

abolition of slavery, emigrants from the Indian subcontinent were encouraged to migrate to the West Indies to help with local labor problems, as indentured labor. The latter phenomenon could have been explored more fully, perhaps warranting a separate chapter for the Caribbean. That said, Atkinson forms useful parallels and comparisons with attitudes to races other than Asians, most notably Afro-Caribbean in the United States.

The book is well researched, and Atkinson provides a very extensive bibliography of both published and unpublished sources from a host of archives across the globe, including the National Archives of the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

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JAMES BEATTIE, EDWARD MELILLO, and EMILY O'GORMAN, eds. *Eco-Cultural Networks and the British Empire: New Views on Environmental History*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

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In *Eco-Cultural Networks and the British Empire*, James Beattie, Edward Melillo, and Emily O'Gorman have compiled a series of innovative essays that demonstrate, individually and collectively, how networks of empire and ecology brought diverse cultures and landscapes into contact. Concentrating on the period between the ascension of Queen Victoria in 1837 and the end of World War II in 1945, the contributors examine what they call eco-cultural networks, defined as the “interlinked cultural formulations, material exchanges, and ecological processes” that were generated by British imperialism (8). Rather than lingering on the theoretical analysis that often dominates the study of networks, the editors focus on the connected geographies of the Empire and the eco-cultural networks that linked the “environments, capital, knowledge, commodities and resources of formerly separate places” to one another (12). Imperial ecologies depended upon exchanges of biota, scientific expertise, technologies, ideas, and values, which, in turn, produced “new environmental practices and cultural adaptations within and beyond the British Empire” (14). The essays in this collection reveal the multidirectional and contingent nature of these eco-cultural networks, as well as the material and cultural consequences of such linkages.

This collection is not the first to argue that the expansion of the British Empire profoundly reordered landscapes and human societies, nor the first to investigate how imperial environmental encounters produced new forms of knowledge, economic values, social relationships, and power dynamics. The amalgamation of “ecological” and “cultural,” which the Beattie, Melillo, and O'Gorman use to indicate “the role of humans in shaping, and being shaped by, their environments,” is fundamental to the discipline of environmental history (8). However, as they note, environmental historians tend to focus on either the material *or* the cultural, political, and social dimensions of human-environmental interactions, rarely both. The essays in this collection exhibit the rewards of exploring imperial networks through a “combined analysis” (8). Perhaps more important is the editors' contention that analysis of these networks should not be constrained by the dichotomies that characterize imperial historiography: center/periphery, settler/administrative, formal/informal, direct/indirect, tropical/temperate, and the like. While acknowledging the imbalances of power in the extraction of natural resources, exploitation of labor, and development of commodity chains, the contributors eschew the hegemony of the center, pointing instead to connections, parallels, and entanglements that do not exist along neat arterial lines extending from the metropole. As Beattie,

Melillo, and O’Gorman argue, eco-cultural networks “operated beyond the political-administrative borders of [the empire’s] nation-states and territories” (7). The broad range of landscapes, peoples, and polities united in this collection reflects the diversity of the British Empire itself, a diversity that, in turn, generated the local, regional, and global eco-cultural networks highlighted by the contributors.

The essays are organized according to the geographic scale of the networks analyzed rather than chronology or region. The chapters in part one, “Regional Eco-Cultural Networks,” focus on trans-regional networks extending to distant parts of the Empire and often beyond, as well as to networks that brought British territories into contact with other imperial spheres. Answering the call in the introduction for the unification of material and cultural analysis, Georgina Endfield and Samuel Randalls (chapter 2) follow the development of climate as a philosophical and political category in response to colonial encounters with new, often bewildering, climatic conditions across the empire. Joseph Lawson (chapter 3) investigates the link between colonial improvement projects across British and Japanese territories and the creation of new agricultural institutions to encourage hinterland development in late Qing and Republican China. Edward Melillo (chapter 4) uncovers the early “supermarket narrative” of tea, showing how Britons imbibed an imaginary landscape purposefully filtered of the social and environmental conditions of tea production in Ceylon. Nancy Jacobs (chapter 5) demonstrates how the seasonal migration of birds between Africa and Europe produced new forms of scientific knowledge across imperial and national boundaries, creating an eco-cultural network that has only grown more complex in the wake of African independence.

The chapters in part two, “Local Eco-Cultural Networks,” explore the impacts of eco-cultural networks on the cultural and physical landscapes of particular localities. Eugenia Herbert (chapter 6) investigates how the gathering in of the world’s biota at the small botanic garden at Peradeniya shaped the development of Ceylon’s plantation economy and culture. James Beattie (chapter 7) reveals how Chinese migration to the goldfields of Otago generated eco-cultural networks that transformed local environments and cultural practices in both New Zealand and China. Kathryn Hunter (chapter 8) examines the diverse but connected trajectories of colonial hunting cultures across the British Empire, and Robert Peckham (chapter 9) follows by showing how hunting in Chinese treaty ports altered Western perspectives of Chinese people and landscapes and created new networks of trade, recreation, and conservation. Highlighting the dependence of commercial rice cultivation in southern New South Wales in the early twentieth century on exchanges of expertise, seed, and water technologies with rice-growing regions in Japan and California, Emily O’Gorman (chapter 10) reveals the profound environmental and economic transformations spurred by this network. Bringing in the urban landscape, often neglected in environmental histories, Sean Kheraj (chapter 11) concludes the book with an analysis of the contested position of domestic animals in Winnipeg.

As global historians the world over can attest, the noble impulse to cast wider conceptual and geographic nets, to blur established categories of analysis, and to embrace complexity over tidiness can come at a price. And as with any collection, the editors are exposed to critiques of the chronological or geographical scope of the volume. Why not, for example, include an essay on eco-cultural networks at play before the 1830s, or one showing linkages to Latin America, or one focusing exclusively on intercolonial exchanges that bypass the metropole altogether? But *Eco-Cultural Networks* is neither a historiographical review nor a comprehensive survey of the environmental history of the British Empire; it is a brochure for the many opportunities on offer when using this eco-cultural approach to follow the movement of people, materials, and ideas throughout a truly global empire.

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