feminist scholarship and despite the varying subject matter in her essays, she seems to be concerned about how power relations are sustained and experienced. The following questions seem to drive her new work and the reexamination of her past publications:

> does our writing effectively uncover and understand power relations in the past, and if so, how and why does it do this? In this regard, both gender and women's history can be considered 'feminist' history (or not), depending on their commitment to feminist politics and perspectives.

Ultimately, Sangster encourages us to think of gender and women's history "through feminist eyes" and view it as feminist history.

In each of her chapters, she includes a preface examining the ways in which the debates and theories have evolved since they were published and how her own ideologies have shifted over time. According to Sangster, new research questions are being posed that were not thought about before, new generations of historians are revisiting old problems that were never solved and more and more work is being published, which in turn, not only challenges previous notions of women's history but also sheds new light on the previous debates and theories used.

Although she does not aim to provide "a detailed 'from then to now'" history of feminist scholarship in Canada, Sangster argues that

> Canadian women's history does have its own peculiarities, shaped by distinct patterns of economic and social development, by Canada's own version of colonialism, and by in- and out- migration, not to mention historians' past preoccupation with the nation-state and nationalisms.

Her essays include well-researched and documented case studies, which demonstrate the ways in which Canadian women's history is shaped by social, economic and political movements. She particularly focuses on gender, class, politics, and colonialism. In *Discovering Women's History*, a preface to *The 1907 Bell Telephone Strike,* Sangster explains how her methodology and political stance attempts to understand the agency of women who worked in factories at the turn of the twentieth century. She draws on skillful empirical research and uses such sources as government documents, newspapers, personal letters, and company files to further explore organized labour movements. Her other essays, *Girls in Conflict with the Law* and *Criminalizing the Colonized* uncovers the history of criminality and power imbalances in the court towards girls and women—both Native and non-Native—who were socially marginalized. In her final essay in this collection, "Making A Fur Coat," Sangster argues that "feminist writing on fur as a gendered symbol for the nation, or as the feminine 'skin of the body' reflects the continuing influence of postmodern preoccupations with the discursive, representation, and sexual identities." Instead, she takes a path not taken in previous feminist scholarship and focuses on women's labour, bush production, manufacturing work and retail labour of skinning, sewing, and selling fur, all by women, in mid-twentieth-century Canada.

This groundbreaking work would be of great interest to graduate students and academics interested in feminist scholarship and women's lived experiences in Canada. Sangster does an extraordinary job at situating her work within the literature of women's history and politics and engages with theoretical debates in feminist ideologies since its first emergence in academia. She goes beyond a historical examination of gender and women's history by interweaving her own experiences and challenges as a feminist academic conducting research in the field for over thirty years. This text is a vital contribution to the scholarship of Canadian women's history.

Marlene Mendonça is a doctoral student in Theatre Studies at York University. Her main research interests include: feminist theory, Girl culture and Girl Studies, Women in theatre and performance in the early twentieth century.

MR. FOX

Helen Oyeyemi
Toronto: Hamilton Hamish Canada, 2011

REVIEWED BY KATHRYN TRAVIS

> *Let me tell you something, kid. Love is like a magic carpet with a mind of its own. You step on that carpet and it takes you places–marvelous places, odd places, terrifying places, places you'd never have been able to reach on foot. Yeah, love's a real adventure! But you go where the carpet goes; after you've stepped onto it you don't get to choose a goddamned thing.*

Helen Oyeyemi's novel, *Mr. Fox*, is a complicated matter. Complicated, I must add, in an incredibly powerful and generative way. The vignettes that Oyeyemi unfolds through the lives of the foxes are a haunting reminder of the dynamics that saturate all kinds of relationships (especially those of an intimate kind) and of power in its very

real capacity to ripple through life, in all of its various shapes and forms. As the writer St. John Fox and his muse Mary Foxe play out a narrative back-and-forth over nine different scenes, it is the capacity of these narrative forays to increasingly bubble over and spill into the everyday landscape of St. John and his wife, Daphne's domestic life which finally forces the three to openly face one another. Through the character of Mary—character in a dual sense, as she is both a character for *us*, the reader, and questionably one for St. John and Daphne—each are able to examine what it means to be with one another.

