

While the book's subject will interest many scholars, its brevity and very specific focus risk making the text inaccessible for non-specialists. Smith's time period, from Confederation through to the 2011 Federal General Election, means that the book covers a tremendous number of events and often relies on the reader's prior knowledge of issues as diverse as Borden's Wartime Unity Government through to the Bilingual and Bicultural Commission to fill in necessary details that are often crucial to his argument. Furthermore, when discussing seminal events in the history of opposition in Canada – such as the King-Byng Crisis – Smith only focuses on the specific aspects of the crisis that advance his argument and dismisses the rest as irrelevant to the current discussion. While such an approach allows for an efficient analysis of his subject matter, it also restricts the audience of the book to a certain subset of scholars already familiar with the contours of Canadian politics. Given the lack of scholarship on Canadian Opposition as a whole, as well as the potential for the book to appeal to international audiences, a broader contextualization of critical events would further strengthen the cross-discipline appeal of his book.

Overall, in *Across the Aisle*, David Smith has done an admirable job of delving into a previously unexplored facet of Canadian politics. Both historians and political scientists interested in Canada or formal politics in countries with Westminster-style governments will find many important insights in this book and an effective blending of historical and contemporary analysis. Given the current debates over the state of democracy in Canada, from the Reform Act to Senate reform, Smith's book provides valuable and timely insight. His defense of parliamentary opposition is much needed in a time when parliamentary politics as a whole is largely viewed with distrust. As Smith demonstrates, while people may yearn for a more cooperative model of government, our current Westminster-inspired system is based on conflict and checks on government power, the most important of these being an effective opposition in Parliament.

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SWYRIPA, Frances – *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010. Pp. 296.

In *Storied Landscapes*, Frances Swyripa explores ethno-religious communities on the Canadian Prairies from the early days of European settlement through to the present. She moves beyond the traditional emphasis on settlement patterns and immigrant reception to probe issues of heritage and identity among prairie newcomers and their descendants. *Storied Landscapes* reveals that prairie landscapes were just that—storied. Through myths, symbols, commemorative traditions, and landmarks, settler peoples told narratives of their relationships with the land, their homelands, and their histories. In the telling and retelling of such

narratives, each immigrant group carved out, not only their own identity, but that of the prairie west itself. This study offers an engaging look at how ethno-religious communities shaped, and drew meaning from, the prairie region. It reveals the importance of place, both material and imagined, to the construction of ethno-religious identities, and the significance of such identities to the making and remaking of the prairie west.

Storied Landscapes focuses on European immigrants who settled, not in cities, but on the land. Ukrainians, Mennonites, Icelanders, and Doukhobors predominate in Swyripa's analysis, but several other groups also make an appearance including Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Poles, Romanians, Jews, American Mormons, Finns, Hungarians, German Catholics, and the English. Rather than offering detailed histories of these communities, Swyripa selectively draws examples from each to illuminate broader themes. In the opening chapters, she outlines the diverse settlement experiences of ethno-religious communities on the prairies, and situates such experiences in wider context. Here, Swyripa sets the stage for several chapters on the various local, regional, national, and international factors that influenced the identities of prairie settler peoples. Through practices such as place-naming and the construction of churches, newcomers moulded the prairie landscape in ways that reflected a "delicate balance between old and new worlds" (p. 49). The immigrant generation further nurtured a sense of place and belonging by publicly acknowledging their founders and telling their settlement stories. Although not without tensions, such stories helped to make ethno-religious diversity central to the wider prairie identity. Settler peoples carved out their identities not only in relation to their local communities and the broader region, but to the nation as a whole. As Swyripa aptly reveals, at events such as centennial celebrations, many ethno-religious groups worked to fit their own stories into the national narrative. The nation, region, and local community influenced the heritage and identity of immigrant groups; such groups were also intimately connected with homelands. Newcomers made sense of themselves and their worlds in ways that reflected their membership in transnational diaspora communities. The politics, traditions, and tensions of the old world carried over into the new, informing in critical ways the identity of, not only immigrant groups, but of the wider prairie west itself. In the final chapters, Swyripa moves beyond the immigrant generation to consider the ways in which the "prairie pioneer legacy" (p. 6) took shape among the immigrants' descendants. That legacy was perpetuated by potent symbols, including statues of homeland heroes and images of sheaves of wheat. Such symbols, together with the ongoing commemoration of pioneers and settlement sites, varied across different communities and reflected the complex mix of old and new that constituted prairie ethnicity. While certain symbols and commemorations were linked to specific ethno-religious traditions, others, such as wheat, pointed to a wider regional identity grounded in a shared attachment to the land.

Storied Landscapes makes a significant contribution to the historiography of religion, ethnicity, and region in Canada. The growing literature on the politics of collective memory, heritage, and invented pasts has, for the most part, passed over the prairie west. By foregrounding the constructed identities and imagined

communities of prairie immigrants, rather than such things as numbers and settlement patterns, Swyripa offers new insights into the history of ethnicity in Western Canada. The region itself is a major actor in Swyripa's work. More than simply a container for universal processes, the prairie west - with its particular landscape, demography, and history - influenced the shape and meaning of ethno-religious identity. Like place, religion mattered to prairie immigrants and their descendants. Ethnicity and religion were inextricably linked in immigrant communities, and Swyripa deftly weaves discussion of both through her analysis. In exploring the Christianization of the prairie landscape, she joins a growing number of scholars concerned with the creation and negotiation of sacred space. Although it would have been useful to learn more about those who contested, or were displaced by, Christianization, Swyripa demonstrates the significance of religion to the material and imagined communities of the prairie west. *Storied Landscapes* would be enriched by greater attention to the differences both within and between various ethno-religious communities, such as those based on gender; it would also be enhanced by further inclusion of the voices and recollections of ordinary members of these communities. Despite such suggestions, Swyripa effectively reveals the rich texture and diversity of prairie culture, and lays the groundwork for further research on sacralization and secularization in the region.

Swyripa deepens our understanding of the overlapping local, regional, national, and international factors that shaped ethno-religious identity in Canada. She shows the inextricability of religion and ethnicity in many prairie communities, and deftly probes the invented pasts of these communities. She also reveals the importance of place to religion and ethnicity, and the centrality of ethno-religious diversity to the making of the prairie west. *Storied Landscapes* thus adds considerably to the literature on ethnicity, religion, and region in Canada.

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THIFAUT, Marie-Claude (dir.) – *L'incontournable caste des femmes. Histoire des services de santé au Québec et au Canada*, Ottawa, Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2012, 370 p.

Cet ouvrage dirigé par Marie-Claude Thifault a pour objectif de réunir une large variété de textes à l'usage des étudiants et étudiantes francophones qui s'intéressent à l'histoire de la santé et de ses praticiennes. Divisé en quatre parties, il comprend 13 chapitres, dont six sont des traductions, et entend surtout montrer que les femmes ont été omniprésentes dans le domaine des soins et de la prise en charge des populations vulnérables tout en étant placées en position de dominées, mais sans que cette position soit immuable. C'est à cette réalité complexe que réfère le titre plutôt sibyllin du livre, comme l'explique Thifault dans l'introduction (p. 11), sans nécessairement convaincre. De fait, une expression moins connotée que celle