



H-Environment

H-Environment Roundtable Reviews

Volume 6, No. 4 (2016)
<https://networks.h-net.org/h-environment>

Publication date: March 14, 2016
Roundtable Review Editor:
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Ian Tyrrell, *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt's America* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015). ISBN: 9780226197760

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Introduction by Christopher F. Jones, Arizona State University

Theodore Roosevelt stands as one of the most quintessentially American individuals of the early twentieth century. Brash, outspoken, and swashbuckling, the 26th President of the United States represented the dynamic vitality, ambition, and occasionally unrefined energy of the world's newest superpower. Yet this iconic American figure, **Ian Tyrrell** demonstrates, cannot be fully understood from within the confines of national borders. *Crisis of a Wasteful Nation* argues that key aspects of Roosevelt and the Progressive conservation movement require the perspectives of transnational history.

International linkages, Tyrrell shows, are particularly necessary for grappling with the why and how of conservation thinking at the turn of the twentieth century. America may have been the world's most wasteful nation at the time, but concerns over resource depletion existed many other places as well, as did potential solutions for addressing environmental challenges. American conservationists, such as forester and Roosevelt advisor Gifford Pinchot, attended transnational conferences of experts, read scientific literature produced overseas, and studied at foreign universities. American debates about the extent of conservation problems and the steps necessary to correct them were, as a result, tied to transnational discussions. Moreover, Tyrrell draws attention to the significant expansions of America's empire during Roosevelt's time in office, which encouraged him and his fellow conservationists to think internationally. Managing landscapes from the Philippines to Panama and assessing the potential resource contributions of other nations to American development cast a distinctly transnational flavor to conservation discourse.

Transnational history has become an important new direction in historical research over the last several decades, and environmental historians owe a debt of gratitude to Tyrrell for being one of its pioneers. The discussion in this roundtable focuses in large part on the potential strengths and weaknesses of this methodological approach. The reviewers raise a number of questions about the extent to which a transnational framing allows us to productively reinterpret existing knowledge, particularly in the realm of policy where state and nation-specific governing bodies make decisions. Does the transnational simply supplement nation-specific stories in these cases, or can it help us transform these accounts? In addition, they ask about which international groups are considered part of the analysis, and how to draw such distinctions? In his author response, Tyrrell engages generously with these questions, clarifying some of his approaches. For those interested in pursuing transnational research and examining its potential promises and pitfalls, therefore, this roundtable offers a stimulating set of exchanges.

I asked **Joseph E. Taylor III** to participate in this roundtable because of his extensive research into the American conservation movement. Author of *Making Salmon* (Washington, 1999) and *Pilgrims of the Vertical* (Harvard, 2010), he is

currently exploring the history of Progressive conservation from the perspective of Congress among other projects, leading him to investigate the intersections between the national and the transnational in his review.

A historian of agriculture, environment, and policy, **Sarah Phillips** has written about American conservationist politics in works such as *This Land, This Nation* (Cambridge, 2007) and her present research looks at food politics in the second half of the twentieth century. Like Taylor, her comments explore the extent to which transnational research alters the way we understand American conservation.

Scott Moranda researches transnational environmental history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, investigating comparisons between Anglo-American land use practices and those favored by Germans and German-Americans. Author of *The People's Own Landscape* (Michigan, 2014), his review raises questions about the similarities and differences between American, British, and German perspectives on conservation.

Harriet Ritvo completes our roundtable, lending her expertise in environmental history, animal studies, and the British empire, where she has published extensively. As she observes in her response, big game hunting in Africa represents one of the mixed legacies of Roosevelt and the early conservation movement, revealing a strong interest in preserving certain parts of nature accompanied by the slaughter of animals, imperial ambitions, and racial hierarchies.

Before turning to the first set of comments, I would like to pause here and thank all the roundtable participants for taking part. In addition, I would like to remind readers that as an open-access forum, *H-Environment Roundtable Reviews* is available to scholars and non-scholars alike, around the world, free of charge. Please circulate.

 Comments by Joseph E. Taylor III, Simon Fraser University

“What One Sees”

It is probably not a coincidence that one of the most consistently insightful perspectives on North American history emanates from Australia. At arm’s length from the navel-gazing tendencies of this continent’s historians, Ian Tyrrell has offered transnational takes on U. S. and environmental history for a quarter century. His 1991 *Journal of American History* essay on American historians’ exceptionalist tendencies was a must read in graduate school. It helped to re-center a generation’s stories about nature and nations. He followed in 1999 with *True Gardens of the Gods*, arguably the first full-blown transnational environmental history. *Gardens* remains an elegant study of the cultural and material flows that shaped Australia and California in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.¹ Now comes *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation*, which extends Tyrrell’s earlier work on the transnational dimensions of Progressive-era environmental and social politics. This time, though, he moves from the peripheries to the core, focusing mainly on the role of Theodore Roosevelt’s White House in shaping Progressive conservation.

Familiarity is a constant danger with this subject. The story is so well known that readers will rightly ask, “What’s new?”, and even in this innovative study, the answer is often, “Not much.” Waste and efficiency, Teddy Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, pundits Richard Ely and W J McGee: we should acknowledge that *Crisis* traces worn paths and interrogates usual suspects. The critical difference is a novel battery of questions that produce an expansive understanding of conservation’s transnational dimensions. Tyrrell’s launching point is his observation that unease about natural resources “was not purely American but extended to many nations” (11). This is not surprising. Akira Iriye, Yves-Pierre Saunier, and others have limned modernity’s global ties and discontents before 1890, while historians of science and the environment have excavated the transnational dimensions of pre-Progressive-era fishery and forestry science.² As a result there is, or should be, wide recognition

¹ Ian Tyrrell, “American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History,” *American Historical Review* 96 (October 1991): 1031-55; *idem.*, *True Gardens of the Gods: California-Australian Environmental Reform, 1860-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

² For transnational flows see Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in Making the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Pierre-Yves Saunier and Shane Ewen, eds., *Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850-2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008). For fishery and forestry science see Joseph E. Taylor III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); Helen Rozwadowski, *The Sea Knows No Boundaries: A Century of Marine Science under ICES* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); Darin Kinsey, “Seeding the Water as the Earth’: The Epicenter and Peripheries of a Western Aquaculture Revolution,” *Environmental History* 11 (July 2006): 527-66; Michael Williams, *American and Their Forests: A Historical Geography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical*

that Progressive conservation's defining elements—governmental control, scientific expertise, utilitarian and recreational agendas, and a politicized rhetoric equating conservation with the greater good—were grafted to local, provincial, and state conservation well before Progressives arrived on the scene. Tyrrell's inquiry is thus less about how conservation developed than how Roosevelt integrated it into foreign policy. Even more fascinating is the popularity of TR's strategy. As Tyrrell points out all through the book, many international leaders enthusiastically supported at least portions of Rooseveltian conservation because they were already pursuing similar policies with similar social and ecological effects. Indeed, Tyrrell could have titled this book *Crisis of the Wasteful World*.

