Donald Wright, *Canada: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 160pp. Paperback. \$11.95. ISBN 978-0-1987-5524-1.

This is an extremely ambitious book, introducing Canada, the world's second largest country, in just 160 pages. However, it is part of the wonderful 'A Very Short Introduction' series published by Oxford University Press, and it makes an excellent addition to it. I made good use of the series for a World History course that I have taught in the past and was disappointed that there was not a volume on Canada, but Donald Wright has rectified this, and done so in a very interesting and readable way. Being an historian by training based in a Political Science department uniquely qualifies Wright to approach what is not just a short history of Canada, but an introduction to the country. In fact, his knowledge of seminal Canadian literature, music, and artworks is also quite impressive.

Wright, unlike many other traditional introductions to Canada takes a thematic rather than chronological approach, which I have to say works well, especially considering the conciseness of the volume. The book is divided into six main thematic chapters: 'Beginnings', 'Dispossessions', 'Nationalisms', 'Rights', and 'Norths'. The use of plurals for all of these chapter titles is intentional on Wright's part, as he wants to emphasise that there was not just one beginning of Canada, or that it has one national identity etc. Instead he quite rightly argues that the use of plurals for all of these illustrates the complex nature of Canada, as I said above the second largest country in the world. Within each of the thematic chapters he primarily adopts a chronological approach which makes sense.

Something that I especially liked about the book is his emphasis on Indigenous peoples in Canada, as well as other marginalized groups, such as visible minorities (in fact the book begins and ends with the arrival and settlement experiences of a family of Syrian refugees, the Albrdians), women, and LGBTQ2 people. Again this is something that more traditional introductions to Canada have given very scant coverage to, if any. And the inclusion of the above groups of Canadians is not tokenistic, but is present throughout the book, especially Indigenous peoples, which again traditionally tend to only be mentioned at the beginning of Canada's national story, and then just disappear. Wright also discusses the position of French-Canadians in the country as well as Canada's relationship with the United States of America.

I appreciated Wright's conceptualisation of the northern part of Canada as the 'actual north' and the 'idea of the north' in the final chapter of the book, which I think neatly encapsulates the different perspectives of the 'Norths'. His affection for Canada is quite apparent in the book, as is his ability to view it through a critical lens. These are perspectives and qualities that I would also like to think I share. However, my only 'criticism' of the book is that it would have been good to see more scholarship by younger and emerging scholars listed in the 'Further Reading' section of the book, rather than primarily works by more older and established scholars or those now retired. But this is a critique I also have of introductions to and concise histories of other countries.

I very much enjoyed reading this book. I wholeheartedly recommend it to readers, both expert and general, although it will probably be more useful for the latter. If you have ever been fascinated to learn more about this vast country of the north then this book will be a wonderful introduction.

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