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William G. Robbins, Katrine Barber. *Nature's Northwest: The North Pacific Slope in the Twentieth Century.* Modern American West Series. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011. xvii + 286 pp. $55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8165-2894-3; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8165-2959-9.

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In this reconsideration of the Greater Northwest region that he previously explored in earlier works, William G. Robbins, with Katrine Barber, proposes a bioregional perspective transcending political boundaries. Exploring twentieth-century themes, landscapes, and experiences connecting northwestern people across international, state, and provincial borders, this general synthesis, aimed at lay historians, links transnational approaches with national, state, and provincial studies, considering, at the scale of "region," issues of extra-regional significance. Instructors of Pacific Northwest history previously lacked cross-border synthesis texts beyond Carlos Schwantes's *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (1996), focusing on the United States, and Jean Barman's *The West beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (2007). *Nature's Northwest* synthesizes these works with other studies of the Greater Northwest, in this transnational survey of the twentieth century.

Despite the title, *Nature's Northwest* focuses mostly on people. It considers "diasporic ethnic populations" that contributed immigrant traditions to an adaptive and growing Native populace (p. xii). It explores transformations of regional experience–from Progressive-Era reforms, through the dislocations of the world wars, and culminating in more recent, conflictive landscapes and postindustrial decades. It begins with a narrative mosaic of prominent people. Subsequent chapters explore how structural realities shaped human experiences. Important sections compare land-use priorities in British Columbia, where the provincial (not federal) government controls most public lands, with states like Oregon and Washington, where public lands were split among state and federal agencies. *Nature's Northwest* notably considers how these differences affected Indian and First Nations peoples, organized labor, and environmental protection initiatives.

The book deftly integrates First Nations and Indian experiences into dominant narratives, but its panoramic approach often disrupts transnational analysis. After thoughtfully tracing U.S. Indian policy from allotment through the 1930s, with attention to fisheries, water rights, and urbanization concerns, the book abruptly transitions into overviews of Chinese experiences with segregation; suffragists in a patriarchal landscape; and labor unrest in a structurally unstable, extractive economy. One important chapter compares farmer-labor activism north and south of the 49th parallel, incongruously terming William S. U'Ren "truly radical," while labeling his state (Oregon) an "anti-populist" exception in an otherwise radical region (pp. 50, 38). Notably drawing on Canadian scholars Barman, Jeremy Mowat, and A. Ross McCormack, the chapter thoughtfully contrasts British Columbia's politically inclined workers with syndicalist labor movements in the U.S. Northwest. The discussion, however, misses significant cross-border complexities. Before the United States entered World War One, for example, militarization in British Columbia fueled a southward labor exodus after 1914, but also increased demand for extractive resources. This artifact of U.S. neutrality contributed to speedup conditions in U.S. timber and mining camps. *Nature's Northwest*, however, surprisingly argues that during the war, by comparison with British Columbia, "conditions on the American side … were no different" (p. 45).

The authors consider dominant and counter-narratives linking political trends, policy discussions, and culture. They effectively compare triumphalist narratives across borders, depicting a conflictive landscape where people struggled to shape a common culture from their disunited pasts. They insightfully link race prejudice with public displays of natural history and art, emphasizing how historical societies and museums shaped dominant narratives, with uneven consequences for local people, depending on their race, ethnicity, class, and gender. This is familiar ground, but the authors innova-

tively locate particular examples within a transnational, regional context. This otherwise impressive synthesis has some drawbacks. Most notably, it sometimes juxtaposes unrelated themes, for example, a discussion of the Western Federation of Miners lurches into a paragraph addressing population recovery among Indians/First Nations people (p. 46).

The book's payoff comes in its last third. Echoing themes from Robbins's earlier study of postwar Oregon, *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940-2000* (2004), this briefer synthesis situates that state history within a broader, transnational context. Extractive industries, nuclear landscapes, and militarized communities of the Cold War center the discussion of deteriorating consensus and racialized exclusion. It explores postwar readjustments for Japanese Americans returning from forced relocation, termination debates reshaping Native American tribal identities, and the postwar growth and segregation of African American and Mexican American populations.

The strongest chapter, "The Conflicted Politics of Environmentalism," compares socially conscious progressivism in British Columbia with ecologically conscious progressivism in Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Wyoming. Offering a western North America context for the book's northwestern regional focus, it contrasts U.S. federal authority with Canada's relatively autonomous provinces. Its comparison of state-to-state differences, however, lacks comparable analysis of dominion and provincial approaches to environmental regulation. Western Canada's importance to North American energy planning underpins a good overview of Columbia River hydropower and fisheries, and that broader energy context might be more fully developed elsewhere in the chapter.

The book ends with a statistical portrait of late century gentrification and urbanization that mostly lacks transnational analysis. Statistical tables that detail Northwest demographics do not include British Columbia. Postulating an emergent, transnational, regional identity, the authors argue that in this "New West" of widening class divides, citizen access to public lands, waterways, and beaches promotes a "collective sense of commonwealth" with the potential for drawing people together, seeking a common purpose in that public realm (see, for example, tables 1 and 2 on pp. 223-224; tables 3 and 4 on pp. 228-229; and table 5 on p. 230). Overall, this is a valuable regional synthesis that does not quite accomplish the bioregional standard suggested at the outset.

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