Tyrrell merges the domestic and international narratives by expanding our conception of scarcity politics. John Ise and Jerome Kerwin initiated what might be called the productionist school of conservation history. Their research into timber, waterpower, and mineral regulation stressed the implications of resource shortages on domestic productivity.³ Loudly proclaimed fears about the collapse of forests, monopolization of hydroelectricity, and declining oil and gas supplies became fulcrums for federal intervention into resource management. TR played up the implications on future production as early as his December 1901 message to Congress. This is where the "What's new?" remarks can seem germane, but Tyrrell points out—in a way I don't recall anyone else doing—that Roosevelt framed conservation from the beginning as a tool for what Tyrrell calls "the global projection of power" (113). Thus as foreign agricultural capacity began to expand, Roosevelt altered his support of domestic irrigation projects to emphasize how development would enable rural areas to become "local centers of mining and other industries" in a general "upbuilding of the nation" (113). Here we see how domestic production bolstered TR's international agenda, but Tyrrell is ultimately more interested in showing how consumption also informed Roosevelt's imperial vision.

The international dimensions of consumption draw us into the heart of industrialization and far beyond North America. Progressive experts such as Richard Ely, Brooks Adams, and Frank Buffington Vrooman argued for "a growing neomercantilist acceptance of the nexus between physical resources and the nation's strength within the international state system" (48). This was not particularly comforting for leaders such as Roosevelt. In reality the United States did not possess all the resources crucial to industrialization, including tin and bauxite; nor were analysts confident the U. S. could sustain domestic supplies of even seemingly bountiful items like coal, iron, petroleum, and timber. We know that foreign policy was tuned to industrial demands, and that it reached ever farther afield to influence places possessing coveted resources. We also know that the

Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); S. Ravi Rajan, *Modernizing Nature: Forestry and Imperial Eco-Development, 1850-1900* (Wortley: Clarendon Press, 2006).

³ John Ise, *United States Forest Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920); Jerome G. Kerwin, *Federal Water-Power Legislation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926); John Ise, *The United States Oil Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926).

politics of uplift helped to rationalize colonization. Tyrrell shows how conservation served both agendas. In Progressive minds American imperialism was nobler than European imperialism because the U. S. would liberate the benighted by teaching them how to manage their own resources. Roosevelt globalized the dictum of greatest good/greatest number/longest time, and in the bargain he increased the likelihood that Little Brown Brother would ensure American access to resources. The irony of Tyrrell's novel linkage between conservation and imperialism is how he takes us somewhere surprisingly familiar. Again, we know that TR and his successors revolutionized the presidency through administrative tools such as commissions, proclamations, executive orders, attorney general opinions, and rule making. Roosevelt and Wilson often acted independently of Congress through tactics that were especially effective in the realms of federal lands and foreign policy. Presidential withdrawals of timber, mineral, and hydroelectric sites carved an empire out of the public lands states of the American West, while military, diplomatic, and colonial initiatives helped Roosevelt reshape the balance of power in the Caribbean and Pacific. Tyrrell shows how the American West was but a subset of a vaster empire of Progressive conservation. Indeed, he limns the global implications of Richard White's observation that the West "served as the kindergarten of the American state."⁴

And then, seemingly, the movement stalled. Every historian of Progressive conservation has posited a sea change with Howard Taft's succession to the White House. Tensions among Republicans mounted, and the Ballinger-Pinchot Affair ripped apart the party. Pinchot warned, "We have fallen back down the hill," and Samuel Hays reported that "popular support receded rapidly."⁵ Taft did signal a shift in tone and style, but Tyrrell, like other historians, complicates the story by showing that while he was less enamored with the movement, and disapproving of Roosevelt's and Pinchot's administrative ploys, Taft nevertheless upheld earlier policies and left his own legacy of monuments, parks, and public land withdrawals (236). Whatever their views of Taft, most historians regard Roosevelt's 1909 trip to Africa as a retreat from engagement.⁶ Tyrrell shows otherwise. In the waning days

⁴ Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Crusade, 1890-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 138, 219-21, 269; Elmo R. Richardson, *The Politics of Conservation: Crusades and Controversies, 1897-1913* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962); James Penick Jr., *Progressive Politics and Conservation: The Ballinger-Pinchot Affair* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); James R. Holmes, *Theodore Roosevelt and World Order* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2005); William N. Tilchin and Charles Neu, eds., *Artists of Power: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Their Enduring Impact on U. S. Foreign Policy* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2005). Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 58.

⁵ For "fallen" see Char Miller, *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism* (Washington: Island Press, 2001), 221. For "rapidly" see Hays, *Gospel*, 175. Also Samuel Trask Dan and Sally K. Fairfax, *Forest and Range Policy: Its Development in the United States* 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980), 71, 100.

⁶ For more Taft-friendly accounts see Hays, *Gospel*; Richardson, *Politics of Conservation*; and Penick, *Progressive Politics and Conservation*. However, even Douglas Brinkley's recent *The Wilderness*

of his presidency Roosevelt called for a World Congress on Conservation. He then boosted the idea with leaked interviews during his African sojourn and directly lobbied foreign leaders while visiting Europe. This, as Tyrrell notes, “was the logical culmination to [Roosevelt’s] thinking on the future of the American empire and on the renovation of the international state system” (208). TR’s domestic supporters thought he was entering an even more influential period, and the *Washington Times* hyperbolically proclaimed that TR’s gambit would elevate him to “president of the world” (207).

Crisis of the Wasteful Nation persuasively documents Theodore Roosevelt’s globalization of conservation, but the conclusion reminds me of R. S. Thomas’s remark that “What one sees must depend on where one stands, when one stands.”⁷ In tracing the international dimensions of Progressive conservation, Tyrrell lets domestic events recede into the background. This enables him to narrate a global story, yet the adage that all politics is local remains particularly important for understanding why Roosevelt cast his eyes across the Atlantic. Like many historians, Tyrrell argues that conservation lost steam after 1910 because “Changing calculations of actual resource shortage, new technologies, the contingencies of war, and the transformation of US society to a mass consumer economy all mattered, but so too did political partisanship, institutional constraints, and personal rivalry” (262). I am predisposed to such an argument. I also emphasize the contingent events of history, and Tyrrell’s litany of events is indisputably accurate. Nevertheless, his explanation overlooks the political contexts that had already constrained TR’s domestic conservation agenda well before 1910. Congress first balked at Pinchot’s grand scheme in 1906 and severely limited the president’s power to withdraw public lands in 1907. It ceased to fund independent commissions in 1908, and the election that year repudiated Republican policies in Colorado. Thus well before 1910, the international arena was becoming all Roosevelt had left.

The strength of transnational history is its attention to ideas and materials flowing across borders, but a subject like Progressive conservation, based as it was in governmental policies and statutes, requires equal attention to flows within the state. The figures Tyrrell traces in *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation* mattered greatly. Roosevelt, Pinchot, and other administrators articulated a strong vision for Progressive conservation, but they were neither internally consistent nor the only ones engaged in shaping policy. Statutory conservation was actually the province of Congress, and the laws that body passed—or rejected—during the half century from 1891 to 1939 revealed heterogeneous and dynamic concerns. To offer but one example, Tyrrell follows the lead of most conservation historians in attributing Roosevelt’s inability to effect systematic land reform to “western opposition” (11). The problems were at once both broader and more specific. First, “the West” was

Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America (New York: HarperCollins, 2009) punctuates TR’s involvement in conservationist with his exit from the White House.

