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Review of *One West, Two Myths II: Essays on Comparison* Edited by C. L. Higham and Robert Thacker

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BOOK REVIEWS

One West, Two Myths II: Essays on Comparison. Edited by C. L. Higham and Robert Thacker. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press, 2006. xiii + 232 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$34.95 paper.

With this collection, editors C. L. Higham and Robert Thacker aim to define the parameters and potential of the Canada-U.S. comparative Wests field of study, with particular reference to its myths. *The American Review of Canadian Studies* (winter 2003) originally published the main body of essays, but this republication has important additions. New appendices include Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 essay on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and J. M. S. Careless's 1954 essay on "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History." Both are useful for understanding what R. Douglas Frances in a separate essay states as the persistent "difficulty of getting beyond and supplanting" the influence of Turner and Harold Adams Innis on U.S.-Canada West history. A third appendix presents Higham's thoughts on the most important works in the field, new and classic, and its major problems, especially the symbiotic relationship between comparative, transnational, and borderlands histories. New features, "Questions to Ponder" and "Must Reads," emphasize the conversations the editors wish to deepen. This edition has fewer illustrations than the special issue of ARCS, but includes new maps; especially useful are visualizations of the Canadian Theory of Metropolitanism and the American Frontier Thesis.

Individual essays point to ways the field of comparative North American Wests could advance beyond its emergent status. Frances suggests new depth might be found in uncovering a "multiplicity of myths" shaped by diverse western peoples, while William H. Katerberg clarifies a northern element that distinguishes both Canadian national and western myths from those of the U.S. Sarah Carter argues that the "gendered dimensions" of mythic "social and cultural constructs" and "nation building" need complex consideration. Her essay explores how different national policies played out in the lives of Aboriginal and white women. *Great Plains Quarterly* readers will be pleased that many of the theories and queries about comparative Wests are discussed with reference to the states and provinces of its region of focus. Readers will be interested especially in David L. Williams's discussion of the French history of the transnational northern grasslands.

Thacker analyzes telling "moments" of "comingling" among historical events and peoples in these two North American Wests to make a central point: the two nations already always are "interconnected," even though, on the U.S. side of the boundary, this insight has remained mostly implicit, ignored, or latent, and north of the line often begrudged. Comparative study of these two constantly "intertwined" nations and Wests, he and Higham argue, will yield new insight into the *distinct* cultures of the two nations. Together with *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests* (2006), edited by Sterling Evans, and the first *One West, Two Myths* volume (2004), this

collection makes clear the seeds of this northern comparative Wests field, the international historiographies and methods by which it has grown, and a research agenda with which the field should blossom.

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