

More critically, there is a basic structural problem with *Freedom to Play* that did not exist in the earlier works by Lewis. That is, whereas letters alone can be connected with minimal commentary or analysis, connecting children's letters to adult memories, or adult memories to author recollections, or children's letters to author recollections, requires more transitional commentary than Lewis has provided. Without smooth transitions between the three types of documents, reading through the six chapters can be a trying process at times, a problem that might have been overcome by employing a variety of transition strategies for this book, rather than holding fast to a formula that worked well with a less complex set of resources.

These criticisms aside, *Freedom to Play* is a useful addition to the historiography of childhood in Canada. As a general reference, the book will undoubtedly prove practical to historians; to a researcher in the field of children's play it is essential reading; and for instructors of the History of Childhood or the History of Education, there are myriad possibilities for using the documents it contains. Lewis is to be commended for exploiting her resources so well as to produce three books in such short order and, with this latest work, for exploring new ways to use those resources to broaden our knowledge about the culture of childhood in Canada before television impacted upon it.

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Kathryn Carter, ed. *The small details of LIFE: 20 diaries by women in Canada, 1830-1996*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Pp. 488.

The small details of LIFE: 20 diaries by women in Canada, 1830-1996, is an ambitious project. In her acknowledgements, Kathryn Carter identifies the market niche this collection hopes to fill: realizing that "no book featured a geographically wide range of Canadian women" (p. ix) as she compiled *Diaries in English by Women in Canada, 1753-1995: An Annotated Bibliography* (1997),

Carter set out to prepare a collection that would address this gap. The result is a bulk of a book that includes a substantial introduction, excerpts from twenty journals composed between 1830 and 1996 by women “who are Canadian or who wrote in what is currently called Canada” (p. 4), succinct introductions to these twenty diarists by nineteen researchers, and a photograph of each diarist and/or pages from her journal. The selected excerpts describe domestic and social activities as well as travel by women who resided in Canada West, several provinces, and territories, although neither Newfoundland or the Yukon are represented. Not represented, too, are women’s diary entries in languages other than English.

In her ample introduction, Carter announces that this collection “seeks to enrich the history of Canada with the voices of ‘unknown’ women who lived from coast to coast” (p. 4). The hitherto unknown voices include Sarah Welch Hill, who immigrated to Canada West in 1843 with an abusive husband and two children under the age of two; Constance Kerr Sissons, who lived in Ottawa, Rainy River, and finally Toronto during her ninety-seven years – and who remarkably maintained a journal for almost seventy-five of those; and Mina Wylie, who, at the exuberant age of twenty-two in the winter of 1911, undertook a journey from Ottawa to Europe via New York City. Both Sissons’ and Wylie’s diaries are held in private collections and are previously unpublished – circumstances that explain why these particular voices are unknown.

Less unknown is the voice of Edna Staebler, who may be familiar to many readers and cooks. Pioneer of the now popular genre of creative nonfiction, Staebler gained a culinary audience with the publication of her “schmecks cookbooks” compiled between 1968 and 1987. Among other arguably recognizable voices in *small details* are those of Dorothy Duncan MacLennan (artist, recipient of the Governor General’s Award, memoirist, biographer, and travel writer) and Marian Engel (novelist, short story writer, and freelance writer, who died much too young in 1985). What *small details* contributes in these cases is previously unknown and thus fresh material articulated by these familiar voices. Indeed, Staebler’s 1995 entry delightfully describes her attending, without her hearing aid, the ceremony at which she received the Order of Canada, while the excerpts from Engel allow us a glimpse into both her enthusiasm for the difficult writing life (“How gorgeous to be wakened by an idea rather than an alarm clock, even if the idea fades” – p. 433) and her attempts to redefine

herself once she accepted, in 1976, that her marriage was unfixable. “Let landscape do what Valium doesn’t,” she reminds herself (p. 429).

The excerpts range in length from a compact three pages to twenty-four, with the average length being a dozen or so pages. At times, these excerpts offer little more than an enumeration of daily activities and duties fulfilled. Sarah Crease’s entries read like truncated lists. A matriarch in late-nineteenth-century Victoria’s society, Crease enumerated rather than described events and people; thus her entry for early September 1878 reads: “1st S Dean Mason” and “4th W H.M.S. Daring left Esquimalt Harbor for Valpo [Valparaiso] Capt Hammer” (p. 158). Similarly, the excerpt by Elsie Rogstad Jones of Dewberry, Alberta, who maintained a diary between 1937 and 1947 when she was in her twenties, offers little description but notes domestic chores completed and domestic situations: “August 3, 1943 – Wed. [son] Jimmy is really sick to day has the measles for sure Gramp & I canned 7 qts peas and 5 of beans 2 pints greens. Was tired at nite” (p. 376). If *small details* had consisted only of scores of pages of such entries, reading the collection would have become taxing despite being forearmed with Carter’s pronouncement that the selections were not made with literary expectations (pp. 8-9). Crease’s and Rogstad Jones’ pithy entries as well as those by Sarah Welch Hill and Dorothy Duncan MacLennan lack narrative momentum and mention so many unfamiliar (and usually undocumented) names that reading becomes formidable. Yet this type of entry is wisely kept to a minimum in *small details*. Indeed, Barbara Powell, who edited the Crease material, alternates one month of entries by this mother of few words, with one month of entries for the same time period by Sarah’s more garrulous daughter, Susan. The seemingly truncated entries also remind us of how provocative the absence of a fully developed narrative may be. Amidst Sarah Welch Hill’s comments about washing day and letters received and sermons heard when she lived, during the later 1840s, in Hope Township, Canada West, her terse words about her husband’s “constant abuse” (p. 86) resonate.