⁷ R. S. Thomas, *The Echoes Return Slow* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 70.

rarely a political monolith, especially in the area of federal conservation policy. The deep divide between urban and rural relationships with federal lands was already well established by the end of the nineteenth century, so western representatives could never speak with one voice. Second, westerners never posed a serious voting bloc in the House of Representatives, and Senate membership turned over so frequently that no bloc lasted. Western opponents *did* effect obstacles, however, by building coalitions with southerners who also opposed intrusive federal regulation and with easterners who supported liberal settlement opportunities in the West for their own constituents. Similarly complex politics shaped water, mineral, and hydropower reforms, and the striking thing about most legislative battles during the Progressive era was the overwhelming common ground of the opposing sides. Conflicts were often less about conservation per se than who would benefit from governmental regulation.

Conservation historiography has always been too tree centric. Pull back from the forests and, to a lesser extent, grasses, and a far broader range of commodity concerns emerge. From our perspective many seem remarkably modern. Fish, minerals, and energy were neither strictly Progressive-era nor domestic concerns. Congress established the U.S. Commission on Fish and Fisheries in 1871 to deal with interstate and international conflicts, and from the start the agency developed intellectual and material exchanges across the globe. Mining regulation actually began in the 1830s and only achieved an interim solution in 1920. Concerns about water resources also predated the 1890s, and Progressive efforts to manage rivers systemically—most famously in the Inland Waterways Commission—ran into constitutional concerns that animated opposition from every corner of the nation. Comprehensive river management soon gave way to much narrower concerns about hydroelectric monopolization that, again, only passed Congress at the very end of Woodrow Wilson's administration, nearly three full terms after *Theodore* Roosevelt left the White House. Comprehensive grazing reform did not occur until after *Franklin* Roosevelt had moved into the same building.

My intent is not to discount anything in *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation*. In tracing TR's efforts at international conservation, Tyrrell reveals important linkages between nature and empire during the Progressive era. He contributes to a growing scholarship on the transnational and international flows shaping North America and the world. Ironically, his arguments also suggest that we should revisit domestic criticisms of federal conservation's imperial tendencies. We must also move beyond the usual suspects. Administrative conservation was unsustainable without statutory sanction, but Congress and non-governmental actors remain poorly understood actors in conservation history. I realize that in demanding an expanded field of vision to tackle the complexity of domestic, international, and transnational influences, I am risking a *mélange* and being self serving, since the legislative story is what *I* am working on these days. This verges on bad form, yet I am convinced that, like Tyrrell's focus on conservation beyond America's borders, the details of Congressional history are not merely additive. Each angle changes the story in important ways. But how do we tell this story? The narrative challenges remind me

of the hypnotic effect of driving past an orchard. From the passenger window, one can turn one direction or another to see perpendicular and diagonal patterns. Only one pattern is visible from any angle, however, and distant objects are blurrier than the front row. Like Thomas wrote, our perspectives depend not only on where but when we stand. I will not pretend to know how to combine all those vistas into a seamless story; maybe such a desire is simply wrongheaded, but conservation's many dimensions seem part of a greater whole that, as messy as it can be to narrate, was how actors actually experienced this history. Isn't that what we're after?

Comments by Sarah Phillips, Boston University

In “The Conservation Movement and the Progressive Tradition,” the concluding chapter of *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, Samuel Hays made a quick comment about foreign affairs, linking it with natural resource policy during Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency. He observed that Roosevelt concentrated his formidable energy on the two policy areas that did not “raise issues of internal social conflict”—conservation and foreign policy.⁸ Fearful of labor unrest and labor violence, and disgusted by agrarian radicalism, Roosevelt crafted concepts and techniques that he hoped would neutralize the economic conflicts unleashed by industrialism. National greatness, patriotic sentiments, material abundance, and full employment would override and heal these internal differences.

Wow! Though written over fifty years ago, this remains a potent summation not only of Roosevelt’s political philosophy, but also of Progressive-era history more generally. The idea that foreign policy and natural resource conservation offered similar economic tonics and political rewards was a brilliant one, undeveloped at the time, but it’s been a ripe fruit waiting all these years for someone to pluck it.

I don’t know if Ian Tyrrell was aware of the Hays formulation, but *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation* is a taste of this fruit. With lenses that look internationally and globally, he fuses together those two policy arenas and argues that global concerns actually inspired the conservation movement’s main thinkers and leaders. Alarmist discourse over resource depletion spanned oceans and spilled over borders, catalyzing domestic concerns about the nation’s place in the world and its potential for endurance. But alarmist ideas did not simply cross borders, and professional networks were not merely transnational in composition. Neither of those would make a very interesting thesis! The really provocative and interesting argument is that the exploding passion for conservation can be explained by its relation to the American imperial experiment. The Spanish American War, and the colonial possessions gained from it, spurred hopes for tropical bounty. When these resources failed to materialize, a competitive imperial outlook inspired what Tyrrell identifies as an underappreciated neomercantilist strain of geopolitical thinking, which created commitments to internal resource hoarding and vigorous efforts to reclaim and settle America’s own inland empire. In the race to turn a civilized nation into a permanent and lasting one, the United States would seed the land with Anglo-Saxon settlers, husband properly its resources, promote international commerce, and join the ranks of global leadership.

In my view, the book’s three strongest chapters take up this overarching thesis directly and persuasively. One examines the co-evolution of U.S. domestic and colonial forestry, and suggests that dim prospects for efficient timber extraction in the tropics help explain the timing of key moments of administrative and

⁸ Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 270.

managerial consolidation over the domestic forest reserves. Another—the strongest of the book—analyzes the crosscutting imperialist, anti-imperialist, and transnational professional appeal of irrigation and waterways development, and provides a novel overarching framework for the reclamation program, river navigation projects, and the Panama Canal.

A third recounts Roosevelt's trip to East Africa from 1909 to 1910, and adroitly links together the seamless global and domestic reach of his scientific and conservationist worldviews. During this sojourn, Theodore Roosevelt often returned from his hunting and collecting expeditions to deliver speeches in Nairobi and to mingle with British colonial society. In this setting, far removed from American shores, Roosevelt shared his vision for the land and revealed his conservation philosophy. He had fond memories of the ranching days in the American West, but foresaw it densely settled with homesteads and irrigated farms. Roosevelt therefore urged the reclamation of the African uplands on the American model, so that the Kenyan hills might be similarly watered and the continent's wilderness also tamed by white farm families.

It is Tyrrell's great accomplishment to revisit Progressive-era conservation with stories like these that capture its international context. Overall, though, I found his attempt to liberate the history of conservation from an exclusively domestic enclosure uneven and often disjointed. The chapters range too widely in an effort to internationalize almost all of the era's environmental concerns: coal and energy, soil and rural development, public health, scenic preservation, and conservation movements. There are several strong sections on Canadian-American relations and the origins of environmental diplomacy; indeed, there are engaging stories peppered throughout. But I found much of the work informative without being historiographically or conceptually transformative. Sometimes the argument just seemed to be that a certain strain of thought was geopolitical in nature or that a certain group of people operated transnationally. As a device, the transnational lenses offered a genuinely new perspective on some topics, but did not appear strong enough to support or sustain a comprehensive rethinking of Progressive-era conservation as a whole.

