

Barabara Lorenzkowski, *Sounds of Ethnicity: Listening to German North America, 1850-1914* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010).

Scholars of immigration have often taken a strong interest in language and international connections between migrant groups. Barbara Lorenzkowski has nonetheless found several innovative ways to shed more light on this well-studied subject. *Sounds of Ethnicity: Listening to German North America* examines German-language education and German music festivals in the tightly-connected borderlands of the Great Lakes region from the mid-nineteenth century to World War I. Lorenzkowski focuses largely on how language and song were used, talked about, valued, and hybridized. The book charts the spaces created by sound in order to explore how ethnicity *happened* (8). Building on a growing historiography in the US and Germany, Lorenzkowski uses “aural history” as a lens to examine the nature of German immigrant culture, linguistic behaviour, and identity. While recognizing that aural history usually refers non-vocal sounds, she uses its methodology to examine “cultural exchanges through which sounds were being produced and heard, the role of aural metaphors in the soundscapes of German North America, the meanings of historical silences, and the sounds of dissonance” (8).

Lorenzkowski challenges the historiography about German education in Ontario, arguing that pressure from provincial policies and the actions of local school inspectors did not cause the low attendance at German language classes in Waterloo County. Instead, the region’s German speakers rejected the idea that their ethnic identity required them to speak standard German free from anglicisms (45), choosing instead to live in a linguistically hybrid world.

In the case of schooling in Buffalo, Lorenzkowski focuses on the efforts that the German-American *Lehrerbund* (Teachers’ Association) made as part of a nationwide strategy to modernize the pedagogical methods used in German language classes. These efforts, argues the author, meant that the promotion of the German language increasingly relied on professional networks and the contacts between the *Lehrerbund* and the National Education Association and the Modern Language Association (95). As a result, by 1900 the *Lehrerbund* had moved away from its original goal of promoting German-language classes in public schools for the children of native speakers, supporting instead new pedagogical methods for the teaching of German to English speakers.

The second half of the book shifts to a series of analyses of *Sängerfeste* (singers’ festivals) in the Great Lakes region, examining the performative meaning of these festivals for German identity and culture. Lorenzkowski argues that music was a space where Anglophones could engage in a cultural dialogue with these German speakers (103). Examining several English-language descriptions of the festivals, she argues that Anglophone observation of these performances had a lasting influence in shaping the way German culture was perceived in

Canada and the US.

Largely avoiding the debate on acculturation and language loss, Lorenzkowski repeatedly emphasizes the hybrid nature of the German language and culture in Waterloo County and Buffalo. Following several US studies, she argues that particularly in the case of Ontario, a great number of German speakers disagreed with the ethnic leadership and its claims that ethnic identity required the use of non-anglicized, standard German. The author is critical of the ideas that “ethnic gatekeepers” propounded in the German-language press. She describes a tension between two groups in Waterloo County: one that believed that its ethnic identity could be maintained through song, performance, associational life, and memory and another that believed that a supposed widespread *Kauderwelsch* (gibberish or pidgin German) deteriorated the position of German culture and somehow also threatened to weaken the ethnic identity of the community leaders themselves.

This well-researched book provides innovative answers to a broad set of questions, at the same time making two major historiographical contributions. First, the lens of aural history and the interest in how culture and ethnicity happened is an important shift away from a long-running debate about acculturation and language loss for Germans in Canada. This fresh approach to Canadian ethnic studies will hopefully have a lasting impact on future studies of other immigrant groups. Second, Lorenzkowski’s description of the cultural connections across the Ontario-New York border through numerous singers’ festivals takes an important step in understanding how transnational connections repeatedly shaped ethnic culture within national and local contexts.

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Gord Hill, *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010).

Gord Hill’s *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* is provocative proof that graphic history is an important tool for activists today. In the preface, Hill argues that the dominant narrative of colonial history in the Americas minimizes the story of indigenous resistance, and he maintains that “such a strategy has been used to impose capitalist ideology on people, to pacify them, and to portray their struggle as doomed to failure” (5). To counter this narrative, Hill’s work chronicles the long history of indigenous peoples’ resistance to colonialism by illustrating the many defeats inflicted on invading European forces and highlighting the strength of contemporary indigenous resistance movements from Chiapas to New Caledonia. Indeed, the very purpose of *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic*