

the second. The result of the tension between the two imperatives has been a recurrent pattern of educational reform followed by a partial retreat in which some aspects of the reform were kept... The pattern of reform and retrenchment ultimately served both the autocracy and the Bolsheviks badly” (199).

This well-written but quite dry monograph will appeal primarily to bureaucrats, school officials, teachers, and politicians with an interest in the institutional history of education. For that reason, more than one reader will likely lament the lack of more personal testimonies from students and teachers. Their inclusion in the narrative would have further enriched this thorough study.

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Michele A. Johnson and Funké Aladejebi, eds.

Unsettling the Great White North: Black Canadian History

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022. 632 pp.

Unsettling the Great White North addresses the dynamism of Black Canadian history and poses provocative questions about its past, present, and future. Disrupting the view of Canada as a “White place and space” (3), this expansive collection examines Black Canadian experiences as these unfolded across several centuries and around the country, looking beyond Ontario and Quebec, to include lesser-known Black histories in places such as Edmonton, Alberta and Vancouver, British Columbia. This expansive approach reflects the co-editors’ argument that the book “foregrounds the multiplicity of Black experiences in Canada and challenges any conception of Blackness/es as linear, unchanging, homogenous, and recent” (7). While *Unsettling the Great White North* makes a significant contribution to Black Canadian history, it is immensely relevant to Black Studies in its debates about identity, memory, the politics of place and geography, and the unfulfilled promise of emancipation in the afterlife of slavery.

The book is organized into eight thematic sections with twenty-one chapters that span diasporic and transnational Black/African experiences. It foregrounds “resistive-resilience strategies” (7) as a feature of Black life in hostile conditions; and its contributors are among the leading, interdisciplinary scholars and authors working in Canada today. The introduction is followed by a chapter (Bookend I) titled “The Future Has a Past: Canadian History and Black Modernity” (31). Written by historian Barrington Walker, this well-placed chapter draws on the scholarship of early writers of Black Canadian history (e.g., Robin Winks, Daniel Hill, and Fred Landon). Walker recognizes their foundational contributions to a discipline that refused to engage Black histories in Canada while presenting a thoughtful critique of how they told this history (e.g., Landon’s romanticized notions of the Underground Railroad; Winks’s emphasis on “Black subjection and abjection,” 34). Walker presents

such critiques not as a dismissal of these early written histories, but with a focus on their limitations, and as a dialogue to advance the intellectual possibilities of Black Canadian history. The final chapter in the collection (Bookend II, Daniel McNeil) explores how Black Canadian thought is contested in Black intellectual traditions in conversation with scholars such as George Elliott Clarke and Rinaldo Walcott and what this could mean for challenging Canada's view of itself as a multicultural nation.

In the distinct voices of a generation of scholars attuned to, and comfortable with, complexity and liminality, *Unsettling the Great White North* addresses questions related, but not limited, to enslavement (Natasha Henry), migration (Claudine Bonner), community creation/organizing (Amoaba Gooden), domestic labour (Michele A. Johnson), and education (Carl E. James; Funké Aladejebi). While these issues are not new in their impacts on the lives of generations of Black Canadians, the uniqueness of the collection is its invitation "to move beyond simple storytelling, fact gathering, and archival spadework" (9). The book charts new ways for thinking about "what we want Black Canadian history to do" (9) in consideration of its relationship to settler colonialism. This provocative invitation is taken up in chapters that move beyond a description of historical events to situate Black people as agentic, using technologies and other strategies to express their subjectivities, without losing sight of the racial horrors that they face(d) in, and beyond the borders of the Canadian state.

The collection prioritizes the historical experiences of Black women writing against the tendency to erase their presence and agency. Chapter 20 presents a powerful and unapologetic Black woman's "Voice of Authenticity" (Esmeralda M. A. Thornhill) to assess a legal case that "constitute[d] a multipronged frontal assault on *Authority vested in Black female skin*" (545). With its review of the Supreme Court of Canada's 1997 landmark decision, *R. vs. S. (R.D.)* this chapter demonstrates how the practices of anti-black, gendered racism that shaped the state's treatment of Black women in slavery continues to manifest in today's institutions to undermine Black women's credibility.

The dearth of knowledge about enslaved Black people points to archival challenges. It also calls for creative methodologies to bring their lives more fully into view and "to recuperate enslaved Black subjects from white-authored records that documented their subjugation" (101). Overall, the book both centres and accomplishes this goal, signaling the importance of telling history from Black people's standpoints, rather than from the perspectives of those who hold the instruments of power. To this end, historians can creatively re-imagine the archives by, for example, re-reading advertisements that sought to recapture enslaved persons who stole themselves from bondage. Specifically, readers learn that "enslaved women depicted in runaway advertisements rendered themselves visible, as worthy of some level of recognition, in a system that treated them as invisible" (94). What new knowledge then, can such advertisements yield, if they are differently interrogated? By asking such questions and creatively re-reading the archives, authors in the collection engage with emerging trends in Black studies that view the archives as living, changing, and open to degrees of interpretations to bring invisible Black lives into view.

Unsettling the Great White North, therefore, offers important examples of how future scholars may re-think, re-tell, and expand Black Canadian history. Walker makes a compelling case for historians to examine “bioarcheologies” and “the traumas that are archived within us, quietly ticking away in mitochondrial DNA, literally collapsing the past and the present” (39). The collection further signals the knowledge production potentialities of “artificially intelligent/algorithmic and cybernetic expressions of Blackness and the Black modern” (39), and it argues for moving beyond celebrations and Black “firsts” (37). This proposition is important, for it means that the collection addresses Black histories in its past and present formations *and* sets the stage for additional histories to be written (e.g., Black queer and trans* lives; Black people who live with disabilities); further, the collection proposes methodologies to be developed, and gestures to the untapped analysis of the body and the use of emerging technologies to expand the documentation of Black Canadian history.

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Jane Martin

Gender and Education in England Since 1770: A Social and Cultural History

London: Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2021. 304 pp.

In *Gender and Education in England Since 1770: A Social and Cultural History*, historian Jane Martin aims to address current issues in the English education system by “bringing the past into a critical dialogue with the present” (1). In particular, Martin offers a few lenses through which to better understand how gender inequality, streaming, the devaluing of (women) teachers, and meritocracies continue to exist in—and, in some cases, dominate—educational institutions. The notion that an individual—child or adult—“working hard enough” can achieve anything prevails despite the limitations that individuals face in education such as labour demands, limited parental support, bullying, and class-, race-, and gender-based forms of discrimination. Covering the period from the European Enlightenment and the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century to the present day, Martin traces the historical roots of these issues by examining the role of “[g]ender/power/politics [in] inform[ing] gender/power/knowledge relations in education” (19).

Over three parts and nine chapters, Martin examines the intimate relationship between gender, class, and education in England since 1770, with substantial attention to the twentieth century. Education here includes elementary and secondary education (public, private, and boarding schools) as well as higher education (universities, colleges, and teachers’ training programs). Through biographical and intersectional approaches to autobiographies, diaries, letters, and interviews of former students and teachers, Martin centres women and girls while recounting the changes and continuities in British education.