One problem, I think, is the transnational methodology itself, which can certainly point to important new sources of concern and overlooked connections, but has limitations for something as domestically constituted as governing power and policy. *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation* very much expands our view of what inspired such passion and urgency among Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and the conservationist "band of brothers," as Tyrrell terms it. But the choke point comes if we want to learn something new about the contributions of conservation policy to the structure of modern political power, and if we want to understand policy outcomes as well as we understand motivations. These require that we retain the nation state—its institutions and its Constitution and its courts and its interest groups—as the primary unit of analysis. Not since Hays has there been a comprehensive treatment of Progressive-era conservation policy that offers a simultaneous interpretation of American political development, and for good reason! He did it really well. Still, in

smaller but suggestive bits, Daniel Carpenter, Donald Pisani, Brian Balogh, and Bruce Schulman have given us new concepts and models.⁹ Tyrrell astutely cites these scholars, claiming that *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation* sheds light on the process of creating “a distinctive American state” (p. 250), but the stories he presents offer no new arguments about the unique political and institutional obstacles that conservationist statebuilders navigated, or the structures of governing authority they left behind.

In conclusion, though, I enjoyed the book very much and applaud the author for his impressive research and ambitious agenda. I’m also content to concede that this review reflects my own scholarly concerns: if we are to take the call for more transnational perspectives seriously, how do we address nation-specific stories of policy and governance along with the international flow of people and ideas?

⁹ Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Donald J. Pisani, *Water and American Government: The Reclamation Bureau, National Water Policy, and the West, 1902-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Brian Balogh, “Scientific Forestry and the Roots of the Modern American State: Gifford Pinchot’s Path to Progressive Reform,” *Environmental History* 7 (2002); Bruce J. Schulman, “Governing Nature, Nurturing Government: Resource Management and the Development of the American State, 1900-1912,” *Journal of Policy History* 17 (2005).

Comments by Scott Moranda, SUNY Cortland

In recent years I have become fascinated by the opportunities offered by transnational history. Over the last two decades, historians increasingly have turned their attention to global conservation and have begun to compare American experiences with those of other nations. Separately, historians of the modern world have become more attentive to transnational connections and their influence on key intellectual, cultural, and political turning points.¹⁰ In my eagerness, I have plunged right into the thick of it, considering transatlantic German-language networks and their significance for nature conservation. Quickly, I realized that my enthusiasm had suddenly thrown me into historiographical territories foreign to me in ways I did not fully appreciate at first. While I teach World Environmental History and have limited training in American Environmental History, I certainly risked stepping on some historiographical landmines I did not even know to fear. As I marched forward, I also underestimated the logistical challenges of such a project. In particular, transnational topics demand that historians master an immense and far-flung source base in multiple languages while juggling teaching and service unimaginable in those idyllic, long-ago days of graduate school.

All of this is to say that Ian Tyrrell has taken on a daunting task with this admirable book. I found that he very much met the challenge and has provided a valuable contribution to the history of conservation. Tyrrell wonderfully integrates various episodes of global interconnection into a powerful narrative about the links between American conservation and American empire. Indeed, the book's transnational scope is its strength. At the same time, its weaknesses derive from the very logistical challenges of such a project.

Tyrrell develops a thought-provoking and admirably cautious argument about the interplay of domestic conservation with visions of empire. He argues that the origins of Progressive-era conservation in the United States cannot be explained fully by a narrative focused on domestic anxieties about the closing of the frontier. As he introduces in the first chapters, leading conservationists participated in a global discourse about conservation, efficiency, and empire. For the United States, conservation of natural resources became essential to competing with other imperial powers. Wasted resources at home undercut ambitions abroad.

The author carefully avoids overstating his case. In a chapter on the Philippines, Tyrrell demonstrates the importance of colonial acquisitions to Roosevelt and Pinchot and other conservation advocates, but he also insists that the colonial experience proved disappointing. For instance, the everyday practice of colonial control demanded too many concessions to subject peoples that impeded efficiency

¹⁰ For the influence among Germanists, see H. Glenn Penny, "German Polycentrism and the Writing of History," *German History* (2012) 30, no. 2: 265-282. From the perspective of Americanists, see Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

and productivity. Some insisted, in response, that the United States turn inward and focus on solidifying its inland empire in the American West. At the same time, Pinchot drew lessons from the Philippines that shaped his centralization and strengthening of the power of foresters at home. Imperialism violated, for many, an American identity rooted in democratic exceptionalism. Even when American conservationists doubted the benefits of colonial salvation, they continued to imagine informal empire built on the efficient management of domestic natural resources. They also drew on lessons from Africa and India in the treatment of Native Americans and western resources. Chapters on irrigation and anxieties about energy resources nicely illustrate how fears of global competition mobilized conservation and resource development efforts at home.

Tyrrell also hesitates to overstate the influence of racial thinking. Many of the most ardent enthusiasts for Social Darwinism and scientific racism occasionally made exceptions and urged caution. Most American racial thinking never sacrificed completely a concern for environmental influences on character and health. Nonetheless, this did not stop many conservationists from fretting and fantasizing about racial suicide and its consequences. On the one hand, conservationists feared that Anglo-Saxon waste and inefficiency contributed to racial suicide. On the other hand, an Anglo-Saxon race enlightened about the virtues of efficiency could become permanent conquerors of “unsettled” lands and serve as a model for the uplift of non-European races around the world. Here, Roosevelt and Pinchot imagined themselves as a part of an American-British global hegemonic order promoting scientific progress, economic growth, and Protestant ethics.

One key benefit of Tyrrell’s approach to conservation is that the historiographical separation of conservation and preservation is further eroded. Preservation of beauty and wilderness was not contradictory to conservation’s concern for efficiency and wise use. In fact, the moral and physical “efficiency” of American citizens and their productivity at work depended on exposure to beauty and nature. The benefits of a transnational or global approach are also clear here. While the United States might have been unique in its wilderness preservation, the Country Life movement of Liberty Hyde Bailey, the British National Trust, and German homeland preservation shared an appreciation for the influence of pastoral landscapes on morals, labor productivity, and health.

The epilogue, however, left me uncertain of how Tyrrell wanted readers to remember Roosevelt. After carefully situating the conservation leader within a history of imperialism and racism earlier in the book, the tone of the book seems to shift in its final pages. Tyrrell looks forward to Roosevelt’s successors and concludes that many of conservation’s shortcomings could be blamed on them. Tyrrell explains that later conservationists ignored Roosevelt’s pioneering quest to elevate intergenerational ethics in American society (253). Similarly, he explains that Roosevelt compromised with pro-growth interests only reluctantly (252). Did Tyrrell worry that readers might write off Roosevelt once they had learned of his entanglements with empire? Did he feel it necessary to salvage Roosevelt’s legacy

before readers put down his book? Perhaps he might have been more explicit in these last pages about how he thinks the history of Roosevelt and American conservation needs to be rewritten in textbooks and other surveys of U.S. history in light of his findings.

The epilogue's comments on conservation's second generation also felt all too brief. Could the author have done more to develop his thoughts on how conservation changed after Roosevelt, even within the constraints of an epilogue or concluding chapter? How exactly did the imaginings of American global hegemony live on in the age of nation states and decolonization? I wondered if Tyrrell's stated differences between Roosevelt's imperialism, Wilson's liberalism, and Hoover's narrower concerns about waste might have been exaggerated in the limited space of an epilogue. Many neoliberal economists after World War Two insisted on the "natural" role of former colonial lands as exporters of raw materials to developed nations. Their project, in many ways, fought for the continuation of trade flows toward Europe and America in a postcolonial world. What continuities and discontinuities between his time period and the later Cold War would Tyrrell emphasize if he had more space to discuss longer trends? Would Tyrrell concur with Sarah Phillips' similar efforts in her epilogue to *This Land, This Nation* to connect New Deal conservation to postwar technical assistance programs overseas? Even if beyond the scope of this book, the transformation of conversation as America became engaged in Cold War competition is a story that still has not been fully told.

