

Doctoral Scholarship Recipient Researches “Canada’s ‘Orient’”

2007 was the first year in which the fellowship program of the Chair in German-Canadian Studies was funded by the Spletzer Family Foundation (Winnipeg). The successful recipients were presented in the last issue of the Newsletter. In this issue, the recipient of the Ph.D. research scholarship, Nicole Pissowotzki of the University of Toronto (Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures), explains her research on “Exploring Canada’s ‘Orient’: The Image of the Canadian North in German Literature.”



“My work focuses on the image of the Canadian North in select periods of German literature. It draws from and contributes to three fields of scholarship: colonial discourse, German-Canadian cultural studies and contemporary literary theory. First, my dissertation shows the relevance of the Canadian North to German colonial discourse in that the texts examined articulate colonial experiences as well as narrate colonial fantasies. Second, my research participates in the field of German-Canadian cultural studies by going beyond the works of canonized literature to analyze a wider range of texts. Influenced by the historiographical work of Michel Foucault, my approach aims to examine the construction of group identities by tracing discourses

that constitute the experience of German travelers moving within the space of the Canadian North. Third, my dissertation explores new territory for advancing interdisciplinary literary criticism such as Edward Said’s *Orientalism* by applying it to a different cultural context, that of ‘occidental’ Canada. My dissertation addresses the question to what extent German literature has

contributed to creating another ‘Orient’ by writing the Canadian North. I will illustrate how the North – like the Orient before it – has been used as a ‘non-space,’ a place on to which German explorers, travel writers and ‘armchair-travelers’ project their imaginations and fantasies. Those projections include contemporary German discourses on ‘Bildung,’ colonialism and nationalism preceding the unification and colonial expansion of Germany (i.e. before 1880) as well as colonial fantasies following the loss of the German colonies after WWI.

After having conducted research in Toronto, Edmonton, Whitehorse, Dawson City and Inuvik as well as in Marburg, Marbach and Munich, further research in Germany as well as in Vancouver, Yellowknife and Fairbanks is planned.

The Chair in German-Canadian Studies was established in 1989 with grants from the Secretary of State’s Program for Canadian Ethnic Studies and a group of private philanthropists within the German-Canadian community of Winnipeg. It is located in, and affiliated with, the History Department at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Chair promotes the teaching of, and research into the history and culture of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in Canada. It interacts with the German-Canadian community in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the rest of Canada through public lectures and the newsletter. The Chair promotes regional, national and international research through conferences, publications and grants.

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Submissions of articles, news, reports, and reviews as well as artwork and photos for publication in this newsletter are welcome.



German-Canadian Studies
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Arrivals hall at the Emigration Barracks in Hamburg

The New German Emigration Fever

Interest in emigration – both old and new – is currently booming in Germany and particularly in Hamburg. This city recently saw the opening of two new major exhibitions on emigration in the 1800s and early 1900s. Next to these traditional approaches to learning about past emigrations, German audiences have been glued to their televisions to watch reality-TV documentaries about the fates of fellow Germans who have been emigrating in the last few years.

Emigration City Hamburg

The newly styled hamburgmuseum (formerly the Museum for the History of Hamburg) recently opened a new permanent exhibition on Hamburg’s history as a port of emigration. “Departure into Modernity. Fire of 1842 – Emigration via Hamburg – Overseas Trade” displays the chronological and thematic development of Hamburg from the 1840s to the 1950s. After the big fire of 1842, which destroyed a large area of Hamburg, the Hanse city recovered rapidly and by the second half of the 19th century its worldwide trade in goods and transport of emigrants from German and many European lands flourished. Hamburg’s shipping companies established routes to Canada and the United States as well as South America, Africa, Asia, Australia and the South Pacific. Trade in Brazilian goods such as sugar, coffee, tobacco, nuts, rubber, guano (fertilizer) and saltpeter made Hamburg into a European and global trading centre and port. The exhibition shows that the Hanseatic city’s and its merchants’ wealth was based on the exploitation of emigrants and German colonies. The situation for emigrants improved only at the turn of the century when laws for the protection of emigrants were finally passed. They also benefited from the increasing use of steam ships, which drastically shortened the passage, and from the Hamburg-America Line’s construction of emigration barracks.

