

whaling fraternity. She was probably conscious, therefore, of family and friends who might have occasion to read her diary. For whatever reason, detailed descriptions of the whaling process and the often sensitive symbiotic relationships that existed between members of the expedition and their indigenous hosts are scarce. In fact, potentially controversial topics are ignored. The result is a thin and often tedious journal which under normal circumstances would not have found a publisher.

Therein, however, lies the real strength of this volume. Simply put, it is Gill Ross's book, not Margaret Penny's, and the diary accounts for a meagre 1:5 ratio in terms of actual text. Margaret's diary, without an extensive commentary, as Ross correctly points out, "would raise many unanswered questions and frustrate the reader". To overcome this problem, he uses the journal as a medium to describe in impressive detail the various aspects of what was a multifaceted operation pitting man against a harsh, inhospitable, and often dangerous environment.

Ross is Canada's foremost expert on the Northern whale fishery and is a leading authority on global whaling in general. He uses his extensive knowledge of the industry, the climate and geography of Canada's Arctic, the struggle for survival in the North, and the relationships between Europeans and Inuit to paint an intimate picture, not only of this particular expedition, but of Arctic whaling as a whole. Ross divides Penny's journal into chapters and draws heavily on the logbooks of the *Lady Franklin* and *Sophia*, as well as detailed reports prepared by Br. Matthaues Warmow, a Moravian missionary who accompanied the Pennys to Baffin Island, to craft a text chock-full of detail that "explains or elaborates on some of the events, topics, places, ships, and people she has mentioned". The only real quibble I have with *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country* is the sometimes irksome repetition between Penny's journal and Ross's narrative. It might have been better to have simply reproduced the journal as an appendix, or to have left it out altogether.

Ross uses Margaret Penny's diary to provide a comprehensive account of one important facet of Arctic whaling. In my view, this is a well-documented research publication of the very highest order. It can only be hoped that he will apply this effective technique to other phases of Arctic whaling or, better still, write a definitive historiography of the trade.

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Angelika E. Sauer and Matthias Zimmer, eds. — *A Chorus of Different Voices: German-Canadian Identities*. New York: Peter Lang, 1998. Pp. x, 244.

Thirteen essays of different disciplines are included in this volume: scholars of history, anthropology, language studies, and political science contributed. The authors include long-time accomplished researchers as well as graduate students just starting out in the field of German-Canadian studies. Their topics vary, however.

In "The Social Construction of Identity" Dieter Haselbach summarizes philosophical and sociological concepts of identity. Ethnicity, as one of the most prominent

sources of identification linked to multiculturalism, is a social construct, intended to detect differences and to back up political claims. Haselbach concludes with two caveats for the field of German-Canadian studies (p. 17): first, making German Canadians an object of research includes a danger of reification of a hyphenated ethnicity; secondly, one should be aware that concepts and funding of research on German Canadians involve political discourse and political interests.

Matthias Zimmer phrases one of the most challenging hypotheses of the book: “A distinct German-Canadian identity does not and cannot exist given the nature of modern industrialization” (p. 21). On the contrary, “different notions of what it means to be German” (p. 30) separate more than they unite German Canadians. He backs his deconstruction of German-Canadian identity by pointing out differences in socialization experiences and the impact of information technology on cultural discourses during the last three or four decades. Language is the only common bond left.

Ova Lindner promotes biculturalism as a viable concept of German-Canadian studies. In her plausible argument she maintains that German Canadians blend “two cultural backgrounds into a comprehensive whole” (p. 46). This concept strikes me as so vague that it fits all persons with bicultural origin or past. Disappointingly she does not compare the “cultural accent” (p. 46) with those of other bicultural groups.

Manfred Prokop evaluates empirical data about maintenance and survival of the German language in Alberta. With very little German-speaking immigration, he identifies an overall loss, especially in post-immigrant generations. In rural areas, however, he shows that German is actually rising because of demographic developments in settlements of Hutterites and to a lesser extent of Mennonites. Nonetheless, Prokop predicts a continual decline of visibility of the German-speaking community, regardless of improved access to German-speaking countries “by plane, short-wave radio or satellite TV broadcast” (p. 63).

Wsevolod Isajiw’s paper is based on a 20-year-old empirical survey of ethnic groups in Metropolitan Toronto. Examining their behaviour patterns (external identity) and their expressed attitudes and feelings (internal identity), he concludes that Germans represent themselves as a heterogeneous group and “lose their identity faster than other comparable groups” (p. 74). However, it is not a complete loss, and Isajiw interprets this as a new construction of identity.

Historian Gerhard Bassler takes the strongest stand for the existence of a distinct German-Canadian identity. He acknowledges a historical heterogeneity but argues that German-Canadian identity is “dynamic”, “indigenous to Canada”, and mostly exhibited by the immigrant generation. Furthermore, the German-Canadian identity is not necessarily “the dominant identity in the hierarchy of multiple identities” and “can be observed in external patterns of settlement, adaptation, and interaction among groups of the German-Canadian mosaic or in internal patterns of self-identification and feelings towards other German Canadians”. Finally, it is “not always self-chosen or self-created”, but “can be imposed by others” (p. 86).

In “The German-Canadian Experience Viewed Through Life Writings, 1850s to 1930s”, Dirk Hoerder is trying to avoid a German-centred discourse by paying special attention to the interaction of German Canadians with individuals from

different cultural groups. His study suggests that numerous individuals “do not fit into the construct of ethnic groups living in specific neighborhoods and building ethnic communities” (p. 113).