While Tyrrell reveals much about global interconnections, just how transnational is this book? What choices were made during its conceptualization to limit its scope, given the immensity of the task at hand? Compared with much of the history of American conservation written in the past, this book is quite global in its perspective. Yet, the narrative largely focuses on America's "Anglo-Saxon" elite. Of course, Anglo-Americans did play a prominent role in American conservation, and as Tyrrell shows us, they often imagined themselves as part of a global Anglo-Saxon race settling and exploring the far reaches of the globe. The contributions of Anglo-Irishman Horace Plunkett or the debts to Australian conservationists fit nicely into that narrative.

Still, how important and how strong were the connections to the non-English speaking world? Was this a story of global cooperation or cultural misunderstanding? The author considers how the Anglo-American elite drew on some German expertise, but given their affinity for Anglo-Saxon settler colonies around the world, it strikes me as problematic for Tyrrell to simply present Anglo-American debts to German thinkers without much comment. In fact, many readers might assume that this "Anglo-Saxon" vision included their Germanic cousins. How might the narrative change if Tyrrell had done more to consider collective identities, ethnic consciousness, or cultural difference in this story? Nationalist thinkers spilled a lot of ink in the decades before World War One contemplating the differences in German, French, or American character. In the United States and abroad, others pondered the virtues and shortcomings of Yankee, Celtic, Germanic, or Norman

culture groups. Promoters of Anglo-Saxon and German “values” often clashed. Adolf Hitler admired racial thinkers such as Madison Grant, but Grant himself doubted the racial virtues of “Alpine” Germans. Many Germans despaired at the destruction of forests and soil by “Yankees,” and Pinchot often attacked German forestry as “authoritarian.”

Inside the United States, Tyrrell’s Anglo-Saxon conservationists were the dominant voice in conservation discourse, but what challenges from other ethnicities and other culturally rooted ethical systems did they face? Tyrrell opens his book with the work of Rudolf Cronau, a German American journalist. Despite that Cronau mentions Pinchot merely once in his book, Tyrrell uses this moment as a window into the international context of Rooseveltian conservation (5). For that purpose, highlighting Cronau’s work makes some sense. But, what if Tyrrell had considered the unique point of view brought to the discussion by German Americans or other non-Anglo populations?

European American immigrants from the continent often supported the conservation program led by Pinchot and Roosevelt, but they also had their own expectations that sometimes clashed with the priorities of Anglo-American Progressives. For example, German-American communities often tied soil conservation and forest protections to a cultural critique of Anglo-American individualism and fanaticism and a celebration of German care and permanence. Some imagined an ethical obligation to the land intertwined with Catholic and Lutheran religious values. They blamed American individualism and materialism for its destruction of land, family, and community. For some, preserving the land helped conserve German language and culture they believed to be oppressed by Anglo-American elites or threatened by cultural assimilation. While Anglo-Americans called for mechanization and market farming to raise the moral standards of the family, many German-speakers urged caution in the embrace of the market and turned to religious and cultural identities to shield them from its worst consequences. They questioned whether soil fertility could be protected and improved through solely through scientific advice or technology purchased on credit. While they recognized the need to improve the material conditions of the farm in order to keep children from fleeing to the city, they worried about the risks of debt for ethnic islands hoping to survive in a sea of American culture and values. German-Americans and other European immigrant communities similarly resented the intrusions of public education and state agricultural schools on their cultural autonomy. Perhaps they differed from Anglo-American conservationists in their relationship to technological modernization? Some, after all, resented Anglo-American Progressives who labeled their farming primitive, especially in its reliance on female and child labor. (Gender, in fact, might have been more central to Tyrrell’s analysis.)¹¹

¹¹ I am finding such sentiments in German-American agricultural newspapers. See also Jon Gjerde, *The Minds of the West Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Stephen John Gross, “The Grasshopper Shrine at Cold

Which German traditions most influenced Progressives? As Tyrrell explains, Roosevelt and other conservationists looked to the German state for models of efficiency and state regulation. Roosevelt's "intergenerational ethics" drew on German ideas about "state socialism" (though Tyrrell does not say as much on this as Daniel Rodgers did in *Atlantic Crossings*).¹² Sometimes, however, German American foresters and agriculturalists drew on other German traditions to question the growing penetration of the state into everyday life. German federalism, Catholic and Lutheran corporatism, and the love of local particularities encouraged alternative approaches to conservation more critical of the state and sometimes promoted communal ethics and cultural tradition as a path to stewardship.¹³ In other words, Cronau's writings might have been an entry point for a discussion about these different paths to conservation instead of a platform to build a history of Anglo-American engagement with global conservation.

A consideration of culture might have altered the story in other ways. Were foresters just technocrats bringing universal scientific techniques to others, or were they missionaries for German ethics and care? Were there competing German, French, or other cultural understandings of land conservation?¹⁴ Did James J. Hill (featured in the chapter on soil conservation) interact with European American agriculturalists in the Midwest, and if so, did they see each other as like-minded defenders of the soil? Did European conservationists ignore Roosevelt's proposed international conservation conference because of political shifts back in the United States, or because they distrusted "Anglo-Saxon" culture and its wasteful ways? In other words, how did nationalism and notions of cultural particularities or cultural diffusion shape the global conversation about conservation?

Would broadening the picture beyond prominent Anglo-American conservationists also affect the book's periodization? For Tyrrell, 1900 is a key point of discontinuity. Conservation in the United States, he argues, rocketed to prominence because it became much more intertwined with imperialism and global competition after 1900. Earlier conservation efforts had been "episodic and internal" (35). His periodization, however, especially overlooks the contributions of non-Anglos in the previous thirty years, whether German American or not. Were there other sources for intergenerational ethics before Roosevelt's nationalism became dominant? Certainly, 1900 mattered a great deal, especially for understanding how American imperialism

Spring, Minnesota: Religion and Market Capitalism Among German-American Catholics," *Catholic Historical Review*. (2006) 92, no. 2.

¹² Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹³ Thomas M. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹⁴ Using much the same language as German-American depiction of Anglo-American land use, critiques of Anglo approaches to agriculture and land use appear among Afrikaner communities described by M. Tamarkin, *Volk and Flock: Ecology, Identity and Politics Among Cape Afrikaners in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2009).

and a particular brand of conservation became intertwined. Yet, do we have to choose between an internal looking origins story focused on anxieties about the closing of the frontier or an outward looking origins story focused on an Anglo-American elite and their fantasies of empire? Other origin stories (some of them also transnational and linked to a wider world) might exist.

Of course, it is not Tyrrell's responsibility to include every transnational connection in his narrative, especially if it would have detracted from his important focus on Anglo-Saxon imperialism. Any book has to choose its battles. Hopefully, readers will embrace Tyrrell's lovely book as a stimulating and vital intervention into the scholarship that will spark further inquiry.