Emigration as Entertainment

These emigration barracks, which were located on the island Veddel in the River Elbe, are at the centre of a new exhibition called “Port of Dreams – BallinStadt Auswandererwelt Hamburg.” This “interactive edutainment exhibition” (press release) has at its core three reconstructed barracks. One of the halls displays the story of emigration from Hamburg on the basis of artifacts and reconstructions. The original barracks, built in 1901, had included



sleeping quarters, dining halls, a church, a synagogue, and a music pavilion. Veddel is a working-class and immigrant neighbourhood, and the exhibition makers have included this interesting and unusual location in their exhibition. Thus, both tourists and the school children of the area (who received free passes to the exhibit) slip into the roles of various emigrants and find out about their fates at interactive computer stations. Access to electronic databases and helpful staff aide visitors in tracing relatives who emigrated via Hamburg. The history of European migrations overseas in the long nineteenth century has been made more complex than the simple story of emigration to America, but the exhibition's odd title alerts visitors ahead of time that they should expect more entertainment than education. Nevertheless, together the two emigration exhibitions in Hamburg will give visitors an excellent insight into the role of emigration in the city's history.

Watching Emigration

Entertainment is also the focus of a new German media phenomenon. In the television series "Mein neues Leben" (My new life), journalists of the TV station Kabel Eins follow German singles and families in their emigration trials to all regions of the world. A Mormon family of ten moves to Calgary, a young couple leaves behind excellent jobs in Germany and begins afresh in Australia, and siblings from Lower Saxony plan to open a hair salon in the Dominican Republic. Kabel Eins sells DVDs of these reality TV documentaries and shows them on its website; German emigrants can thus participate vicariously in

the experiences of "greenhorns" like the Nötzel family, who give up their jobs and sell their house in Germany to come to Vancouver Island on a tourist visa, hoping that the prospective employer – a car sales company – will stick to its non-committal promise to hire the father. And yes, this is their first time ever in Canada. In the episode "Truckstop Kanada," Mike Schönenkorb and his family move to Winnipeg. The unemployed German has just passed the test to drive a semi-trailer truck in Manitoba. German audiences follow the tribulations and tears of goodbyes and the uncertainties and disappointments of new beginnings each Thursday evening from 8:15-9:15 pm. Those left hungry for more tune into the Sunday evening special "Mein neues Leben – XXL" to watch two exhaustive hours of non-stop emigration. And those unwilling or unable to wait till Thursday for their next fix take in some of the competition's offers. The TV station VOX broadcasts one hour of "Goodbye Deutschland! Die Auswanderer" (Goodbye Germany! The Emigrants) each Tuesday at 9:05 pm. There, you can find out about the Reimanns in Namibia, a couple in Tuscany and the marriage crisis of the Appelius's – only three months after their emigration to Majorca. Other TV stations show countless "documentaries" about the new German emigration fever – or is it just a media fever?

More information:
<http://www.hamburgmuseum.de>
<http://www.ballinstadt.de>
http://www.kabeleins.de/doku_reportage/neues_leben
<http://www.vox.de>

Review: Berliner Journal

Anne Löchte. Das Berliner Journal (1859-1918). Eine deutschsprachige Zeitung in Kanada. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2007. ISBN 3-89971-370-2. € 38,90.

