

Book Reviews and Notices

The Interior Borderlands: Regional Identity in the Midwest and Great Plains, edited by Jon K. Lauck. Sioux Falls: The Center for Western Studies, 2019. iii, 327 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$15.00 paperback.

Reviewer Amanda Rees is professor of geography at Columbus State University in Georgia. She established the Columbus Community Geography Center and received the 2018 Helen Ruth Aspaas SAGE Award for outstanding Stand Alone Geographic Educators.

Embracing ethnicity, fiction, film, food, gender, geography, geology, history, memoir, and religion, this edited collection draws comparisons and distinctions between two US regions: the Midwest and the Great Plains. It is made up of twenty short chapters, many no more than 9–10 pages and several of which have no organizing theses or conclusions. This book should perhaps best be understood as a series of think pieces. This review focuses on a few of its less successful submissions while highlighting several more novel approaches.

One impactful theme left unaddressed in the book is the tension between the “region as place” and the “region as process” perspectives. This reviewer recommends beginning the book with its last chapter, authored by Michael J. Mullin, so that readers can more easily place this tension into a broader historical and cultural context, and recognize the tension that is riven between the chapters.

At first glance, the application of economic geography by James S. Aber et al. to contrast the settlement of the two regions suggests a novel approach to contemporary regional studies. This quantitative approach, however, had its heyday in the mid-twentieth century and has well understood limits. Applying location theory to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century human settlement patterns without a nuanced cultural and historical context does not add much to the broader discussion of region as a theoretical location.

Gleaves Whitney’s reflection on the “there” in “There is no There” embraces the conservative approach to “region as place.” This chapter rails against cultural theory, assuming that region is an acultural container in which things happen, rather than understanding region as a cultural construction that changes over time, space, and the viewer’s subjectivities. Indeed, this essay might best be characterized as defensive, essentialist, and occasionally boosterish. Inspired by the work of

geographer Pete Shortridge, Christopher Laigen makes some headway in response to Whitney's work, drawing our attention to the lack of reflection on how regional residents understand their region. Laigen, and subsequently Mullin, focus on residents' perceptions of regions that challenge the fixed boundaries that are sometimes drawn by "region as place" writers.

There are four chapters that explore new approaches and more contemporary evidence to reflect upon region and boundary. Rachel Handel's comparison of late twentieth-century Plains and midwestern women's memoirs highlights some remarkable themes and contrasts including the use of landscape, region as emotion, and reinvention both to stay and to leave. Handel shares approaches that both connect and are at odds across this regional boundary. Debbie A. Hanson's comparison of post-1970s regional cookbooks in bordering states of the northern Plains/Midwest offers a liminal boundary over which these cultural productions reach. Jay M. Price's use of religion to explore the Midwest's southeastern border helps reposition the discussion of dynamic boundaries and liminal spaces away from the Plains and opens up some new and interesting questions about how boundaries function. Finally, Anna Thompson Hajdik's well-written reflection on cinematic representations of "fly over country" provides a timely reflection on the Great Recession and the election of Donald J. Trump. These four texts work to balance out the sometimes all-too-familiar terrain of Great Plains-Midwest regional analysis that often privileges the past.

Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power, by Pekka Hämäläinen. The Lamar Series in Western History. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2019. ix, 529 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, glossary, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Stephen Hausmann is an assistant professor of history at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. His book manuscript is an environmental history of the Black Hills and examines the implications of settler colonialism for Native people in cities in the twentieth century.

Lakota America is Pekka Hämäläinen's spiritual sequel to his award-winning 2009 book, *The Comanche Empire*. Both projects cover the rise and fall of powerful nomadic Indigenous societies on the Great Plains of North America, arguing that horse-and-bison social and economic systems held the keys to Lakota and Comanche power. *Lakota America's* subtitle—a *History of Indigenous Power*—is the principle difference between this and Hämäläinen's earlier work. Unlike his previous