

MORGAN, Cecilia—*Creating Colonial Pasts: History, Memory, and Commemoration in Southern Ontario, 1860-1980*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015. Pp. 217.

The literature on the politics of commemoration and the uses of public history has grown significantly in recent years. In *Creating Colonial Pasts*, Cecilia Morgan makes a distinguished contribution to this body of work. More a collection of connected essays than a monograph, Morgan examines how a number of mostly forgotten individuals contributed to the development of historical memory in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and among the Six Nations of Grand River and Tyendinaga. In four well-crafted chapters, Morgan demonstrates how committed individuals and groups looked to history to make sense of the present and shape the future by creating a sense of place that both drew upon and reworked larger colonial narratives of nation and empire.

Morgan's first chapter focuses on school principal, local historian, preservationist, and museum director, Janet Carnochan. Convinced that "knowledge of Niagara-on-the-Lake's past would stimulate, educate, entertain, and uplift" (p. 11), Carnochan enthusiastically embarked on a crusade to illustrate how the grand narratives of Canada's national and imperial past came alive when examined through local events and individuals. Unlike the academic historians of her day, Carnochan's history went beyond military and political battles and included the everyday lives of ordinary people, including women and families, African Canadians, and Indigenous peoples. Particularly important to Carnochan was the ability to tell the stories of the past through objects and personal recollections—sources held suspect by her professional peers. Despite her commitment to producing a more "complete history" (p. 36), Carnochan had her own blind spots, particularly the Irish and labourers, who did not fit into the narrative of progress and prosperity she crafted. Nonetheless, Carnochan succeeded in demonstrating that history could be "practiced on a wider canvas" (p. 59) than that found in the scholarly writing produced during her lifetime.

In her second chapter, Morgan explores how the Six Nations of Grand River used the past as a means to address their current condition and to think about their future in a settler society prone to historical amnesia. Early on the Ontario Historical Society shared with the Six Nations a common goal in celebrating their contribution to the imperial cause in the American Revolution and the War of 1812 and the progress they had made in 'civilization'; the enthusiasm of its members waned, however, when Six Nations leaders sought the society's support in their efforts to secure legal equality and treaty rights from the federal government based on their unique history. Significantly, the Six Nations found a greater willingness to support their cause at the local level within the Brant Historical Society whose white members recognized the capacity of the history of the Six Nations to situate their locality within the grand imperial narrative as well as provide "an exotic attraction." (p. 66) The most interesting insights provided in this chapter comes from Morgan's analysis of the very different perspectives on the significance and meaning of Six Nations' history held by Indigenous historians Elliott Moses and

Milton Martin. Moses constructed a history of progress that celebrated the Six Nations' integration into Canadian society. He used his version of the past to criticize the paternalism of the Indian Act as well as those activists who invoked history to justify bestowing special status upon Indigenous peoples. Martin, on the other hand, was more concerned with correcting misrepresentations of his people and recapturing the "authentic" (p. 83) history of the Six Nations and their pivotal role in Canada's history. For Martin, Indigenous peoples should not have to choose between maintaining their identity and enjoying the full rights of citizenship. Morgan convincingly demonstrates how history carried multiple, and sometimes conflicted, meanings among the Six Nations.

The fascinating career of teacher Celia File provides the basis for Morgan's brief third chapter. File reluctantly accepted a teaching position at Tyendinaga in 1921 where she developed a deep appreciation of and empathy for the history and life of the Mohawk. File went on to study history at Queen's University where she produced a thesis on the life of Mary Brant and her influence among both the British and the Iroquois during the Revolutionary War. Frequently overlooked by other historians, File argued that Mary Brant was a genuine heroine who played a decisive diplomatic role before, during and after the Revolution. Breaking the boundaries of traditional history, File demonstrated that Brant's contributions were intimately related to her roles as wife and mother. Later in life, File wrote a memoir of her time spent at Tyendinaga. Morgan evocatively explores how File's memoir was not simply an account of what happened, but also a reflection on the meaning of her own life in light of her subsequent experience. The result is a penetrating consideration of the creation of place and meaning in women's lives.