Die vorliegende Studie beschreibt die Geschichte des Berliner Journals, einer der größten deutschsprachigen Wochenzeitungen Kanadas im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Die Zeitung wurde zwischen 1859 und 1918 in Berlin (heute Kitchener), Ontario publiziert. 1909 erreichte die bis dahin auf 16 Seiten angewachsene Zeitung eine Auflage von 5000 Stück. Inhaltlich hatte die Zeitung allerdings bereits einen qualitativen Abstieg begonnen, seit nämlich um die Jahrhundertwende

die Söhne der ursprünglichen Verleger das Journal übernommen und wesentlich stärker auf Lokalnachrichten ausgerichtet hatten. Auch quantitativ stieg die Auflagenhöhe und Seitenzahl lediglich deshalb, weil das Journal im ersten Jahrzehnt des 20. Jahrhunderts mehrere kleinere deutschkanadische Zeitungen aufkaufte und mehr Werbeanzeigen schaltete. Diese Zahlen fielen nach 1909 rapide.

Im Hauptteil ihrer Studie erschließt die Autorin die insgesamt 3000 Ausgaben des Journals inhaltlich, insbesondere mit Hinblick auf Artikel, die Aufschluss über die Identitätsbildung deutscher Einwanderer und ihrer Nachfahren in Kanada geben können. Dabei hat Anne Löchte die relevanten Artikel neun Themenkreisen zugeordnet, darunter, deutsch-amerikanische Stereotype,

Christiane H. E. Harzig, 1952 – 2007

The community of German-Canadian Studies mourns the loss of one of their own. Christiane Harzig, a stimulating scholar and dear friend who had made important contributions to the study of German-Canadian women and immigration policies in Germany and Canada, passed away on 6 November 2007 after a battle with cancer.

Christiane was born and grew up in Berlin, where she received her Ph.D. with a dissertation about immigrant women in Chicago. In *Peasant Maids - City Women: From the European Country Side to Urban America* she brought together international scholars to study the migration experiences of women from Sweden, Ireland, Poland and Germany. Her *Habilitationsschrift* about immigration and politics and the historical memory and political culture in Sweden, the Netherlands and Canada focused on the period 1960 to 1990. She co-edited *The Social Construction of Diversity: Recasting the Master Narrative of Industrial Nations* and several other books. Readers of this Newsletter will remember her also for her publications on the

historical experiences of German and other European immigrant domestic workers in postwar Canada.



Christiane Harzig

In 2004, she received the Canada Council's John G. Diefenbaker Award to study Canadian immigration policy relating to domestic workers at the University of Winnipeg. From Winnipeg, she moved, together with her husband, Dirk Hoerder, to Phoenix to take up a position at Arizona State University.

As a teacher at universities in Germany, Canada and the United States, and as an active global scholar Chris touched the lives of many. Christiane Harzig, an historian who was

deeply engaged in present society, will be missed by friends, colleagues, and students alike.

deutsche Sprache und Kultur, Einwanderung und Leben in Berlin und Umgebung sowie deutsche Politik. Diese Themen werden in Unterkapiteln weiter analysiert. Das Thema Reiseberichte und deutsch-amerikanische Stereotype wird beispielsweise unter den Gesichtspunkten „Deutschland ist mundtot“, „It is a wonderful country, but women and dogs have no chance at all“, „Trinken ist ganz reputirlich, wüstes Saufen unmanierlich“ und „Deutsche Müttersöhnchen in Amerika“ näher untersucht. Zahlreiche unterhaltsame und aufschlussreiche Zitate sowie intelligente Kommentare der Autorin, die in einem natürlichen, lockeren Stil schreibt und Themen gekonnt auf den Punkt bringt, laden zum Lesen, Stöbern und Verweilen ein. Dies macht das Buch auch für ein breiteres Publikum lesenswert. Zudem wird es deutschsprachigen Forschern eine große Hilfe bei

der tieferen Erschließung und Nutzung des Berliner Journals sein. Auch kann es als Modell für ähnliche Übersichtsstudien zu anderen deutschkanadischen Zeitungen wie dem Nordwesten oder Kanada Kurier dienen