Royden Loewen evaluates autobiographical accounts of German-speaking immigrant women between 1874 and 1910. Loewen sees them as being “intersected, proscribed and enabled by an ethnically-determined set of social networks and cosmologies, and further restricted and empowered by the variables particular to any of a dozen sub-groups among the amorphous category of German-speaking immigrants” (p. 137).

In the micro-historical study “Ethnicity, Family, and Community: German Canadians in Suburban Ottawa, 1890–1914”, John Walsh looks at the polyethnic environment of New Edinburgh. He shows that German migrants from Europe and rural Canada “purchased property, found work, built churches and schools” there. Relying on secondary sources, Walsh claims that “how these Lutheran German Canadians made sense of these experiences, and how others saw them as ‘German Canadians’, were central to the construction of ethnic, class, and gender identities” (pp. 156–157).

Barbara Lorenzkowski examines the external ascription of characteristics to perceived Nazis in Canada by the government in Ottawa during World War II. Her findings indicate a gap between the constructed Nazi prototype and the socio-economic profiles of German-Canadian internees. Lack of knowledge about the differences “between ‘Reichsdeutsche’ [German nationals] and ‘Volksdeutsche’ [ethnic Germans], between political and cultural allegiances, between naturalized and non-naturalized German Canadians” (p. 178) resulted in the internment of 305 persons whose loyalty to Canada was questioned by the officials.

“[H]istorical actors make sense of their lives by attaching personal meanings and significance to specific events” (p. 189). With this premise Alexander Freund shows how the image of domestic German postwar immigrants changed during the process of migration. Striving for a mixture of adventure, independence, and personal freedom, these women arrived to find their dreams confronted with back-breaking work and exploitation by their employers. To face these conditions, Freund argues, the women reinterpreted the situation “as a necessary learning experience on the path to successful immigration” (p. 201). Domestic service became a useful means of integration into Canadian society. They reconstructed their identity “from an adventurous world-traveler to a ‘natural woman’ and a ‘good Canadian’” (p. 203).

Hans Werner titles his paper after what he claims to be Nazi Germany’s indoctrinated ideal for women’s sphere: “children, kitchen and church” (p. 219). He concentrates on the recreating identity of postwar ethnic German immigrants to Canada and their intense desire for stability after having experienced separation of spouses and families in the past. In his opinion, “the creation of family was the strongest means of reclaiming stability” (p. 222), even if it meant marriage to “partners who would not have been eligible mates in their prewar communities” (p. 221).

Angelika Sauer addresses “The ‘Ideal German Canadian’: Politics, Academics, and the Historiographical Construction of German-Canadian Identity”. She expounds a close entanglement of German-Canadian studies and politics and questions “a

secular ethnic German identity in Canada and that it is somehow tied to the use of the German language” (p. 232). She urges us to “examine the issue of German-Canadian identity outside the parameters of ethnicity as secular identification” (p. 233) and to get rid of “the perception of victimization, stigmatization and discrimination” (p. 236) as the core of German-Canadian history and as a general explanation for a perceived invisibility in society.

A Chorus of Different Voices makes a rewarding study for interested readers, but it is sometimes difficult to track the chorus among all these voices.

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Françoise Thébaud — *Écrire l'histoire des femmes*, Paris, ENS Éditions, 1998.

En France, après la thèse de doctorat, un mémoire d'habilitation est exigé pour permettre aux universitaires de diriger des thèses de deuxième et de troisième cycles. Ce travail se veut à la fois un essai historiographique, un petit exercice d'ego-histoire et une mise en perspective de ses travaux antérieurs. C'est ainsi que Françoise Thébaud, dans un essai superbement argumenté, présente non seulement le bilan d'une recherche, mais aussi le cheminement intellectuel au sein duquel se situe son travail, enfin, rien de moins qu'« un manifeste de défense et illustration de l'histoire des femmes » (p. 19). Une préface élogieuse d'Alain Corbin commente très favorablement ce nouvel éclairage sur l'histoire des femmes, sur les « gender studies » ou « women's studies » (mais oui, on ne traduit pas).

Sujet et objet de cette analyse, Françoise Thébaud, déjà bien connue pour son édition du cinquième volume de *l'Histoire des femmes en Occident — Le XX^e siècle*, ainsi que pour ses ouvrages sur la maternité pendant l'entre-deux-guerres et sur les femmes pendant la Guerre de 1914, est elle-même une de celles qui veulent dissiper « la longue surdité de la discipline historique ».

Cette réévaluation de l'histoire des femmes, limitée aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles, se situe dans une perspective internationale. Thébaud est une des rares spécialistes en histoire aussi au fait de l'historiographie anglo-saxonne que de celle de son pays. Reconnaissant combien l'histoire des femmes doit au mouvement social qui l'a propulsée, elle ne craint pas d'admettre la dette de ce champ historique envers les Américaines, pour la recherche empirique et surtout pour les débats théoriques. On connaît l'importance de la méthodologie dans l'histoire des femmes qui ne cesse de s'interroger sur ses cadres théoriques jusqu'à devenir, du moins aux États-Unis, un « des courants les plus théoriciens de l'histoire » (p. 19).

Existe-t-il une façon nationale d'écrire l'histoire des femmes? se demande-t-elle (p. 21). Au tout début de son essai, Thébaud réfute avec tact la notion de singularité française mise de l'avant par certaines historiennes ces dernières années. Contrairement à ces dernières, elle admet les rapports de pouvoir, les conflits de sexe et l'existence voire l'importance des féminismes français (p. 16–17). Une orientation différente se manifeste des deux côtés de l'Atlantique et l'histoire des femmes a