in the past, and if so, how and why does it do this? In this regard, both gender and women's history can be considered 'feminist' history (or not), depending on their commitment to feminist politics and perspectives.

Ultimately, Sangster encourages us to think of gender and women's history "through feminist eyes" and view it as feminist history.

In each of her chapters, she includes a preface examining the ways in which the debates and theories have evolved since they were published and how her own ideologies have shifted over time. According to Sangster, new research questions are being posed that were not thought about before, new generations of historians are revisiting old problems that were never solved and more and more work is being published, which in turn, not only challenges previous notions of women's history but also sheds new light on the previous debates and theories used.

Although she does not aim to provide "a detailed 'from then to now'" history of feminist scholarship in Canada, Sangster argues that

Canadian women's history does have its own peculiarities, shaped by distinct patterns of economic and social development, by Canada's own version of colonialism, and by in- and out- migration, not to mention historians'

past preoccupation with the nation-state and nationalisms.

Her essays include well-researched and documented case studies, which demonstrate the ways in which Canadian women's history is shaped by social, economic and political movements. She particularly focuses on gender, class, politics, and colonialism. In *Discovering Women's History*, a preface to *The 1907 Bell Telephone Strike*, Sangster explains how her methodology and political stance attempts to understand the agency of women who worked in factories at the turn of the twentieth century. She draws on skillful empirical research and uses such sources as government documents, newspapers, personal letters, and company files to further explore organized labour movements. Her other essays, *Girls in Conflict with the Law* and *Criminalizing the Colonized* uncovers the history of criminality and power imbalances in the court towards girls and women—both Native and non-Native—who were socially marginalized. In her final essay in this collection, "Making A Fur Coat," Sangster argues that "feminist writing on fur as a gendered symbol for the nation, or as the feminine 'skin of the body' reflects the continuing influence of postmodern preoccupations with the discursive, representation, and sexual identities." Instead, she takes a path not taken in previous feminist scholarship and focuses on women's labour, bush production, manufacturing work and retail labour of skinning, sewing, and selling fur, all by women, in mid-twentieth-century Canada.

This groundbreaking work would be of great interest to graduate students and academics interested in feminist scholarship and women's lived experiences in Canada. Sangster does an extraordinary job at situating her work within the literature of

women's history and politics and engages with theoretical debates in feminist ideologies since its first emergence in academia. She goes beyond a historical examination of gender and women's history by interweaving her own experiences and challenges as a feminist academic conducting research in the field for over thirty years. This text is a vital contribution to the scholarship of Canadian women's history.

Marlene Mendonça is a doctoral student in Theatre Studies at York University. Her main research interests include: feminist theory, Girl culture and Girl Studies, Women in theatre and performance in the early twentieth century.

MR. FOX

Helen Oyeyemi
Toronto: Hamilton Hamish Canada, 2011

REVIEWED BY KATHRYN TRAVIS

Let me tell you something, kid. Love is like a magic carpet with a mind of its own. You step on that carpet and it takes you places—marvelous places, odd places, terrifying places, places you'd never have been able to reach on foot. Yeah, love's a real adventure! But you go where the carpet goes; after you've stepped onto it you don't get to choose a goddamned thing.

Helen Oyeyemi's novel, *Mr. Fox*, is a complicated matter. Complicated, I must add, in an incredibly powerful and generative way. The vignettes that Oyeyemi unfolds through the lives of the foxes are a haunting reminder of the dynamics that saturate all kinds of relationships (especially those of an intimate kind) and of power in its very