At times the diary selections provide a substantial probing of a personally significant experience. During the 1926/27 school year at the Roman Catholic Mount Saint Vincent Academy in Halifax, seventeen-year-old Mary Dulhanty sporadically made entries in a notebook. Nevertheless, she created a substantial record of her experience at a three-day retreat conducted by mission priest Father Knox. Mirroring a stream-of-consciousness style, this record

reveals not only the influence Knox wielded over young Catholic women's understanding of their roles but also Dulhanty's frantic attempts to grasp the preacher's strictures. For the most part, however, the selections in *small details* record rather than probe, describe briefly not copiously, and observe the external rather than confess and emote. We may observe, however, a shift from the essentially dispassionate recording of events to confessional writing because of the overarching chronological structure of the collection. We begin with adventurous traveller Frances Ramsay Simpson's writing from 1830 and conclude with Staebler's from 1996; thus provided is a trajectory of women's diary writing in Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This collection is also organized thematically. Materials are classified under one of six topics that commence with "Turbulent Beginnings," followed by "Conflict and Confusion," "Hesitation and Pause," "Exploration," "Love, Loss, and Work," and "Reflective Endings." This organizational decision, selected to mirror the *kunstlerroman*, provides a measure of structural unity and diversity – that is, Carter's key interest. Committed to the principle of diversity in writing and uninterested in aesthetic judgement, Carter includes selections that range from the nineteenth-century sea travels of the intrepid Amelia Holder (who, at age eleven, sailed with her father to Spain, Ireland, and South America) to the struggles of housewives such as the headstrong Caroline Alice Porter, who poignantly observes that "this life is very short, changes and vacant chairs" (p. 239) to the romantic and professional concerns of teachers such as the British Columbia-based Nagle sisters (Susan and Sarah), the Alberta-based Sophie Alice Puckette, who temporarily taught in Colfax, Washington, in 1908, and Phoebe McInnes, who bicycled to work in the Fernridge district of Langley, British Columbia.

Yet, in its ambitious desire to be all things – to range across time and Canadian space, to be organized both chronologically and thematically, to present "the extraordinary daily achievements of allegedly ordinary women" (p. 4) – *small details* overextends itself. Individually, each packaged introduction, excerpt, and photograph allows us a glimpse into the private person. Collectively, however, the entries of *small details* are oddly unbalanced in spite of the dual organizational structure. The excerpt from the 1922 travel diaries of the prolific Miriam Green Ellis is curiously short, given the prolixity of this Western journalist's writings and especially when it is set against the lengthy entry by Sarah Welch Hill. The introduction to Dorothy Choate Herriman mentions her

romanticism but not religion despite this Ontario-based poet's 1932/33 journal being suffused with religious imagery.

But these are small details, and *small details* significantly introduces us to fresh voices via meticulously edited entries. And, by offering us introductions to and diary entries by twenty women, *small details* makes available previously untold lives – and that is no small matter.

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Shenwen Li. *Stratégies missionnaires des jésuites français en Nouvelle-France et en Chine au XVII^e siècle*. Paris et Québec: L'Harmattan et Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001. Coll. InterCultures, 380 p.

Dans des articles parus en 1996 et 1998, Dominique Deslandres avait amorcé un travail comparatif au sujet des missions de la Nouvelle-France. D'une part, elle avait mis en parallèle les stratégies missionnaires déployées dans les missions intérieures de la France et celles utilisées, à la même époque, dans les missions amérindiennes; d'autre part, elle avait comparé les stratégies missionnaires mises en œuvre auprès des Amérindiens, en Amérique du Nord, par les Anglais et les Français. Dans le présent ouvrage, Shenwen Li ajoute une pierre à ce chantier comparatif dans le domaine des missions au XVII^e siècle. Cette fois-ci, il tente d'établir une comparaison entre deux univers fort contrastés, le monde amérindien et la civilisation chinoise, deux univers où des jésuites français ont œuvré au XVII^e siècle, bien que les périodes correspondant au sommet de leur activité dans ces deux mondes ne coïncident pas exactement.

Pour conduire ce travail comparatif, l'A. construit son ouvrage de manière assez classique. Une première partie (un chapitre) s'intéresse aux missionnaires jésuites : les origines, la structure hiérarchique et les règles de la compagnie, la formation des membres, l'implantation de la compagnie en France et la préparation aux deux missions d'outre-mer qui nous intéressent ici. Peut-être n'a-t-on pas porté ici une attention assez grande au