Comments by Harriet Ritvo, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Theodore Roosevelt began the final chapter of *The Wilderness Hunter* (1893) with some general reflections on the fauna of North America, based on his experiences in pursuit of them:

It has been my good-luck to kill every kind of game properly belonging to the United States: though one beast which I never had a chance to slay, the jaguar, from the torrid South, sometimes comes just across the Rio Grande; nor have I ever hunted the musk-ox and polar-bear in the boreal wastes where they dwell...

I have never sought to make large bags, for a hunter should not be a game butcher. It is always lawful to kill dangerous or noxious animals, like the bear, cougar, and wolf; but other game should only be shot when there is need of the meat, or for the sake of an unusually fine trophy. Killing a reasonable number of bulls, bucks, or rams does no harm whatever to the species; to slay half the males...would not stop the natural increase, and they yield the best sport, and are the legitimate objects of the chase. (1910 ed., p. 269)

Of course modern ecological understandings were not available at the time, but even so this constitutes a very moderate endorsement of restraint. His descriptions of hunts for particular trophies in *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1888; quotes from 1899 ed.) provide a more concrete sense of his priorities: the rarer the species, the more he desired to bag it. Thus, after noting that the wapiti a "stately and splendid deer, the lordliest of its kind in the world, is now fast vanishing," he recounted how he shot "a good bull" out of the few remaining in the neighborhood of his ranch (147); he regretted to have "killed no grizzlies," even though there were "some still left" (151). As Ian Tyrrell explains in his account of Roosevelt's imperial post-presidential progress, he killed with equal enthusiasm and according to similarly nuanced principles on safari in Africa.

Roosevelt was not the only author to use the "game butcher" as a term of reproach. As sportsmen (among others) began to realize that it was possible for entire species of conspicuous and abundant animals such as the African quagga or the North American passenger pigeon to decline and vanish rather suddenly, elite hunters tarred many of their fellow marksmen with that brush. Excessive slaughter was interpreted as a sign of bad character (if perpetrated by hunters from similar backgrounds) or of ignorance or ill-breeding (if perpetrated by lower class or indigenous hunters). But if it was easy to agree that "excess" and "butchery" were bad in principle, consensus about what numbers of which animals might deserve such condemnation proved more elusive. I have occasionally used excerpts from Roosevelt's hunting accounts in environmental history classes, since they persuasively illustrate how the content or denotation of terms like "conservation"

or "wildlife protection" can change, even as their connotation remains fairly constant.

Tyrrell accurately characterizes Roosevelt as "a man of his times," whose enormous game bags merely replicated "what other Victorian and Edwardian hunters and naturalists in Africa had readily done before him" (192). Roosevelt's elaborate safari of 1909 and 1910 resulted in a combined game bag (with his son Kermit, who accompanied him) of 512 animals shot with a rifle, which he listed by species in *African Game Trails; An Account of the African Wanderings of an American Hunter-Naturalist* (1910) (457-9). The tally included 17 lions, 7 cheetahs, 9 hyenas, 11 elephants, 20 rhinoceroses (2 species), 9 giraffes, 10 buffalo, 12 warthogs, and 29 zebras (2 species), along with numerous antelopes, monkeys, and birds. (The list explicitly excluded an unspecified number of birds killed with a shotgun, whether for the pot or as museum specimens.) The published list itself indicates Roosevelt's uncomplicated pride in this accomplishment or set of accomplishments, and Tyrrell chronicles the approbation with which these exploits were received both in the United States and during the series of visits to European capitals with which Roosevelt concluded his progress.

In the first instance, the fruits of the safari represented Roosevelt's prowess as a Nimrod, although Tyrrell points out, his hunting technique left something to be desired--he was near-sighted and often merely injured animals who had to be dispatched by one of the many African attendants, whose attitude toward him does not seem to have been one of unalloyed respect. They referred to him as "Bwana Tumbo," which Tyrrell translates as "portly master," possibly but not ineluctably an indication of fondness (196). And at least some of the audiences for his exploits in Europe and North America also expressed ambivalence (not primarily with regard to his physique, although critical caricatures were more likely than celebratory ones to emphasize his embonpoint). By the first years of the twentieth century even some enthusiastic sportsmen had begun to have second thoughts about the enormous bags catalogued in the voluminous hunting literature to which Roosevelt's memoirs belonged. In 1900, the "Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa," the substance of which had been proposed by the British, had been signed by representatives of the European governments with colonies in sub-Saharan Africa. Its provisions included an absolute ban on killing several of the species targeted by the Roosevelts. (Overall, the Convention was not very effective in inspiring international cooperation, or, indeed much enforcement at all, although it did encourage the promulgation of hunting regulations throughout the British Empire.)

In a similar spirit, the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire was founded in 1903 (still very active, it has undergone several rechristenings as the politics of conservation, and of empire, have changed--it currently calls itself Fauna and Flora International). Tyrrell notes that Roosevelt was an honorary member and contributed a supportive message to the 1908 volume of the society's journal (23). But as with the 1900 Convention, there may have been a disjunction

between his theory and his practice. The SPWFE initially characterized itself, however aspirationally, as "a modest and unpretentious group of gentlemen of wide experience of the outposts of Empire and a common enthusiasm for the preservation from destruction of many of its fauna"; it resisted critics who accused its members of being "penitent butchers"--that is, "men who, having...taken their fill of big game slaughter..., now, being smitten with remorse and having reached a less strenuous term of life, think to condone our earlier bloodthirstiness by advocating...preservation."¹⁵ (In another indication of changing wildlife politics, the society titled the history that it commissioned for its 75th anniversary in 1978 *The Penitent Butchers*.) Neither the positive description nor the negative one fit Roosevelt very precisely.

But as Tyrrell emphasizes, Roosevelt's hunting adventures and the narratives in which he distilled them for the public were about more than killing animals. Behind the breathless descriptions of stalking and shooting, the comments on local assistants, and the practical advice about equipment and food, were the larger political issues that constitute the themes highlighted in Tyrrell's subtitle. Roosevelt's rather profligate method of conserving species provoked criticism from some of his contemporaries, as did the possible paradox implicit in maintaining game populations so that there would be plenty of animals to kill later. (Neither of these critiques has become totally obsolete.) But his concern with the exhaustion of wildlife resources echoed his concern with the wastage of forests, water, and soil. And his African safari highlighted both the international connections of the United States and its distinctiveness. Roosevelt hunted in Great Britain's African colonies with the same trappings that would have accompanied the party of a member of the British imperial elite, and so he hunted a very different style from his earlier adventures in the American west. *African Game Trails* makes it clear that he enjoyed this exalted position and that he identified with other people of "European stock." Nevertheless he frequently alluded to his own nationality, and he took special notice of any Americans he encountered; in addition, there are scattered comparisons of African species (even rodents) to more or less similar American ones. This desire to make common cause while remaining distinct also characterized his subsequent appearances in European capitals. For example, in a speech delivered at London's Guildhall, he scolded the rivalrous European powers, reminding them that "the civilized nations who are conquering...savage lands should work together in a spirit of hearty mutual goodwill," before asserting that "it has been a benefit to everyone that America took possession of the Philippines." (in *African Trails*, 471). A man of his times indeed.

¹⁵ Richard Fitter and Peter Scott, *The Penitent Butchers: 75 Years of Wildlife Conservation* (Fauna Preservation Society, 1978), 8-9.

