custom locked into the church he had been brought up in. To switch allegiances took an exceptionally strong conviction and a strong individual. To marry a Roman Catholic was, for either man or woman, completely out of the question, unless of course, one had been born into the faith. Exceptions, of course, happened—but the pressures of Kinship and Community were very strong. This was certainly still the case when I grew up in the ’30s in a small town in Southern Ontario. In fact, I believe that the present furor about the issue of “same sex marriage” which is often linked in the press with “family values” might well be more specifically linked to the continuing pressures and prejudices of kinship, community, and religious affiliation.

One of the strengths of this study is the frankness and charm of the many quotations from the letters, journals, and diaries of Noël’s sources. Abraham Joseph, for instance, the son of a wealthy Jewish importer of tobacco and snuff, is a notably social bachelor who in the mid-19th century obviously suffered no discrimination in Quebec City society: “Because of religious food laws, he also declined most of the oyster parties which were frequent at certain time of the year: ‘Oysters are now and then, and their frequent services as a midwife, but also for her lifelong code of helpfulness and caring, especially offered by women to other women in times of childbirth and illness, is both moving and heartening to read: “The early nineteenth century has been associated with the rise of individualism and the ideology of the self-made man, but the reality, for most individuals, was that they were nurtured and supported by a dense matrix of family, kin and friends.”

In Upper Canada, Catharine Parr Traill has long since become an icon of women’s solidarity, not only for her frequent services as a midwife, but also for her lifelong code of helpfulness and love. Noël has widened our knowledge and appreciation of a host of other women like her.

LEARNING TO BE OLD: GENDER, CULTURE AND AGING

Margaret Cruikshank
Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003

REVIEWED BY SHERILL CHEDA

Do Not be misled: This is not a self-help book but a scholarly exploration of how cultural attitudes determine what it means to grow old in the United States, based on research, with recommendations for policies that could improve the situation, as well as a comprehensive bibliography. The author is well qualified as a Women’s Studies lecturer and faculty associate of the Center on Aging at the University of Maine. This text is such a gem that it is tempting to quote from it non-stop. The main research finding of the book is “the current incidence of illness among old women and men, far from being inevitable, is more determined by culture than by biology.” A medical system and political policies which stressed preventive medicine and exercise programs would go a long way to improving this situation for many older citizens. The way we age depends on where we live in the world, as aging is culturally determined. The US medical model that sees aging as illness and infirmity is not universal. Older people are more than just a bundle of illnesses that need medication. Many elderly people have illnesses from which they fully recover. Class, race, sex, education, and income are all-important factors in how we age and how healthy we are as we age. Research into aging indicates that what we call aging results from lack of exercise, smoking, other addictions, poor nutrition, falls, and stress. Cruikshank points out that there are no broken hips in the jungles.
The Psychology of Gender, Second Edition

Alice H. Eagly, Anne E. Beall, Robert J. Sternberg, Eds.
New York: The Guilford Press, 2004

Reviewed by Susan Thomas

Reproductive rights, HRT, the use/abuse of anabolic steroids, same sex marriage, leadership by women, commercial stereotypes, domestic violence, sexual and gender harassment, challenges faced by women entering the skilled trades—news reports and coffee time conversation abound with these subjects. These issues are the meat of debate amongst ordinary citizens. Yet, they also fall under the purview of those who carry out relevant research. The "psychology of gender," a widely ranging and contemporary concept, now also finds its niche in biology, sociology as well as in the various approaches to psychology. It is the focus of undergraduate and graduate courses; the professional literature lists hundreds of titles. Given this vast and varied range of information and interest, the publication of The Psychology of Gender, Second Edition is a significant undertaking on the part of editors, Eagly, Beall, and Sternberg.

In an expanded second edition, The Psychology of Gender presents a banquet of information on the study of gender. With a mission to foster discussion and debate amongst scholars from several fields, the editors selected samples of "best work" with various approaches to clarify the similarities and differences between men and women. These ideas are presented as a continuum where men and women overlap in their characteristics and behaviours. In creating this second volume, the editors stress that the field of research has advanced to the point that current inquiry is now based on increasingly subtle questions about the contextual patterning of difference and similarity.

How does biology play a role? The first chapter discusses the extent to which the prenatal environment and exposure to gonadal hormones influence the development of the brain and subsequently gender identity, personality, sexual orientation, and social behaviour. The second considers the effects of the hormones in men and women with a particular focus on cognitive functioning. Next, an evolutionary approach begins with Darwin to explain gender differences.

Conversely, the following chapter highlights the manner in which society socializes male and female infants into their adult roles and stresses that cultural design (messages from parents, peers, the media, school systems, and organizations) rather than "biological endowment" brings about stereotypical attributes and roles. The subsequent chapter explores the role that parents' expectations play in endorsing stereotypes and in responding differently to male and female children. Feminist psychoanalytic theory follows with an examination of how unconscious and unresolved conflicts influence personality and how gender is always coloured by the personal unconscious. In studying how we connect with those around us; authors of another chapter find that both men and women define themselves socially, use social networks, and draw on social values but differ in where they look for intimacy and connectedness.

Social constructionism asserts that meanings for concepts are not fixed but are constructed through language, social activities, and other social processes and are constantly changing in differing situations. Hierarchal structures which lead to gender inequalities in status and social power form the basis for discussion in two chapters. Social role theory of sex differences and similarities is used to explain that in many societies men...