

my cat, also, my slave” (p. 37). In chapter two, Rushforth takes readers from indigenous North America to the trans-Atlantic world of French imperial slavery. By interrogating how French society understood slavery and justified its existence in their Christian nation, Rushforth argues that Nigritic functioned in the French geographic imagination as a space “uniquely suitable as the presumptive source of slaves” (p. 104). Chapter three explores French efforts like Jacques Raudot’s 1709 Ordinance that made Indian slaves in New France “like the Negros of the Islands” (p. 137).

The second half of the book hones in on the various ways indigenous people – as slaves, allies, or enemies – were involved in the Indian slave trade. Chapter four explores the complex alliances formed amongst free indigenous peoples and French officials that were sealed through the exchange of people; an exchange that produced “creative tensions that neither French nor Indian participants could fully control, and to which everyone would adapt with terrific creativity” (p. 197). While French administrators supported an alliance with the Foxes to gain access to the interior, and the Foxes sought an alliance with the French to protect themselves from their French-allied enemies, French-allied Indians undermined these diplomatic efforts by continuing to trade Fox captives to the French as slaves: ultimately this allowed French-allied Indians like the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and the Illinois a way to oppose colonial power.

Chapters five and six examine the exploitation of Indian slaves by French colonial slavery. In chapter five – which is entitled “The Custom of the Country,” a phrase linked in Canadian historiography to the important work of Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer Brown – Brett Rushforth explores the carnal relations of indigenous, Metis, and French peoples, both free and slave that were structured by ideas of domestic slavery. The book’s final chapter takes us into the households along Rue Saint-Paul in Montreal where fully half of all colonists owned both their home and an Indian slave. In an effort to recover the details of enslaved individuals’ lives, this chapter recounts the individual histories of Jacob, an Indian slave of a Metis master (p. 302); Mary Joachim, a Fox slave whose master, Julian Trottier dit Desrivières, accused her of theft in 1725 (p. 320); Jacob, a Fox slave shot in 1728 at point blank range by Jean Gaboureau dit La Palme (p. 338); and Marie Marguerite, who was sold to Marc-Antoine Huard de Dormicourt only to be exported to Martinique (p. 347). This may not have been a “slave society” – a peculiar historiographical distinction used to establish hierarchies of slavery – but the cultural, legal, and social practices Rushforth uncovers certainly cast New France as a society that hoped to become one.

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STRONG-BOAG, Veronica – *Fostering Nation? Canada Confronts Its History of Childhood Disadvantage*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011. Pp. x, 302.

Veronica Strong-Boag provides an important and much-needed analysis of the genesis and implementation of the fostering of children in private homes and institutions in English Canada. She explains that the book “explores the missteps and detours of a century and

more of child protection efforts by Canadians and their governments as they confronted the specter of children judged neglected, abused, deficient, and delinquent” (p. 3) from the late 19th century. Beginning in the early twentieth century, placing children not identified as deficient or delinquent in the homes of respectable families was perceived to be a preferable nurturing environment to institutional care. Foster families were sought to nurture children who were either voluntarily surrendered for care by a biological parent (often due to economic circumstance), or, children removed from parental care by the state due to poverty, neglect, or violence. Strong-Boag deconstructs how fostering strategies adapted over time and in response to changing government policies and public perceptions. She explains that although Canadians and their governments were slow to offer economic assistance to the needy after Confederation, economic support for fostering was an extension of the “social supports” introduced in the interwar period that included mothers’ allowances, unemployment insurance and family allowances (p. 35). She finds that in any decade, race, being a newcomer to Canada, (dis)ability, kinship ties, and economic disparity shaped the contours of foster care in English Canada. Furthermore, Strong-Boag reveals the gendered stereotypes of absentee parents that prevailed for much of the history of fostering: non-custodial mothers were condemned as failures more often than non-custodial fathers unless the father had been charged with abuse or refused to provide financial support.

