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**Shore, Marlene, (ed.). *The Contested Past: Reading Canada's History — Selections from the Canadian Historical Review*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Pp. xiv + 353. CDN\$29.95 (paper). ISBN: 0-8020-8133-9**

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In Canada, a vigorous conversation has continued from the late nineteenth century to now about the nation's history and how to approach it. This extended debate is an important dimension of our intellectual tradition. Much of this conversation has been featured in the *Canadian Historical Review* [CHR], "the flagship journal of the Canadian historical profession" (xiii). Marlene Shore, professor of history at York University, uses excerpts from the journal to prospect this rich vein of thought. Her study demonstrates that fundamental questions about Canada's history have been debated since the founding of the *CHR* in 1920. Hence, contemporary debates about the best ways to study and interpret Canada's history are really nothing new.

*The Contested Past* is composed of a preface, a lengthy introduction (62 pp.) and then selections (editorials, letters to the editor, articles, and book reviews) from the *Canadian Historical Review* (1920-1995). These selections are divided into four parts organized by theme — Nation and Diversity, 1920-1939; War, Centralization, and Reaction, 1940-1965; the Renewal of Diversity, 1966 to the Present; and Reflections. Shore begins each part with a commentary that effectively establishes the relevant historical contexts and concisely introduces important contributors to the journal, as well as their themes. The volume is an excellent introduction to central topics in Canadian history and historiography.

Shore's long introduction sketches out the structure and content of her book. She also concisely charts the origins of the *CHR*, and notes the critical role played by the University of Toronto, its press, and its professor of history George Wrong. The *CHR* had two foundational aims: "to promote high standards of historical research and writing in Canada" and "to foster the study of Canadian history" (xiii). Part I includes excerpts gleaned from 1920 to 1939 that reveal Canadian historians grappling with the purpose of doing history. This section shows the persistent nature of key questions: Is history a science? What is the proper subject matter of history? What social role should the historian play? Part I also shows Canadian historians working to define the nation in relation to Britain and the United States, studying Canada's

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environment and resources, and examining early European—native contact. Shore concludes that the *CHR*'s interwar era was characterized by thematic and methodological eclecticism.

In Part II (1940-1965), Shore finds certain centralizing tendencies in the thinking of Canadian historians. The war heightened a concern to preserve the principles of western civilization. Donald Creighton was influential in elevating political history and biography over economic, social, and native history. After the war, historians worked to redefine the nation in the new world context, and examined Quebec nationalism and the role of the federal government. Apparently, the *CHR* witnessed little innovation during the 1950s, but it was renewed later in the decade under a new editor who solicited the work of younger scholars.

Shore's theme in Part III (post-1966) is "the renewal of diversity" in both method and topic. Her excerpts center on sub-themes, such as limited identities (regional, ethnic, and class), nationalism in Quebec, working class history, native history, gender politics, and intellectual and cultural history. The use of computers and quantitative analysis marked a new era in method. The diverse selections include Michael Katz's use of the manuscript census to profile the people of Hamilton in 1851-1852, Ronald Rudin's 1992 critique of recent Quebec historiography, Desmond Morton's analysis of the militia's "aid to the civil power" in the nineteenth century, Bruce Trigger on early French—Huron relations, Joy Parr on gender in historical practice, and Richard Allen on the Social Gospel in Canada.

The final part of Shore's study is entitled "Reflections." She includes excerpts from seven *CHR* articles that she hopes "provide windows on the state of the field at particular points" (309). In 1944, George Brown and D.G. Creighton argued that history is more than merely politics. H.J. Hanham, writing in 1977 as an outsider, declared that Canada's historians had been preoccupied with nationhood and national character. W.J. Eccles highlighted the alleged flaws in Harold Innis's work on the fur trade (1974); in response, Hugh Grant praised Innis's strengths (1981). John English explained why political history declined in the 1960s (1986), Kenneth Dewar analyzed narrative structure in historical writing (1991), and Allan Greer discussed the Rebellion of 1837-1838 to demonstrate the need for broader approaches in historians' studies of individual Canadian events.

I find Shore's *The Contested Past* an excellent and creative introduction to the Canadian historical enterprise. For academic historians, it roots their efforts in a vigorous and diverse intellectual tradition revealed through the prism of the *CHR*. It destroys any myth that earlier Canadian historians achieved a consensus about how to approach the nation's past. Shore does a solid job of explaining key shifts in the profession's approaches by positioning the *CHR* excerpts in their relevant historical contexts — social, political, intellectual, and international. So often, the interests and approaches of Canadian historians' mirrored their time and place. For students of Canadian history, the book provides a solid introduction to key themes and important historiographical debates. Generally, Shore's excerpt selections are useful and revealing, and effectively illustrate her main organizational themes. In my view, the entire work is highly instructive, both for professional historians and for undergraduate students of Canadian history. In the future, it will be useful to have a more comprehensive analysis of the Canadian historical profession, one that examines, using a wider lens, its intellectual evolution

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using key monographs and journals, as well as its institutional supports and expressions across Canada.