The final chapter of *Creating Colonial Pasts* examines the groups and individuals intent on using the past to make Niagara-on-the-Lake an appealing tourist destination from the 1860s through to the 1970s. Morgan provides a nuanced analysis of the multifaceted forces behind the efforts to define the town's identity and shape its landscape in light of past associations, current realities and future aspirations. She convincingly demonstrates that the impetus behind tourism cannot simply be reduced to economic interests or state agendas but must be located in the specific context of complex local conditions. Tensions over which sites, events and individuals merited commemoration, which class of tourists were deemed desirable, and the roles and responsibilities exercised by different levels of government and community organizations underlay discussions of tourism and the construction of Niagara-on-the-Lake's identity and landscape. The scope of this chapter is much more ambitious than Morgan's earlier chapters and several episodes call out for a more in-depth and detailed treatment.

These four chapters are united by a common concern with demonstrating "how constructs of the past have their own histories." (p. 172) In her treatment of Janet Carnochan, Elliot Moses, Milton Martin, and Niagara-on-the-Lake's heritage and tourism promoters, Morgan offers a compelling analysis of how narratives of the colonial past are rooted in local particularities and in how individuals thought historically. Particularly noteworthy are this work's contributions to the role of female and Indigenous historians and their conceptions of women's and native

peoples' place in the past. *Creating Colonial Pasts* provides a welcome recovery of the contributions of the local historian whose insights and approaches were often far more interesting and penetrating than their academic contemporaries.

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QIAN, Nanxiu – *Politics, Poetics, and Gender in Late Qing China : Xue Shaohui and the Era of Reform*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2015, 376 p.

Spécialiste de littérature de la Chine classique, l'auteur sort de sa zone de confort et nous plonge au cœur de la période de réformes de la fin de la dynastie Qing, prenant comme pivot central les « Cent jours » de 1898. Plutôt que d'opter pour le récit habituel qui souligne presque uniquement le rôle joué par les hommes influents de la dynastie, elle s'intéresse au destin d'une écrivaine talentueuse et prolifique, Xue Shaohui 薛绍徽, ainsi qu'aux membres du réseau intellectuel et familial qui l'entourent. S'inscrivant à la suite des études pionnières de Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers* (Stanford University Press, 1994) et Mann, *Precious Records* (Stanford University Press, 1997), l'auteur poursuit l'objectif de sortir les femmes réformatrices de la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle de l'oubli dans lequel elles ont été plongées par les historiens en Chine et en Occident. S'appuyant sur le genre comme catégorie sociale, elle propose une analyse minutieuse, reposant sur l'interprétation de sources littéraires, incluant les écrits des réformatrices comme Xue Shaohui, ainsi que ceux des frères Chen Shoupeng et Chen Jitong. Des classiques et des œuvres plus anciennes sont utilisés pour appuyer l'argumentaire et approfondir les myriades d'allusions intertextuelles qu'on y retrouve. Maniant avec brio les sources poétiques, l'auteur offre une perspective rarement offerte, mais pourtant très riche qui témoigne de la complexité sociale de l'époque, permettant d'apporter de nouvelles lumières sur cette période mouvementée. Loin d'être « silent and passive spectators, waiting to be liberated from themselves » (p. xi), les femmes instruites de la fin des Qing sont des agents actifs impliqués dans les enjeux cruciaux de la période des réformes.

Le livre est divisé en deux parties, selon une approche chronologique et thématique. La première partie débute par une présentation de la culture poétique Min de laquelle est issue Xue Shaohui (p. 23-58). Ensuite, l'auteur dresse le portrait d'un éminent représentant de la culture navale de Fuzhou, Chen Jitong (p. 59-86). Un troisième chapitre s'articule autour du mariage entre Xue Shaohui et Chen Shoupeng, métaphore de la rencontre entre la culture poétique féminine et la culture navale, symbole de modernisation (p. 97-119). La deuxième partie nous présente l'évolution de la carrière de la poétesse, dont le point central est la campagne pour l'éducation des femmes de Shanghai en 1897-1898 (p. 123-158). Par la suite, les derniers chapitres mettent l'accent sur les œuvres littéraires et poétiques, ainsi que sur le travail de traduction effectué par le couple après la