Strong-Boag confesses that “*Fostering Nation?* is not a happy book. It struggled throughout its creation to escape submersion in the tide of human tragedies that threads throughout the history of child welfare in Canada” (p. 1). She found that kindness and protection were sometimes lacking from those acting in the “best interest” of children or adolescents. Strong-Boag gives a voice to three distinct groups within this volume: “the boys, girls, women and men at the centre of public and private childcare initiatives” (p. 5), the biological or ‘first families’ and their relatives or “kin”, and “foster or surrogate parents, those adults who have assumed responsibilities for girls and boys who are not their sons and daughters by birth” (p. 6). The extensive inventory of government and NGO reports help Strong-Boag to locate and situate the experiences of these three groups within the larger histories of child welfare, child protection and foster care. She identifies child savers John Naylor of Halifax and J.J. Kelso of Toronto as early advocates of foster care. “State-run, sanctioned, and subsidized fostering spread across Canada in the first decades of the twentieth century to replace parents who could not meet the standards of respectable child rearing” (p. 71). Overall, Strong-Boag argues that fostering in English Canada showed greater tolerance for racial minorities, recent immigrants, the poor and unwed mothers after 1960 but often failed first families and fostered youngsters, despite Canada’s status as an affluent capitalist nation (p. 202).

*Fostering Nation?* is an extension of Strong-Boag’s earlier work on adoption in Canada. Taken together, these works emphasize the importance of recognizing colonial attitudes in the policies confronted by First Nations parents and their children and how such attitudes excused “the sixties scoop” of First Nations children (p. 175). The national narrative provides insight into the policies and public attitudes toward child welfare and child protection in Canada. Strong-Boag divulges how the 1982 *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was a catalyst for greater agency among First Nations in response to past detrimental approaches to the care of Native children (p. 100). “Social security, adoption and fostering programs

evolved to confer greater entitlement to the benefits of childhood on First Nations, non-European, and other marginalized populations” (p. 205). While, in 2009, 1 in 6 Canadian children lived in poverty “after several decades of neo-conservatism’s zealous attack on social security” (p. 1), Strong –Boag “takes comfort from the ever-widening recognition that justice for children requires justice for adults as well” (p. 206).

Strong-Boag further reveals some of the ironies of the early reformers whose best intentions were to promote foster care as a means of child saving. By the mid-twentieth century, orphanages and institutions built by charities, fraternal organizations and churches were no longer viewed as the optimum settings for nurturing children. However, eliminating all types of institutional care was impossible. Group homes and institutions supervised by state agencies remained necessary for specific groups of children and adolescents in care - including those with severe disabilities or exhibiting at-risk behaviors. Strong-Boag unearths the somewhat naïve early twentieth century belief that respectable middle class families would be drawn to fostering in sufficient numbers by altruism and Christian duty (pp. 72-75). This perception failed to account for the economic burden of unfunded fostering and the unanticipated social stigma of accepting non-kin children in need into middle class homes: child savers hoped foster children would become good, middle-class citizens. Necessity, however, would dictate the use of working-class host families as foster families, a trend that was accompanied by a history of inadequate financial assistance for caregivers (p. 172). When viewed historically, the late-twentieth century effort to return to the use of kin networks for foster care ultimately revived a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century solution. Today, a rising number of grandmothers and other kin are assuming parenting responsibilities for youngsters who have absent or unfit parents (p. 23).

Veronica Strong-Boag’s history of fostering in English Canada adds a laudable new dimension to the history of childhood and family in Canada. It is an important companion study to her earlier work on adoption and a praise-worthy addition to the series *Studies in Family and Childhood in Canada* published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

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TYE, Diane – *Baking As Biography: A Life Story in Recipes*. Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010.

Diane Tye begins her excellent critical biography of her mother, Lauren Tye, with something of a contradiction. Despite having devoted much of her life and energy to baking for her family – and to the unending series of church functions that came along with being the wife of a United Church minister – Tye’s mother admitted later in her life that she did not enjoy baking. The book then begins with the question: “How could it be that she spent so much time at an activity that held – at least apparently – so little importance for her?” (p. 4) In her attempt to answer this question, Tye presents one of the best recent Canadian works in food studies as well as a thoughtful and important feminist contribution to the social history of postwar Canada, and the Maritimes more specifically.