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Robert Craig Brown, *Arts and Science at Toronto: A History, 1827-1990*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. Pp.xii + 339, illus. CDN\$60.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-1-4426-4513-4.

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Few are more qualified to write a history of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Toronto than Robert Craig Brown. He joined Toronto's history department in 1966, going on to publish eleven works of history and co-edit several more over the next four and a half decades. During his tenure at Toronto, Brown was intimately involved with the management of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, serving in various administrative capacities. With a wealth of experience and an insider's knowledge, Brown tackles his latest topic, *Arts and Science at Toronto: A History, 1827-1990*. Brown is a master of his craft and his most recent work does not disappoint. With only a few minor complaints, this book receives the highest of recommendations.

What Brown wanted to accomplish in this book is to explain the growth, development, and change that happened in the Faculty of Arts and Science from 1843 to 1990. Brown deftly weaves the threads of administrative, economic, and political histories with the experiences of students and faculty. While this work is largely a top-down institutional history, Brown makes an effort to include students' narratives in every chapter. The priority that Brown gives to the female undergraduate experience is certainly appreciated and reflects recent trends in the historiography of higher education.

Brown's objective was to write a book that is easily accessible to a wide, lay audience. Largely, the author has achieved his goal. The narrative follows an easily recognizable chronology and the major themes are organized around readily identifiable figures such as the various deans and presidents. Brown's style is assuring as each chapter is constructed in much the same fashion. Most chapters begin with the big picture as the author gives the reader the broad social, political, and economic context for his discussion. Next, Brown lays out the events pertinent to the faculty in a clear manner and proceeds to interpret and analyze them. Finally, most chapters end with a strong summary that draws the disparate themes together and in the process makes insightful comparisons to previous eras.

Overall, Brown's narrative is excellent, but in a few instances, his story becomes entangled in an excessive amount of detail. Details are a delight for the historian but may turn off a more casual reader. Further, Brown has the unenviable task of describing and explaining the tremendously confusing transformations that characterized the colleges, curriculum, and bureaucracy in the 1960s. With subject matter this difficult and complex, a graph or diagram charting all the changes would have been a most welcome addition.

The material Brown used to create his text mostly comes from the primary source documents in the University of Toronto Archives. But he also draws on a variety of other sources including the best institutional history of the University of Toronto, written by Martin Friedland, as well as *The Varsity*

student newspaper.¹ Clearly, this book is well-researched, incorporating a wide range of source material. But there is more: starting with his chapter on the 1960s, the author adds certain touches and insights that reveal an intimate connection to the events and personalities involved. In many ways, the history of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is Brown's own history. Nothing less would be expected from one who witnessed so many of the events.

The scope of the text covers almost one hundred and fifty years, 1843-1990. To comment on such a span of time is a daunting task, and inevitably some sacrifices have to be made. For the most part, Brown skillfully chooses the most important topics and dwells on the most interesting or controversial episodes in the faculty's history. Three topics, however, did not receive the attention and closer analysis than they deserved. The first topic concerns the lack of commentary about the reception of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* by members of the faculty. It is unfortunate that this controversial and polarizing topic was not explored because University of Toronto Professors, such as Reverend William Hincks and Dr. James Bovell, played such key roles in the debates.² Second, the discussion of the co-education controversies is one-sided as it is overly focussed on President Daniel Wilson's and *The Varsity* newspaper's resistance to the issue (19-20). No explanation is given for the genesis of the March 1884 motion in the provincial legislature; the voices of women who were admitted in the early years remain silent. The work by Sara Burke suggests this was a more complex issue than Brown indicates.³ The third topic concerns women undergraduates' patriotic service during the First World War. Brown writes only one small paragraph on the contributions made by women on campus and overly focusses on the organizational efforts of President Robert Falconer's wife (62-3). Works by Linda Quiney and Burke suggest that women made greater contributions and played a larger role on campus than is suggested by Brown.⁴

One other minor complaint must be raised. Students' and faculty's voices all too often become buried in Brown's rich political and administrative narrative. While the author does mention students and various faculty members in each chapter, the reader is often left wanting to know more. In culinary terms, Brown has given the reader an appetizer but has not delivered the main course. Moreover, students and faculty are not often portrayed in a positive fashion. Certainly they made excellent contributions during the First and Second World Wars and Brown is quick to record some of their achievements; however, all too often students and professors are typecast as protesters and complainers.

The minor complaints raised should not detract from what is an excellent piece of scholarship. Brown has masterfully described and explained the evolution of the Faculty of Arts and Science at the University of Toronto from its tentative beginnings to its current comprehensive composition. Historians, alumnae, and the general public will find *Arts and Science at Toronto: A History, 1827-1990* an interesting, accessible, and insightful read.

¹ Martin Friedland, *The University of Toronto: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

² See, for example, A.B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), 82-3, 99-113.

³ Sara Z. Burke, "New Women and Old Romans: Co-education at the University of Toronto 1884-95," *The Canadian Historical Review* 80:2 (June 1999): 219-241.

⁴ Sara Z. Burke, "Dancing into Education: The First World War and the Roots of Change in Women's Higher Education," in *Cultures, Communities and Conflict: Histories of Canadian Universities and War*, eds. Paul Stortz and E. Lisa Panayotidis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 95-120; Linda J. Quiney, "'We must not neglect our duty': Enlisting Women Undergraduates for the Red Cross during the Great War," in *Cultures, Communities and Conflict*, eds. Stortz and Panayotidis, 71-94.