

North America

Ian Tyrrell. *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt's America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. 351 pp. ISBN: 9780226197760. \$40.00.

One can argue that Theodore Roosevelt adored the natural world more than any other president in American history. He created five national parks, over fifty federal wildlife reserves, and ditched the comfort of the Secret Service to spend a night with John Muir in Yosemite National Park. And the swiftness in which the twenty-sixth president accomplished his conservation objectives astonishes people to this day. Yet in *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt's America*, the eminent historian, Ian Tyrrell provides a masterful narrative in which he sheds light on why the “Bull Moose” acted with such urgency in leading the top-down conservationist wing of the Progressive Era. Not only did Roosevelt inherit international conflicts such as the Philippine-American War, the “Wilderness Warrior” faced global environmental catastrophe.

Tyrrell organizes his book into three sections. In Part I, “The Origins of Alarm,” Tyrrell contextualizes the international movement for conservation. Part II, “The New Empire and the Rise of Conservation,” covers topics ranging from Roosevelt’s influence on geopolitical strategists such as Brooks Adams to the nation’s hydrological infrastructure and from the fossil fuel revolution to the complicated divide between conservation and preservation. Finally, in Part III, “The Global Vision of Theodore Roosevelt and Its Fate,” Tyrrell analyses the reasons behind the demise of Roosevelt’s global conservation diplomacy. Taken as a collective whole, Tyrrell’s main historiographical intervention lies at the intersection of empire building and the conservation of natural resources. According to Tyrrell, historians have yet to “... put two themes together: the first, Roosevelt’s geopolitics, is seen as the outward projection of American power; the second, the conservation movement he helped to fashion, is treated as an inward encounter with a unique American environment” (17). In this regard, Tyrrell combines and builds off two historiographical strands highlighted by works such as Howard K. Beale’s *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (1956) and Douglas Brinkley’s *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* (2009).

Tyrrell ultimately sees conservation as the crucial element in empire building during the Age of Imperialism. According to Tyrrell, “Given the emergence of the United States as a major industrial power in a world of imperialist rivalries, the real issue was neither the development of stronger nation-state structures nor the existence of American empire as fact. It was what kind of state and what kind of empire the United States was to become” (250). Tyrrell also notes, “Equally important was the idea of an explicit *inland empire* to complement the external one ... because the United States was a latecomer to the worldwide scramble for colonies, both preservation and wise use of internal resources through conservation policies became doubly important” (14). Basically, internal and external conservation was a means to ensure the permanency of American civilization. In the geopolitical context of the early twentieth century, it was crucial to cultivate an empire of conservation to protect Western civilization from meeting the same ecological demise as the Qing dynasty.

One of Tyrrell’s main objectives is to document a powerful contingent moment. With no small grain of idealism, Tyrrell posits “Roosevelt’s presidency witnessed a rare opportunity in American history to bring the threads of sustainability and nature conservation together on a national level and to begin these conversations on an international level too” (261).

Essentially, if Roosevelt had his way at the international level the United States would have led the world on a path towards a sustainable future. This is best illuminated through Tyrrell's chapter, "Something Big: Theodore Roosevelt and Global Conservation," which focuses on Roosevelt's desire to hold a World Congress on Conservation at The Hague. Seeking to combine conservation with diplomatic internationalism, Roosevelt publicized his plan right before his infamous African safari in 1909. In a world increasingly connected and interdependent, "Roosevelt's initiative for the rational allocation of raw materials foreshadowed the future of the whole planet, not just the United States" (210). Word of Roosevelt's proposal quickly spread throughout the world and gained remarkable support in places such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. However, it was not simply the "settler societies" of the British Empire; Roosevelt, along with his international conservation conduit, Lord James Bryce, tapped into a conservationist yearning in places such as Argentina, Mexico, and India. Within less than two years twenty-nine nations agreed to attend Roosevelt's World Congress on Conservation. This "global moment of enthusiasm for conservation," however, dissipated as fast as it had emerged (225). Roosevelt's successor, William Howard Taft, did not subscribe to global conservation diplomacy and he did his best to ensure the United States focused on internal conservation. If it was not for Roosevelt's inability to regain the presidency, along with the crisis of internationalism which led to a full-blown world war, Tyrrell suggests the American Empire and the world at large would look fundamentally different in the twenty-first century.

One minor critique lies in Tyrrell's temporal conceptualization of the American empire. According to Tyrrell, "As much as when considering the colonial territories and the informally dominated Caribbean States, the continental United States itself was conceived of as an empire in this geopolitical sense in the era of Theodore Roosevelt" (15). This statement is accurate when viewed through the framework of Roosevelt and dominant American society during the Age of Imperialism. However, when one applies an indigenous perspective to the formation of an American empire, the commencement is much earlier. To be sure, Tyrrell does suggest "Empire is not simply a fact but an idea, an idea that needs nurturing. People live by such ideas. Despite the arguably empire-like wrestling of the American West from Indian tribes and the Mexican Republic in the nineteenth century, an empire was a notion that did not sit comfortably with many Americans, even when the facts indicated otherwise" (39). Moreover, Tyrrell does spare two and a quarter pages (110-112) to discuss indigenous people in the context of the inland empire, but he does not connect the end of the "Indian Wars" with Roosevelt's American empire: "Whereas the Dawes Act coerced Indians into becoming individualistic farmers as a prerequisite for citizenship and deprived them of vast acreages, Roosevelt preferred paternalistic intervention, not the ruthless and impersonal logic of bureaucratic expropriation by a domineering state" (111). This is problematic because events such as the Wounded Knee massacre, a classic example of an empire exerting authority over a subjugated people, was less than eleven years removed from Roosevelt's arrival in the Oval Office. In addition, historians of Native America have engaged this topic for quite some time. Such works include Jeffrey Ostler's *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (2004); Kathleen DuVal's *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (2007); Ned Blackhawk's *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (2008); and Jerome A. Greene's *American Carnage: Wounded Knee, 1890* (2014). As these historians suggest, thousands of indigenous people had already experienced the crushing wave of American expansion prior to the rise of Roosevelt. In all fairness, the issue surrounding the definition of the American empire in relation to indigenous nations is

emblematic of historiography in general, thus it is not simply Tyrrell who neglects to see the American empire through native eyes. Yet if one is going to discuss America's inland empire during the Age of Imperialism, the experiences of the Lakota, Chiricahua Apache, and the dozens of indigenous nations who lost land in 1907 with Oklahoma statehood need to be included in the analysis. Doing so might reveal an American empire firmly mature by the time Roosevelt and his elite internationalists arrived on their high conservation horses.

Despite Tyrrell's limited exploration of the rise of the American Empire in Indian country, he successfully roots the conservationist strand of American Progressivism in external ideological and material soil. Tyrrell brilliantly utilizes an array of interpretive lenses (biographical, environmental, and transnational) to illuminate the external forces catalysing America's domestic and international conservationist agenda. In light of *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation*, historians can no longer discuss American conservation within the confines of the United States and Tyrrell's work forces us to reconsider the true motives of the "Wilderness Warrior".

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Justin Whitney, *California State University at Sacramento*

South America

Oswaldo F. Pardo. *Honor and Personhood in Early Modern Mexico*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 2015. 237 pp. ISBN 9780472119622. \$70.00.

Oswaldo Pardo's *Honor and Personhood in Early Modern Mexico* details the critical role mendicants had in upholding European values and institutions once they assumed the duties of diocesan clergy in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Mexico. As the colony's spiritual and social guardians, Pardo shows how friars used catechisms, sermons, and sacramental rituals to teach indigenous people how to "obey the pope, their priests, and the laws of the church, but also the king, his representatives, and his laws" (7). Blurring lines between secular and religious control, and despite the Spanish crown's efforts to assert jurisdictional control in the region, many friars presented themselves as the ultimate sources of authority to indigenous parishioners, a conceit buttressed by their own theological and political machinations. Attempting in vain to defend their position before the crown, many of the most influential friars (particularly the Franciscans and Dominicans) appealed to a European audience already embroiled in issues of reform. Their letters, dictionaries, confession manuals, and corpus of printed legal and religious works are among the well-worn sources that Pardo thumbs.

The religious orders aimed to expel the Devil from the New World and recreate the Primitive Church in Mexico, likening indigenous communities to the great ancient civilizations ready to take up Christianity and hasten the millenarian second coming. To carry out their mission, Pardo argues that friars needed to protect the honour and stability of indigenous communities in the face of predatory *encomenderos* and a state that had little understanding of the perilousness or potential of the evangelical project. To reach indigenous communities, friars first needed to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers by adopting an indigenous lexicon and relating it principally to lessons found in the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deadly Sins. Pardo shows how Friars took on the task of formulating and conveying religious concepts alongside Hispanic ideas of honour, reputation, social estate, oath-swearing, and punishment. Far from being static concepts, Pardo shows how the instability of these ideas was directly tied