

secret treaties anyway and enhanced their anti-imperialist credentials further with the independence of Finland, the Baltic states and Ukraine under the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The war of intervention, the *cordon sanitaire*, the backwardness of Russia and the civil war would have supplied lots of reasons for giving them the benefit of the doubt when they retreated from the revolutionary principles they announced in October 1917. More importantly, perhaps, the Bolsheviks actually had power, and kept it in the name of socialism. For two decades to come there was little to show for socialism anywhere else. Lenin's idea that 1914 had opened up an epoch of wars, civil wars, revolutions and the decline of bourgeois democracy was supported by plenty of empirical evidence in the inter-war years. The vanguard party had much to recommend it in these circumstances and compared favourably to the experience of social democracy and the pre-Bolshevik amateurism of the Marxist left in its ability to organise and focus popular discontents. Finally the temper of the far left in 1918 is not captured merely by its talk of direct democracy so much as its conviction that parliamentary government best represented the enemy. The enemy had just presided over the greatest man-made catastrophe to date. It was tempting to think that the Bolsheviks had found a way to dispose of it and that socialists who really meant business would have to do as they had done.

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Alvin Finkel, Sarah Carter, and Peter Fortna, *The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2010).

The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region has a history of its own. Published by Athabasca University Press and edited by Alvin Finkel, Sarah Carter, and Peter Fortna, the collection of essays springs from the like-named *The West and Beyond: Historians Past, Present and Future* conference, held at the University of Alberta in 2008. The conference envisioned itself as heir to the annual Western Canadian Studies Conferences of old, which had begun in the late 1960s and continued into the early 1990s (xi–xv). Throughout that series, politicians, western proponents, and academics rubbed shoulders in equal measure making the conferences as much about protecting or promoting the west as they were about studying it. Today's project is interested in moving beyond Western alienation; a confining narrative under which "the West" became a battleground for regional elites rather than a space for lived experience. *The West and Beyond* is far more interested in imagining a region, than in defending it.

The book is broken down into five thematic sections. The first considers frameworks for Western Canadian History. Gerald Friesen traces shifting trends within the historiography of Western Canada; from an initial focus on the establishment of European governance and economic integration with the rest of Canada, to today's focus on postmodern theory and integrating the west into transnational themes (XVIII). Lyle Dick offers a look at vernacular historians, people such as Katherine Hughes, F.G. Roe, and Roy Ito, and Winona Wheeler articulates the role of Aboriginal oral histories and provides cautionary suggestions in using them.

Aboriginal people are the focus of the book's second and arguably most thematically coherent section. Matt Dyce and James Opp walk the reader through efforts to create Aboriginal people as economic actors in the Edmonton hinterland, while Kathryn McKay traces the encounter between the medical establishment and Aboriginal people, and Susan L. Joudrey looks at efforts to create and challenge Aboriginal identity at the Calgary stampede. Amber Dean's essay on Hauntings in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside links the historical displacement of Aboriginal people to the contemporary plight of missing women in Vancouver; a brutal reminder that the violence of dispossession in the past continues today.

Economics and economic actors take centre stage in *The Worker's West*. While essays by Jeffery Taylor and Elizabeth Jameson consider the articulation of capitalist development in the west and envision its global links, Esyllt W. Jones and John Willis focus on Winnipeg by examining, respectively, the impact of disease on worker's bodies and the involvement of Winnipeg Postal Workers in the Winnipeg General Strike. The Winnipeg focus is appropriate and welcome. Winnipeg's early Twentieth century role as the dominant prairie metropolis ensured that it was the focal point for social, economic and ethnic battles on the prairies. As Willis demonstrates, the postal workers saw Winnipeg as a natural battleground for winning rights because through the city, still the east-west chokepoint in 1919, they could control the access of mail to the west (236). Region mattered and as went Winnipeg, so went Western Canada.

The fourth section views the "west from the margins" with a chapter by Dan Cui and Jennifer R. Kelly on black people in Edmonton, another by Valerie J. Korinek searching out the life histories of queer people on the prairies and a third by Dominique Clément on the evolution of BC's human rights laws. The challenge of placing the people of the margin into their own distinctive chapter is that it pulls their history out of the region; their history becomes a separate block within a series of histories rather than an integral part of the region itself. Finally, in the last section we see cultural portrayals of the west with

essays focused on skiing, Glenbow Museum founder Eric Harvie, the conservation of historic places in Saskatchewan and the links between historian W. L. Morton and Margaret Laurence.

This collection pulls together nicely. It makes no pretense of providing a coherent history of the west – if that is even possible – but rather a series of thematically linked snapshots, or perspectives as the title suggests, of the region. Struggling against a relentless historiography stretching over decades that focused on settlement and governance, the collection has little to say about the details of both though much to say about their implications and ramifications. As the editors intended, *The West and Beyond*, is most useful as a book that challenges us to perceive the west as both a region that is constantly being reimagined and one enmeshed with a broader world. In that sense, with a nod to the book's cover, which features a gravel road stretching across an endless prairie, *The West and Beyond* is an intellectual starting point, rather than an end.

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Peter Morton Coan, *Toward a Better Life: America's New Immigrants in Their Own Words—From Ellis Island to the Present* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2011).

The human experience of migration lies at the center of this work: “sometimes sad or angry, other times joyous, tragic or bittersweet . . .” (36). The collection of interviews includes fifteen-year-old Ava Rado-Harte’s late-night escape to Austria during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the well known von Trapp family’s story portrayed in the *Sound of Music*, and the illegal entry and fairy tale success of Cesar Millan, the “Dog Whisperer.” Coan notes: “few subjects remain as controversial and emotionally charged -- and central to being American -- as immigration,” (25).. He identifies continuing themes in the immigrant experience -- discrimination, immigration as a filtering process -- but also identifies differences in countries of origin, policy and process changes, and technological advances. “The world has changed. The game has changed. Immigration has changed.” (29)

“The very things they said about the Irish, Italians, eastern Europeans and the Jews coming in,” Coan quotes one immigration scholar, “are word for word the same accusations being leveled against Hispanic and Asian immigrants coming in today.” (25) Coan correctly notes continued tensions and an immigration policy, “geared to reject people rather than to accept them . . . to separate