

the understanding as to how, under conditions of modernity, such knowledge develops and exists. Do people working in capitalist resource-extraction industries, or with little day-to-day contact with the environment at all, really have knowledge of the environment based in personal narratives and experience? Or is their understanding of the environment and their experience a composite of competing scientific ideas, press reports and cultural assumptions? This is not to say that people are misinformed, nor is it to deny the absolute importance of learning about local context – needs, values, and customs – as part of the environmental decision-making process. But I need further convincing that a unique form of local knowledge exists that can be opposed to, and tapped into by, science and industry. In North America, after all, we are usually not dealing with communities with long pasts on the land. We are dealing with the people who displaced those communities in favour of suburbs and industrial logging.

Second, I am not sure that this is really a book about politics. It is more a book about policy. When Bocking imagines environmental politics as a “conversation, with no one interest dominating, but all parties able to have their say...,” (221) I think of the Harper government’s manipulative “Clean Air Act” of 2006, which concentrated on smog to divert attention away from climate change. I think of the way that the Bush administration has hijacked the language of postmodernism for political gain. In one well-known incident, a Bush staffer dismissed reporters by telling them that they were part of the “reality-based community,” whereas Bush’s people “created realities.” I am convinced that Bocking’s critique of science is correct and that science must be much more firmly rooted in political and social context to become effective at solving environmental problems. But we cannot assume that our enemies will be reasonable. The previous generation of environmental politics relied on the authority of science. Bocking (and others) have pointed out the chinks in the armour, and Bocking offers a solution that seems sensible for the policy process and local politics. However, more needs to be said about politics at the larger provincial, state, and federal levels at which the rules of the game are set, and where conflict, not consensus, is the norm.

I offer these points as arguments with a piece of work I admire. In general, both books raise issues around science and politics that need to be addressed in contemporary environmental history.

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Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2005).

Even by today’s standards, the Montana-Alberta borderlands are ‘remote’. This semi-arid and serenely beautiful setting is one where the weather can quickly turn, and the open plains can leave one suddenly feeling very exposed. These border-

lands were among the last areas of the plains/prairies zone to be surveyed, mapped, and settled by whites. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when both the US and Canada were eager to settle their respective Wests, the rugged Montana-Alberta borderlands posed a colossal challenge to the parallel imaginations of national economic and cultural expansion. As Sheila McManus writes in *The Line Which Separates*, “In the case of these borderlands, their distance from the national seats of government meant that most federal forms of differentiation were indirect and imaginary” (xviii).

The delineation of political boundaries across an uninterrupted physical region requires surveys and mapping, as well as the imposition of socio-cultural norms and expectations used to create distinct territorial affiliations. McManus, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Lethbridge, explores these processes in her study of race, gender, and national identities in the Montana-Alberta borderlands. She adds, with some limited success, to the body of research on the creation of gendered and racialised identities in the West, as she presents a historicized social geography of this borderlands region.

McManus focuses on three concerns: the mapping and legislating of the borderlands; Blackfoot-state relations; and gender and racial expectations that accompanied white settlement to the region. She concentrates on the two decades between the 1872-74 Boundary Survey and 1890, shortly before more widespread settlement took place. To begin, McManus examines measures taken to survey and map the international boundary through the borderlands. In doing so, the governments could create “a border where one did not exist and reinforce it with social and political categories that could outweigh the physical and social geographies of the West” (8). Here, the two governments created legal templates for the economic development of the region, which included replacing the ‘family farm’ ideal with a more realistic vision where “the discourse of ranching”, one which was “overwhelmingly masculine”, prevailed (47).

Next, McManus investigates social boundaries within the borderlands—those between Blackfoot nations and agents of the state, between Blackfoot peoples and whites, and between men and women of multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds (including a handful of Chinese and Black settlers). Delineating clear and appropriate roles for each of these groups was critical in successfully settling this region and buttressing national identity. National identity was likewise used as leverage to reinforce social categories and difference. For example, McManus notes that policies regarding Native-white marriages differed, particularly with regard to the status of Native women. “North of the line mixed-race couples were not allowed to live on ‘Indian land’...South of the line a couple could live on Indian land and a white man could access Indian resources” (161). These policy differences called into question how ‘masculinity’ and ‘whiteness’ were defined in the by the two national governments.

