

women across geography and class. Her emphasis points away from a Foucauldian preoccupation with discipline and toward a view of institutions as potentially protective and even empowering.

The book offers strong thematic continuities, as mobility and agency penetrate a variety of women's activities. Of particular interest are sociability and work. Chojnacka develops a fresh sense of the complex texture of relationships with men and with other women that shaped *popolane* lives. In making the case for significant female management of property, she highlights the seldom examined importance of siblings — sisters and brothers. Rather than assuming that male dominance is the whole story, she proposes for women's dealings with men a model of collaboration and, in a few situations, even friendship. At the same time, ordinary women did spend much of their time with other women. Chojnacka strikingly depicts neighbourhoods where men and high-status women were largely absent from the streets, and *popolane* engaged with their peers in daily rounds of social and economic activities. Women's work typically occurred here, for most an improvisational motley of tasks and exchanges rather than a job or a career. By implication, work identity lies deeply enmeshed in broader social connections. Chojnacka explores female money-making where she can, but inherited assets loom larger than earnings or business profits. Despite the book's title, women's work remains somewhat elusive.

All told, one of the great merits of the study is Chojnacka's inventive and patient deployment of diverse sources. At the same time, because the data are richer on some matters than others, at points the patchwork feels a bit uneven. Perhaps because so many kinds of documents are in play, some readings assume too much transparency. The impact of law and genre on language and representation demands a steadier eye, and arguments from omission or negation sometimes presume an overly close equation between text and world. For example, a male habit of demurral in witchcraft trials need not betoken men's general absence from neighbourhood affairs. Nonetheless, Chojnacka succeeds in drawing for Venice a more nuanced portrait of *popolane* women's lives than we have yet had for any other Italian city. Her accumulated results point toward a significant adjustment of our understanding of gender in the peninsula. Many ordinary women did circulate within and beyond their city, and they did participate in shaping their own well-being and that of their families and neighbours.

Elizabeth Cohen  
York University

Enda Delaney — *Demography, State and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921–1971*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000. Pp. xvi, 345.

This text is a welcome addition both to McGill-Queen's "Studies in Ethnic History" and to the historiography of Irish emigration. It is particularly encouraging to see such a well-researched, carefully argued monograph highlighting the vital impor-

tance of placing Irish emigration in its twentieth- as well as nineteenth-century contexts. By studying the Irish migration to the rest of the British Isles, Enda Delaney has provided a necessary corrective to the tendency of migration history to concentrate on the overseas movements to North America and beyond. *Demography, State and Society* traces the movement of approximately one and a half million people who left Ireland for Britain, from the founding of the Irish Free State to the early 1970s. Delaney opens with a discussion of theoretical approaches to migration history and then, in a series of chronological chapters, deals with four separate periods of Irish migration: the 1920s and 1930s; the war years; the late 1940s and 1950s; and finally the 1960s. While his nuanced study offers a number of insights, Delaney's central argument is that, although overall "economic factors (broadly interpreted) were a key determinant of Irish migration patterns and trends", the "changing aspirations towards a higher standard of living, and not simply sheer economic necessity, also shaped the history of Irish migration" (p. 289).

Delaney presents the reader with the theoretical models that guide his investigation. These range from Ravenstein's "laws of migration" to economic "push-pull" and "core-periphery" models, and to the sociologically inspired "network analyses". Delaney acknowledges that a wide range of sources, including emigrant letters, census returns, newspaper debates, and government policy documents, must be consulted to develop a full understanding of the forces that encouraged and shaped emigration. As a consequence of his concern with developing an overall interpretation of Irish migration to Britain, however, the author tends to highlight the broad demographic and economic data found on either side of the Irish sea rather than to examine individual migrant experiences.

Each chapter begins with an impressive examination of the demographic sources for each era, followed by an equally detailed discussion of the available economic data. One cannot fail to be convinced by Delaney's conclusion that most Irish counties, save Dublin, experienced population loss until the 1960s, when population growth finally outstripped emigration for the first time since the Great Famine. Nor can one fail to be impressed by the weight of detailed evidence showing that the demand for labour in industrial Britain made such widespread migration possible. Indeed, one intriguing consequence of the pattern of migration from rural agricultural Ireland to urban industrial Britain was the relative lack of internal migration within Ireland itself.

Delaney argues that the Irish state's inability to modernize agriculture or develop non-agricultural employment opportunities was one of the key "push" factors throughout the period, but that overall the state's influence on migration patterns was slight. The Irish government considered all emigration as a social evil but did not place restrictions on movement; conversely, the British government explored the idea of restricting Irish emigration in the 1930s but did not pursue it. While Delaney illustrates how emigration became a central feature of Irish political debate, particularly in the 1950s, he points out that the issue was used to criticize the performance of governments from all parties rather than to promote anti-emigration legislation. Nevertheless, the Irish state's preoccupation with migration matters did result in the creation of the Commission on Emigration which produced reports from 1948 to

1954. Delaney makes very effective use of these documents and associated unpublished material to support his claim that Irish migrants were motivated by a desire for a higher standard of living.