Response by Ian Tyrrell, University of New South Wales

I thank the respondents for going to the trouble of giving my book a serious reading and a comprehensive critique. In writing *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation* I was aware of the difficulty if not impossibility of covering all aspects or every level of American Progressive Era conservation policy and practice. I wished to use the transnational lens to open up discussion not only of what the Progressives did (a good deal of which is indeed well known), but why. I was also using this approach as a way of highlighting the possibilities of Progressive conservation as a moment in time when imperial globalization was in full flight. I knew this was a moment akin to but not the same as our own. Some of the ideas raised from the 1890s to World War I were not implemented through Congress and remained byways not followed. It was this area of lost possibilities for the future that most concerned me. This meaning is conveyed in the conclusion, ending with the Rhys Isaac quote. I do not agree that topics such as farm policy and health and national vitality are not shown in *Crisis* as intrinsically important to conservation because they left less legislative trace or had a different legislative trajectory. Nor were they intellectually at odds with the thrust of Progressive conservation. The topics that Progressives raised at the national level had a kind of internal consistency when seen against the pressures of international imperialism, the end of the frontier, and the internal crisis of the American state over the role of labor and the preservation of social order. In all of those cases, considerations of empire impinged upon the thinking of the people Theodore Roosevelt influenced or relied upon. But in no case did these linkages appear spontaneously. Their connections became apparent over the course of the years 1898 to 1912. Progressive conservation was a phenomenon in motion, not a thing to be tied down at any one point. Such a perspective allows us to open up space for understanding how things might have been—and were not.

Two central and closely related questions emerge: one is the relationship between national and transnational levels; the second, whether or not American conservation policy and the state apparatus interwoven with nature's protection are any different looking at it from a transnational perspective.

I did not dispute the importance of the national but rather wanted to show how the national and the transnational interacted. These shouldn't be thought of as distinct, but connected and interpenetrated by each other. I did not neglect the congressional role, but viewed it in relation to my focus on high policy. Sarah Phillips and Joseph Taylor are equally right that the machinery of the nation state was key to getting things done. Roosevelt knew this too. He wanted to build strong nation-state policies as a foundation for international action, and wanted other countries to do so too. We have seen in recent negotiations over climate policy how the lack of a clear national consensus can in many cases impede international action that might otherwise be undertaken. This is why he worked closely with Representative John Lacey (national parks, monuments, forestry and wildlife issues), and Senators Theodore E. Burton (on the Great Lakes, Niagara, and the inland waters) and Francis

G. Newlands (irrigation). Congressional action was necessary and indeed, in a sometimes-negative way, intrinsic to the development of Roosevelt's agenda, even, as Taylor points out, before TR's exit from the presidency. It may have been the case that Roosevelt realized the game was already up domestically by late 1906, and that a career outside of politics and perhaps on the international stage would be more viable or worthy. Otherwise his decision not to run for another term in 1908 is hard to fathom. He would almost certainly have won.

Congress's importance was not only in what it did legislate, but what congressional leaders obstructed. That shaped the decision-making processes of the Roosevelt administration. What Roosevelt did time and again was try to get around the logjams in Congress by using the fledgling machinery of international environmental diplomacy and executive actions that presumed a cross-national and imperial, even colonial, agenda. This was seen in the waterways issue, and here TR cleverly utilized point men in Congress to achieve his aim. But of course there was give and take with purely internal political interests; the national and the international had to interact, and, it should be remembered, international as well as domestic pressures came from below as well as above.

To the extent that the model offered is top-down, the implications are uncomfortable. An underlying issue was how effective a democratic system was in dealing with the problems thrown up by industrialization and, equally important, globalization. Democracy is still the least worst system of government, in my view, but there are many types of democracy, and the Progressives witnessed democratic institutions in a position of strain and even gridlock that called into question the efficacy of representative politics. Progressives were also alert to the concentration of economic power as they saw it manifest in the American democracy of the era of Theodore Roosevelt. Yet the complex and multi-layered machinery of democracy in civil society was still in evidence, albeit limited in class and ethnic perspective. I did recognize that there had to be 'troops', from missionaries, journalists, academics, and reformers to farmers, irrigators, and businessmen, who found the Roosevelt agenda or parts of it attractive, and who had their own circuits of transnational activity (the dryland farmers' work was one such example, the international irrigation congresses another). I couldn't discuss in detail all of these activities in a diverse civil society, and much more could be done and probably should have been done.

As I have drilled down further into that story I've found further examples that indicate the international, the national and local are not separate but inter-penetrating spheres. One of the ways that scholarship moves forward is by putting forward an argument that is then confirmed or ruled out by further research, as Scott Moranda implies. I am pleased that, below the rarified atmosphere of Washington politics there is some confirmation for my arguments in more specialized studies of less than prominent people, whose work I did not introduce but possibly should have. Susan Rimby's *Mira Dock and the Progressive Conservation Movement* is one example, as Dock was a friend of Gifford Pinchot, shared his views

on forests, and was influential in his home state.¹⁶ Dock worked across national boundaries. She saw her work as having an international component, studied in Germany, maintained a life-long friendship with world-famous German forester Dietrich Brandis and his family, and expressed “admiration” for German forestry methods. She toured botanical gardens in Britain and recommended tree planting as practiced in Europe as a model for American cities. She wanted Pennsylvania’s state forestry program modeled after the Black Forest and worked for conservation in the international sphere through the International Congress of Women, and domestically in the General Federation of Women’s Clubs. She regarded her European tour as a turning point toward her own valuing of managed forests, and she gained credibility at home through her international experience. This does not make her an imperialist, of course, but a transnational figure crossing national boundaries figuratively in her thought and literally in her life and work. Many such stories remain to be told, not least those of the officials of the Philippine Islands Bureau of Plant Industry that I briefly mentioned, or the work, for better or worse, of John Gifford in Puerto Rico and Florida.¹⁷

Complementary questions emerge from Moranda’s commentary, mostly concerning the diversity of American Progressive Era conservation and its relationship with state power. Moranda asks “How might the narrative change if Tyrrell had done more to consider collective identities, ethnic consciousness, or cultural difference in this story?” My frankly elitist story restores the role of a conservative form of conservation, but does not deny the limits to this way of thinking and acting—I think the idea of different ethnic concerns about TR’s programs and about the natural world is definitely worth further research and I find Moranda’s arguments heuristically useful. But such people did not control the American state then, or now.

A key development was the emergence of a peculiar American state structure. Sarah Phillips is right to an extent in arguing that *Crisis* does not uncover a distinctive state, at least completely distinct from what Samuel Hays and others have expertly shown to be the case. Obviously I did not give a clear enough account of how the state was constituted, so here is my position. I need here to move both forward and back in U.S. history to make any meaningful comment on this point and to extrapolate from other and earlier work. Although there was arguably in cultural terms a “nature’s nation”, with a transcendental philosophy behind it and a handful of national parks to realize its possibilities prior to 1898, there was not yet what might be termed a fully-fledged “nature state.” I shall use “nature state” as a shorthand description of the concept: a state in which nature’s mobilization in the aid of national power and its projection upon the international stage itself defines the central activities of the

¹⁶ Susan Rimby, *Mira Lloyd Dock and the Progressive Era Conservation Movement* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Ian Tyrrell, “Conservation and Forestry in the American Tropics: John Clayton Gifford in Puerto Rico,” *Arcadia*, 2015, no. 10, at Environment & Society Portal, <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/arcadia/conservation-and-forestry-american-tropics-john-clayton-gifford-puerto-rico>.

state.¹⁸ In the 19th century, nature and the state were differently connected. The main purpose of the state was to facilitate the commodification of nature, especially the movement of natural resources from government control into the market. That began to change in the late 19th century, and state promotion of natural resource conservation and allocation accelerated in the decade and a half after the war with Spain. No reviewer needs to be reminded how considerable the presence of the American state has become through the regulation of the U.S. public lands, nor, I suspect, how military and political leaders have used those lands in the 20th century from bases to bomb sites to current planning for the exploitation of domestic sources of rare earth minerals for the electronics and defense industries. Articles prior to my work portrayed some of the scope and indications of what Adam Rome termed the modern “environmental management state”. Paul Sutter, Brian Balogh and Bruce Schulman have done in insightful work on this question.¹⁹ They collectively anticipate but do not concentrate on the ways that the state was imperially constituted as a nature state, with global ambitions for the regulation of nature. This approach could cut two ways, toward either international cooperation, or American supremacy in resource use. In Theodore Roosevelt’s time, the possibilities were finely balanced.