McManus relies on two types of primary research materials. The first is

government documentation, namely annual reports produced by the US Department of the Interior and the Canadian Department of Agriculture. McManus rightly recognizes the research value of the annual reports in that local agents of the state often provided perspectives on Native relations, ranching, and other issues that differed from official government policy. Second, McManus utilizes the journals and remembrances of a small number of white women settlers in the region. Limited in number, these materials nonetheless provide a greater insight into social identities in the region, and McManus's use of them is her strongest contribution.

McManus's decision to treat gender and nationality, and not *class*, is conspicuous, however. The viewpoints of the white borderlands women were strongly influenced by both gender norms *and* class expectations, and addressing one absent the other misses a critical contributing factor in how social identities were constructed and perceived. Also problematic is the consideration of non-white female and Native experiences. While McManus is concerned with the ways in which social categories such as race and ethnicity are imagined (3-4), only limited attention is paid to the role of individual (non-white) agency in this imagining process. Did all Native peoples or Chinese migrants in the borderlands, for instance, unwillingly assume the identity as 'Other' given to them by whites, or did some contest or, alternatively, willingly adopt these social boundaries and identities?

The Line Which Separates utilizes a linear temporal approach to understanding identity construction at multiple scales, moving from a consideration in early chapters of how large western spaces were envisioned to an analysis of local social geographies in the final chapters. This format is unnecessarily limiting. The discussion of survey and policies, for instance, is somewhat, albeit not entirely, isolated from the more complex discussions of gender in the last third of the book. The chapters therefore are only loosely tied together by McManus's stated goal of illustrating that "categories of race, gender, and nation, were intangible and unstable...challenged and redrawn at the local and federal levels" (xiii).

Two additional issues require attention. First, at no point does McManus define and describe her region, ironic as she is building in part on geographic scholarship. Calgary and Great Falls are given limited attention, but enough so as to question whether they are part of her study. If they are, what differences emerge in how race, gender, and national identities are created in nascent urban communities? Second, the book lacks adequate visuals. Most of the maps used have been reduced too much to be of much value, and archival photographs could have been used to present the borderlands' social and physical landscapes.

In the field of US-Canada borderlands studies, consideration of social boundaries has been limited relative to research on the US-Mexico borderlands, where cultural differences are more pronounced. *The Line Which Separates* lacks the depth and variety of source materials needed to address this lacuna but it does

provide a partial treatment of imagined social and national identities in this borderlands region. It also serves as a good starting point for further inquiry.

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Mark A. Lause, *Young America: Land, Labour, and the Republican Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

Mark A. Lause, an Associate Professor of history at the University of Cincinnati, has distinguished himself as a keen analyst of the insurgencies that influenced mainstream politics throughout the nineteenth century. He continues this scholarship with his fine study of the National Reform Association (NRA). This organization carried to the fore the concerns working class Americans had for land reform. Lause argues effectively that the “NRA’s agrarianism formed a persistent and underlying theme for the later working-class movement” (129). Lause demonstrates how the agrarian movement of the antebellum period succeeded in securing the “Republican” Homestead Act of 1862, and also laid the ideological groundwork for the rise of fraternal organizations of the postbellum period. With this work, Lause demonstrates the intellectual connection between agitation that ‘peaked’ in the years 1850-52, with the later movements known as Greenbackism, the Single Tax proposal of Henry George, and other “non-electoral communitarian, socialist musings” that gripped national politics in the late-nineteenth century. But the organization’s influence also helped to “mobilize public opinion strong enough to topple the slaveholders’ party from office” (133). Thus we find in Lause’s work a critical link between antebellum political agitation and the social radicalism of the late-nineteenth century.

The leaders of the National Reform Association understood initially that “theirs was but a partial white, urban, Anglo-American perspective on the working-class experience” (2). Yet, their message, according to Lause, appealed to a broader segment of the working class than the anti-monopoly rhetoric of the Locofocos. National Reformers advocated three principal and inter-related measures. First, they pushed at the state level for debt reform and the end of property seizures. Second, homestead legislation that would “permit the free settlement of the landless on the public domain.” Third, reformers wanted to eliminate speculation by limiting the amount of land any one individual could own (3). As the NRA spread from an eastern, urban, working-class movement into the Midwest and West, they embraced another set of “secondary” or “auxiliary” movements, including the ten-hour workday, direct election of government officers, and “abolition of practices ranging from the Electoral College to slavery.” According to Lause, National Reformers also consistently defended newcomers to the country, urged peace, and fostered international associations” (3). While most scholars focus on the impact these undercurrents had on the Democratic Party, Lause contends that it was the Republican Party that benefited most (but ultimately learned