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**Review of *Uniting Mountain and Plain: Cities, Law, and
Environmental Change along the Front Range* By Kathleen A.
Brosnan**

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Uniting Mountain and Plain: Cities, Law, and Environmental Change along the Front Range. By Kathleen A. Brosnan. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. xii + 276 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Brosnan offers a remarkably well-researched and well-written analysis of the Colorado Front Range urban ecology, focusing on Denver (the financial and commercial capital), Colorado Springs (the tourist town), and Pueblo (the factory town). Denver's business leaders receive the bulk of the attention here, but their efforts to promote a diverse regional industrial hinterland lead the reader through the mining, farming, and grazing regions of nineteenth-century Colorado. The narrative does not follow localities so much as problems and possibilities, beginning with the problem of extinguishing Native American claims (chapter 2) and establishing irrigated agriculture (chapter 3). The histories of Colorado Springs (chapter 4) and Pueblo (chapter 5) are cast within the context of their ecological niches (or industrial bases), indicating that their success was rooted in their specialization and subservience to Denver. In this vein the stage is set for the major analytical chapters, which explain the environmental devastation wreaked in the foolish effort to dominate nature (chapter 6) and the inevitable triumph of national and international capital in dominating even the Denver crowd (chapter 7).

Richly documented and superbly illustrated with well-chosen photos and the occasional map, this is an important contribution to western history, Colorado history, and the developing field of environmental history, wherein its most original contribution may lie. Beyond this, the urban ecology approach brings the Front Range into the analysis of the Great Plains in a marked shift from traditional approaches that have looked eastward. Here again Brosnan offers an original and important contribution.

Brosnan's is a new voice in many ways. Her concern with race, ethnicity, class, and (to a lesser extent) gender indicates a commitment to the New Western

History. Her environmentalist sensibilities indicate a commitment to New Social Movements. Urban ecology, however, is not particularly new, but Brosnan's interests clearly distinguish this work from the urban ecology of the Progressive Era. Exactly how this new Historical Geography builds upon and challenges the old urban ecology and the somewhat newer social history and political economy of earlier generations is not yet clear to this reader. Perhaps the writer is still finding that voice or this reader is not quite ready to hear it. In any case there is more than enough here to challenge the critical inquirer. Whether this is a new paradigm is not clear, but this is a new voice that should definitely be heard.

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