A sweeping account of this nature state as a formal and informal empire would go on to show how the emergence of the warfare state after 1945 was connected to and dependent on a reading of the condition of global resources and their articulation in the policy and practice of the nation state as “nature state.” This theme emerged full-blown in President’s Commission on Raw Materials post-World War II and the subsequent work of Resources for the Future. If the importance of resource abundance to American power had origins in TR’s time and in his policies, in the 1950s anxiety was directed much more towards foreign resources rather than reform at home. What President Dwight Eisenhower said about South East Asia indicates the drift of thinking. The U.S. supply of \$400 million in aid to the beleaguered French forces in Vietnam in 1953 was undertaken, Eisenhower explained, because “If Indochina goes, several things happen right away. The Malayan peninsula would be scarcely defensible- and tin and tungsten we so greatly value from that area would cease coming.” Such an outcome would be “very ominous” for the United States because “if we lost all that, how would the free world

¹⁸ For the terminology and concept, I am indebted to Matthew Kelly, et al., “Nature States,” unpublished manuscript prepared as part of the Workshop on the Nature State for the German Historical Institute, 2014. This formulation, however, is entirely my own responsibility.

¹⁹ Adam Rome, “What Really Matters in History: Environmental Perspectives in Modern America,” *Environmental History*, 7 (no. 2, 2002), 303–17, esp. 306; Bruce J. Schulman, “Governing Nature, Nurturing Government: Resource Management and the Development of the American State, 1900–1912,” *Journal of Policy History*, 17 (no. 4, 2005), 375–403; Brian Balogh, “Scientific Forestry and the Roots of the Modern American State,” *Environmental History*, 7 (April 2002), 198–225; Paul S. Sutter, “The World with Us: The State of American Environmental History,” *Journal of American History*, 100 (June 2013), 100.

hold the rich empire of Indonesia?"²⁰ This was a time when the United States became acutely concerned over the reservation of such supplies of raw materials, which were needed for the nation's worldwide military commitments gained as a result of the Cold War. The roots of that dilemma facing Eisenhower was found in the Progressives and the limits of their campaign for an efficient state that worked with other governments and conservationists to regulate the use of raw materials globally, regionally, nationally, and locally. The mentality that equated nation state power with control of raw materials, forcefully and broadly identified in the period of the European and American formal empires, remained important long after TR was dead and buried. While the growing concern with strategic materials should not be reduced to oil, as it sometimes is in present discussions of American military entanglements, strategic raw materials and the sources of materials for consumer goods provided the modern context in which the nature state developed in its international relationships. But the external and material context is not enough. The nature state was not merely a question of management, either internally or externally, but one concerning a social and cultural relationship with the natural world that influenced government and community perceptions and practice.

Internally and perhaps even in some ways externally through the impact of ideas of wilderness and national parks, the nature state had (and retains) functions as a source of state ideological legitimation (equating the boundaries of nature, especially scenery and national parks, with American national exceptionalism). But more than that reductionist formulation, national parks allowed Americans to identify their personal experiences of a God-endowed and exceptional nature with the nation-state. American exceptionalism is not founded on either abstract ideology or state coercion, but personal identity, forged in experience and reinforced by received understandings of history. Visiting places that TR and others reserved as monuments or national parks is a key part of that lived experience of the nature state. This is not to see the state as a superstructure, but as a historically contingent social formation. In few other countries did this engagement with the natural world occupy such a large proportion of the state's activity—Germany might be one, as David Blackbourn's work indicates.²¹ Certainly I'm not the only one to note this comparison, but I try to show the specific origins of this phenomenon in the era of "high" or "Victorian" imperialism.

There are of course other lineball judgments in my book, and some are hinted at in the commentaries. One is the title. I agree with Taylor's implication that I might have preferred "wasteful world" or "A Wasteful Nation." *The Wasteful Nation* is a bit unfortunate since I do not believe that the United States is or was the only wasteful nation on earth. However the title of the book captured the mindset of the historical

²⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower: "Remarks at the Governors' Conference, Seattle, Washington.," August 4, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9663>.

²¹ David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

actors, which was very much about a crisis of American exceptionalism characterized by a jeremiad over resource use. TR was an anti-exceptionalist, but in a qualified way. Harriet Ritvo accurately conveys the complexities of Roosevelt's African safari and its meanings on this point. She rightly notes that TR had a "desire to make common cause" with the European imperial project "while remaining distinct." That was indeed the point of American empire in the 1890s to 1910s, to work within an Anglo-American framework of "civilization" while subtly asserting the dominant American role within that racial and social formation. The missionaries I studied in *Reforming the World* did this, and Roosevelt did also, only he had more, though still limited, power over outcomes.²²

I agree that I did not deal unambiguously about outcomes. What was my position on this? The last two paragraphs in the book sum it up. The implications regarding the role of Theodore Roosevelt and his entourage were ambiguous from my perspective and from the perspective of the early 21st century. There is no easy answer, no simple moral formula. That's how history is. The good, the bad and ugly were well and truly mixed up in this case. For one thing, the Progressives did have a eugenicist tinge or at least a eugenicist fringe. For another, TR's imperial worldview was undeniable, and his racialist perspective was real though not as extreme as for many of his time. In this respect he was not a man of his times, or rather, his moral outlook was late Victorian and his political outlook modern and focused on creating a flexible modern state that could bring order out of the chaos of international competition – order that would, however, retain elite, class-based power. Resource access and deployment was a key part of his foreign policy and of the elite's geopolitical outlook more generally, not national self-determination, not human rights or anything like it, but what they saw as duties, obligations, and necessities enforced by human will and high-minded leadership. Not an entirely attractive worldview but one that still underpins a major part of American foreign policy. Underlying American policies of human rights, democracy and so forth in later periods, there is still the approach that the international system must be ordered, indeed subject to rules, but rules that favour the modern version of "civilization," which is globalization, whether achieved by force or persuasion. But the triumph of liberal humanitarianism and neo-liberal free trade economics has produced an uncertain and often anarchic world that Roosevelt would not have liked. We need to pause before we glibly conclude that we are any better because we are not "imperialists" like him. Roosevelt wanted the world—as much as the nation state—to be regulated in the Progressive spirit, as he egotistically interpreted it of course, but today we increasingly have neither world nor nation state sustainability.

²² Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

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