The challenge becomes whether we, as readers, are able to follow Oyeyemi and her cast of characters in their processes of unravelling. By pushing the boundaries of relationships, by having them change—from love, to dependence, to aloofness, to harm, to name but a few states—her characters test the limits of how we conceive of being-with another. In many ways, *Mr. Fox* is a tale about "knowing"; how we uncover the knowledge that we have of others, of those with whom we find ourselves in relationships, and how we come to know ourselves in the process of relating to another. How, oftentimes, it takes the act of being with someone else to finally begin to know ourselves.

By the end of one's reading journey, it is clear that Oyeyemi has affectively moved her reader to reconsider the boundaries between fact/fiction and real/make-believe. As the character of Mary Foxe so aptly portrays, these divisions cannot be so easily made or steadfastly upheld. Abiding too rigidly to preconceived notions or perspectives—such as how one understands "reality" or, quite simply, the nature of relating to others—only guarantees that one's sense of the world will be rather limited.

For any reader that has been touched by a book, the ending is a complicated matter; it is the slow working down of pages, and the culmination of events having passed, which mark the reality that those still-yet-to-come are dwindling. The reader, so touched, hopes that pages in some magical way do not correspond to an ending, or a closing, or anything which will signal that the finale is slowly creeping closer. It speaks volumes of Helen Oyeyemi's abilities as a storyteller and writer that she is able to affect her readers so deeply. While she taps into a wide genre of writing that speaks to the relationship between imagination and the experience of unbearable events, it is her ability to carry her reader into an "openness-towards" that marks her abilities as an artist; to be open to the potential that anything is possible. It is her gift of weaving-between, of folding stories, characters, and ways of knowing and perceiving the world together that affectively moves those who read her work. It reminds each of us to be wary of the rigid and inflexible borders that oftentimes shape how we know and what we can know; for it is these same borders which contain the ability to close us off from experiencing that which is truly extraordinary.

> *I almost forgot to mention another fox I know of—a very wicked fox indeed. But you are tired of hearing about foxes now, so I won't go on.*

I for one hope that there will be more foxes.

Kathryn Travis is a third-year Ph.D. student in the Gender, Feminist, and Women's Studies program at York University. Her research focuses on how multiple forms of cultural production work collectively to reconfigure the Paris 'banlieues' in representation and experience.

THE MERE FUTURE

Sarah Schulman
Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2011

REVIEWED BY ROBERT TEIXEIRA

To many in the LGBT social justice and AIDS movement circles, Sarah Schulman is a well known figure, whose earlier works, for example the 1990 novel, *People in Trouble*, describes the turbulent lives and loves of queer women and men living and struggling with AIDS. It highlights how important queer women were (and still are) to a complex array of resistance and community-building that was necessary to save lives and to help dignify a complex terrain of emotional and health crises where activists responded to the murderous indifference governments displayed toward PHAs at the time.

A prolific author and activist, Schulman holds a position as Distinguished Professor of English at City University of New York, College of Staten Island. During the Reagan era in the US, which witnessed a juggernaut of anti-gay backlash in the midst of the AIDS crisis, Schulman participated in ACT-UP's many creative actions and was one of the co-founders of the Lesbian Avengers. These two radical queer organizations were responsible for advancing direct-action resistance with a queerly theatrical twist to the annals of radical resistance movements well before such tactics were more popularly taken up by the anti-globalization demos a decade later.

In her 2011 novel, *The Mere Future*, her first foray into the science-fiction genre, we are treated to startlingly angular prose where descriptions slightly off the mark of recognizable reality are yet all to often transposable to the over-familiar lexicon of marketing lingo and ad copy. In