By drawing on the testimony provided by commissioners, in particular Arnold Marsh's unpublished papers, Delaney is able to identify specific local examples of "migratory types". Many such individuals apparently planned to leave for Britain on a temporary basis for higher wages or greater employment opportunities. The reports suggest that this was a relatively easy step which involved far "less trauma" than the trip to America since the journey was short and emigrants were supported by relatives and friends in their destinations. Such "networks" also provided the migrants with specific information on employment prospects long before the journey was undertaken. Delaney is also able to demonstrate that circumstances such as marriage or relatively stable, if less well paid, employment encouraged many others to remain in Ireland.

While the Commission reports are clearly a rich source, they were produced by civil servants often interviewing similarly placed individuals in charge of local employment exchanges, who tended to generalize from their own experience. All the same, the reports do contain 208 individual case histories, of which Delaney provides a random sample of eight to the reader. Thus we hear of an 18-year-old tailor's son in County Clare who had two sisters working as domestic servants in Britain and wished to go there himself "to obtain constant work" and also of a 21-year-old Tipperary native who wished to go "to kitchen gardening near Hammersmith", where he had friends (p. 183). However, this kind of individual immigrant profile is relatively rare in Delaney's account, as the author readily concedes. Indeed, he ends his book with a call for further studies, particularly those that would use a combination of oral testimony and documentary records to answer "questions relating to the ethnicity of Irish migrants in Britain" (p. 297).

Some of those questions are indeed suggested by Delaney's study. He claims that by the 1960s the Irish hardly registered in the British debate over immigration, which focused on the racially visible "New Commonwealth" migrants. This may have been true of much of the public debate, but the derogatory comments directed against the Irish did not end after the Second World War. Drawing from Pam Schweitzer's *Across the Irish Sea* (London, 1991), Delaney quotes the testimony of Christina Pamment, who travelled to Holyhead in 1946: "I heard a rather harsh English voice saying, 'Irish passports this way. If your passport has a harp on it, you're Irish.' Young as I was, I realised that this was a put down" (p. 141). Such commonplace prejudice was readily apparent in British cities like Liverpool and Glasgow, which had close ties to Ireland and contained migrant populations that replicated Ulster's sectarian divide on the British mainland. While these issues of political and cultural antagonism are not the focus of Delaney's study, the author does lead the reader to existing studies such as Stephen Fielding's *Class and Ethnicity* (Manchester, 1993), which examine questions of Irish adaptation to British life.

Delaney has succeeded in living up to the title of his book by clearly delineating the demographic and economic factors that contributed to Irish migration, by examining the nature of state involvement on either side of the Irish sea, and by providing

a clear explanation for the desire to emigrate. Like the author, one hopes that others will follow up on this work by uncovering many more of the individual experiences of migration and adaptation to test against the broad patterns identified in *Demography, State and Society*.

Michael Vance  
Saint Mary's University

Lyle Dick — *Muskox Land: Ellesmere Island in the Age of Contact*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001. Pp. xxv, 615.

Who would have thought that it was possible to write a book of 640 pages about a part of the world which cannot have had more than a few thousand inhabitants in the millions of years since it cooled from magma? At first glance, to write such a work might seem excessive, almost absurd. Yet there is enough history in this island to fill this very large book.

Writing such a book about Ellesmere Island requires a shift in the usual way of looking at the North, and the High Arctic in particular. If one thinks of it as a peripheral region inhabited over several thousand years by a only a handful of stone-age people at any one time, the idea might seem preposterous. But if one thinks of Ellesmere Island not as peripheral, but as the centre of an entire world, and moreover the centre of a great deal of European activity over the past two centuries, then it makes perfect sense. It should be added that the book ranges outside the island to the north-west part of Greenland, where the local Inuit (the Inughuit) live. This is fair enough, since the Inughuit traditionally used Ellesmere Island as part of their territory; had Lyle Dick confined himself strictly to the island, there would have been no indigenous people there in the past two centuries to talk about.

*Muskox Land* is, as any book of this kind must be, interdisciplinary, written with the tools of the historian (Dick pays tribute to the influence of Fernand Braudel), but bringing in other disciplines as well. Anthropology is of particular importance, and the book is strongly influenced, as is the region, by geography, climatology, botany, and biology. The book is arranged in the light of Braudel's "structural, multi-dimensional approach to temporality" (p. xxii), which means that it is not linear in structure. European cultures up to 1940 are discussed in chapter 5, exploration from 1818 to 1840 in chapter 6, the interplay of cultures in the same period in chapters 10 to 12, and so on. This is an interesting method of organization, but inevitably rather disjointed and somewhat repetitive: Robert Peary is summarized on pages 119–120, discussed on 221–231, again on 380–384, and again in other places. *Pace* Braudel, there is something to be said for linearity.

There are two main human voices in the book: those of the European explorers and exploiters, and those of the Inuit for whom Ellesmere Island has been a homeland for about 4,000 years. Reconstructing the first voice required the author to use the traditional tools of this historian — archival research, delving into the many accounts published over the centuries, into government documents, and the like. Reconstructing the Inuit voice, on the other hand, while partly possible through pub-