

BOOK REVIEW

***Sisters or Strangers?: Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History.* Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa, editors. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004; photographs; xi + 418 pages; ISBN 0-8020-8609-8; \$29.95 (paper).**

Sisters or Strangers?: Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History aims to expand existing representations and analytical frameworks of women of colour in immigrant and women's history. Identifying the 1986 collection *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History* as a ground-breaking, yet lacking, study of female immigrants and minority women in Canada, the editors and the seventeen contributors of *Sisters or Strangers?* challenge the earlier text's premise of women of colour in Canada as sisterly members of closely knitted, and rather homogeneous communities. Instead, the contributors believe that women of colour in Canada in the past two hundred years were often strangers to the wider white societies, men in their own communities, and even among themselves. At the same time, the contributors are cautious, and I would argue quite successful, to emphasize the inextricable intersections of the female subjects' ethnicity with the subjects' sex and class positions. The articles illustrate comprehensively ways in which women's positions as *strangers* in Canada were and remain fluid. They demonstrate how the subjects' marginalized and victimized realities are sometimes partnered with impulses of joy, community-building, and renewal in Canada's struggles with its "multicultural" identity and colonizing history of Aboriginal people in the past two centuries.

Using an impressive array of sources including court files, magazines, oral interviews, newspaper articles, immigration policies, and even Canadian food guides, the contributors' works are organized into six parts. They are: 1) nation-building and discourses, 2) race, gender, race and justice, 3) immigrant working-class women encounter the state, 4) immigrants, gender, and familial relations, 5) symbols and representation, and 6) history and memory. Adele Perry, Cecilia Morgan, Enakshi Dua, Barrington Walker, Lisa Mar, Varpu Lindström, and Franca Iacovetta and Valerie J. Korinek investigate pervasive discourses of racialized femininities and masculinities, as well as white Canadian political and social investments in these gender constructions in the late 19th century and early 20th century. In particular, Walker's and Mar's studies of the abuse of immigrant women of colour illustrate how Canadian stereotypes of Black and Chinese femininities and masculinities respectively reinforce patriarchy and racism, while further alienate women of colour from both their majority white society and men within their own minority communities.

Focusing on personal interviews, contributors Ester Reiter, Karen Flynn, Paula Draper, Marlene Epp, Midge Ayukwa, Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, and Gertrude Mianda document accounts of immigration and settlement of Jewish mothers, Black nurses, female Holocaust survivors, Mennonite immigrants, Japanese mothers, Armenian families respectively. The contributors articulate their subjects' negotiations between the need to assimilate and their desires for the preservation of home cultures and history among themselves and future generations.

While the contributors are effective in their arguments for complex intersections of racialized, gendered, and class positions fundamental to women of colour's experiences in Canada, the subjects' collective subscription to and participation in institutionalized heterosexual projects such as marriage, reproduction, and primary parenting remain undertheorized. The power of institutionalized heterosexuality is central to, yet rarely addressed, in the discussions of the nationalism-building potential of mono-racial marriage and reproduction among Perry's white European immigrants, Dua's Indian "imported" wives, Ayukawa's first and second generation Japanese, and Kaprielian-Churchill's post-genocide Armenian families. Also, as homemakers, caregivers, mothers, wives, and principle transmitters of culture, the female subjects of this book embody a wide range of gendered roles that arose from *and* are naturalized through heterosexual *and* heterosexist patriarchy. In making explicit the heterosexual nature of such projects, the editors and contributors could have exposed ways in which (hetero)sexuality intimately *shape* racial, sex, and class positions in the policing of women of colour's places of power and powerlessness, pleasure and danger in the Canadian society.

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