

but also to conduct a detailed analysis of the Calvados region, and examine the intricacies of one localized area. Desan carefully and thoroughly excavates court cases, legislation and political debates, état civil records, and a host of other sources, which bring the spirit and practice of the family reforms to life. She is also adept at re-creating the details of particular family crises and dilemmas, which as Desan notes, gives the historian a unique opportunity to “peer into households and assess the contours of this revolution within the home” (6). In addition to marriage reform, Desan devotes chapters to the implications of the divorce law of 1792, the changes made to inheritances, and the debates over determining paternity and legitimacy. All of these issues are impressively woven together within a rich historiographical context to demonstrate the ways in which the family was indeed an important testing ground for the high ideals of the revolution, and at the same time, was crucial to the forging of the revolutionary state. Family reform was also transformative in the lives of average French citizens, and Desan is at her best when she tells the stories of the men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, who could now claim the lofty goals of the new republic for themselves and apply them to their own lives. In this way, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* is a tremendous achievement, one that demonstrates the potential of cultural histories that foreground social practice, and will be of importance not only to historians of the period, but to those who deal with cultural constructions of gender, and the interactions between politics and lived experience.

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**Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa, eds., *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).**

*Sisters or Strangers?* is a collection of articles investigating how women’s experiences in Canada were shaped by their immigrant, ethnic, and racialized identities. Spanning close to two hundred years of history, this volume begins by looking at the creation of white settler communities in North America and concludes with a discussion of how women not only dealt with the process of immigration, but how they remembered the reception they faced as non-Anglo Canadians in post-war Canada. In between, the collection tries to excavate the lives of women by dealing with a number of important issues from nation building, interactions with the state and public institutions, the representation of women as symbols, family relations and the transmission of culture, to an examination of experience and memory. The editors select works and themes that highlight not only the diversity of women’s experiences, but also the impact of national allegiances and borders on the lives of women. As the edi-

tors argue, “in a post 11 September 2001 world, it is very important to acknowledge how concepts of nation and citizenship are racialized” (8).

Looking at the stories of first, second, and third generation immigrants, the authors try to unpack how gender, race, ethnicity, and class shaped the identities of minority women within the Canadian landscape. The essays look at how women, operating within their own context and according to priorities established by their own ethnic or racial groups, maintained cultural connections within families, communities, and ‘their’ people outside of Canada (9). For example, Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill examines rates of intermarriage among Armenians and the efforts that were made within mixed-families and communities to retain and transmit language and traditions to their children, and Midge Ayukawa’s piece focuses on the important roles Japanese mothers played in maintaining pride and self-respect among Japanese children in the face of overt racism. In a society in which white Anglo-European identities were privileged, it is important to appreciate how minority groups maintained and encouraged their own cultural distinctiveness.

Questions of nation and citizenship are also central to this collection. In their interactions with the state, minority women faced serious obstacles. Immigrant women were not considered to be ideal ‘citizens,’ and did not receive the same privileges of citizenship allocated to most Anglo-European Canadians. These women were subject to greater scrutiny and regulation by the state. Franca Iacovetta and Valerie Korinek’s essay shows how efforts by the government after World War II to introduce Euro-North American concepts of a healthy ‘balanced diet’ were also about cultural dynamics and power. Food served as an important signifier of difference, and health campaigns run by the state created normative definitions of behaviour that excluded large segments of the population (190).

Other articles in this volume show how some women came to the attention of the state under less than ideal circumstances. Barrington Walker and Lisa Mar use court records that ensued from incidents of domestic violence in an attempt to make African Canadian and Chinese women visible. Both Walker and Mar found that as members of a visible minority these women faced a ‘double bind.’ Walker’s examination reveals that although the bodies of Black women became visible through court records, these women remained invisible as subjects (11). Similarly, Mar’s work shows that the interests of individual Chinese women were often obscured or ignored by the male members of the Chinese community, as was the case with Lin Tee. She claims that the Chinese community put forth in the defence of Mr. Lee emphasized Anglo-European gender ideals of the Christian family and male patriarchy to the detriment of Lin Tee. In the face of racism immigrant, ethnic, and racialized communities often had to forgo the rights and personal interests of individual members, particularly women, in order to ‘fit in.’ Given the multiple and varying categories of race,

ethnicity, and class that women occupied, it is important to acknowledge how such diversity produced very different boundaries within which women were forced to operate.

This volume offers a much more complex picture of the lives of immigrant, ethnic, and racialized women. More importantly, especially after 9/11, this collection documents the impermanence of national boundaries, and by recognizing multiple and shifting identities and loyalties, the authors have raised important questions about citizenship and definitions of nationhood. The activities of the state are informed by who and what it means to be a 'Canadian' and the authors of this collection have attempted to unpack such categories as unnatural, socially constructed, and subject to revision.

*Sisters or Strangers?* is written as a response to an earlier work on the history of immigrant and ethnic women in Canada entitled *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History*. A groundbreaking work, *Looking into My Sister's Eyes*, was a collection of articles published in 1986 that used the concept of 'sisters' or 'sisterhood' as an organizing framework. This 1986 work emphasized the connections between women despite diverse backgrounds, and tried to locate a 'middle' or 'common' ground that all women occupied based on a shared experience of 'sisterhood.' In contrast, *Sisters or Strangers* seeks to complicate the framework of 'sisterhood,' "recognizing that the historical experience is so often characterized by dichotomies" (6). Instead of trying to trace the similarities that exist between women, the authors of this collection have sought to excavate the multiplicities of women's experiences. Epp, Iacovetta, and Swyripa recognize and assert that women can simultaneously be oppressed and oppressive, that agency and victimization are not mutually exclusive, and that common ground can co-exist quite comfortably alongside alienation and marginalization. These authors argue that questions of difference and diversity are an essential component of understanding the lives of women in Canada.

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**Nadja Durbach, *Bodily Matters: The Anti-vaccination Movement in England, 1853-1907* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).**

The received image of the nineteenth century anti-vaccinationist as an ignorant, anti-modern extremist tilting against the incontrovertible evidence of the benefits of vaccination has started to dissolve in recent years. While the movement did attract more than its share of cranks and eccentrics, more recent scholarship has tended less towards ridicule than to rehabilitation, rendering anti-vaccinationism as a genuine expression of a sometimes radical proletarian culture and its proponents working-class heroes defending themselves against the depreda-