

The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River (Hill and Wang Critical Issues)

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The Hill and Wang Critical Issues Series: concise, affordable works on pivotal topics in American history, society, and politics.

In this pioneering study, White explores the relationship between the natural history of the Columbia River and the human history of the Pacific Northwest for both whites and Native Americans. He concentrates on what brings humans and the river together: not only the physical space of the region but also, and primarily, energy and work. For working with the river has been central to Pacific Northwesterners' competing ways of life. It is in this way that White comes to view the Columbia River as an organic machine--with conflicting human and natural claims--and to show that whatever separation exists between humans and nature exists to be crossed.

In *The Organic Machine*, Richard White, a distinguished historian and leading scholar of the American West, explores the intimate relationship between nature and mankind along the Columbia River. Working on the cutting edge of environmental and social history, White demonstrates how, over the centuries, both native peoples and settlers have continually remade the river, treating it as a machine designed to churn out energy and sustenance. He assesses the impact on the Northwest ecology of enterprises that have marked the river's history, from salmon fishing to the Hanford Energy Works nuclear plant, and eloquently reveals the insights and illusions of those who work with the river. Richard White, professor of History at the University of Washington in Seattle, is the author of *The Middle Ground* and *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* and the recipient of the Albert J. Beveridge and Western Heritage awards.

Other Books

The Significance of Nonhumans in U.S. Western History,

by Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995) ... They remind us that nonhumans must be included in any analysis of the western past and western place-making ... 1995); Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995) ..."