

to illuminate how the themes of home, nature, and the feminine ideal were embedded in spatial constructions. While the book engages the reader in its empirical richness, the weakness of this work is that it leaves the reader craving more thorough explanation. In particular, the work mentions race and discusses maintenance of 'the race' while neglecting an explicit explanation of the construction of race, its role in empire, and the centrality of notions of white supremacy therein. Not to say Stratford fails to implicate the significance of race and racism, particularly in nation-building and empire in the Anglophone world, but that at times the work seems to talk past race, rather than engaging with it in the depth necessary for its centrality to the themes of this work. Overall though, this is a monograph worthy of consideration by scholars and graduate students in the field of historical, feminist, and critical geography, as well as for those interested in the construction of nature, environmentalism, public health, and discourses of governmentality. While it leaves some explanation to be desired at times, this book provokes deep thought and brings together a wide range of scholarship within history and geography.

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The Postwar Origins of the Global Environment: How the United Nations Built Spaceship Earth, Perrin Selcer (Ed.), Columbia University Press, New York (2018). 400 pages, US\$65.00 hardcover

This engaging book works at the interface of environmental history, political history, and the history of science to show how modern conceptions of the environment as an entity to be governed at the global scale were built by various organisations operating under the umbrella of the United Nations in the three decades after World War II. Perrin Selcer frames this as the construction of the environment or of a global environmental consciousness.

Selcer's narrative begins in the 1950s with the efforts of the United Nations, mainly via UNESCO, to work on cognitive psychology, the argument touted at the time being that appropriate education could create global citizens who would avoid a repetition of the catastrophes of global warfare. The bulk of the book then attends to the efforts to activate a global consciousness through various environmental projects that the United Nations sponsored. Above all, global environmental problems were seen as important examples of why a global governing elite with a cosmopolitan psychology was important to building a new postwar world order. The problems of the environment were paradigmatically those that needed the cooperative ethos of the UN to be capable of comprehension let alone resolution. At the beginning of the period covered by Selcer, such projects tended to be framed in a language of conservation. Arid zones were a particular focus of these efforts, crossing political boundaries as they did and thereby requiring international cooperation and consensus. From Selcer's perspective, as important as any physical-environmental outcomes of UN attention to arid zones was the construction of a global cadre of environmental experts building the scientific and institutional protocols by which they could cooperate.

More generally, a particular strength of this book is the close attention it pays to the institutional frameworks by which individuals were aggregated and ideas were operationalised. Selcer looks

at two large scale UN projects to pursue these questions. First, the joint UNESCO-FAO project to construct a soil map of the world. This required the harmonisation of multiple different national soil-classificatory systems. Selcer frames this as a high modernist project of universalising knowledge. It brought together the US and the USSR at the height of the Cold War in the 1960s, but its main driver was the work of Dutch and Belgian soil scientists who led the project, they themselves being part of the rump of former colonial scientists seeking new outlets and opportunities in the wake of decolonisation. A similar pattern emerges in Selcer's narration of the International Biological Programme which, commencing in 1961, sought to develop a global classification of the world's biomes as synthetic ecological regions to be mapped, used, and preserved. In this case, the driving force was a British biological community who had trained in the empire that was being dismantled.

In the years between the initial formulation of the project for a global soil map in the 1950s and that for a global mosaic of biomes, Selcer detects an important shift from a language of conservation to one of a universal 'biosphere' in need of global governance. And it was in this language that the pathbreaking 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm was conceptualised. Selcer's final chapter attends to the Stockholm conference showing that, for all the schisms between the aspirations of the global North and the global South, there was a shared understanding of the need to build an equilibrium in the world environmental system. This framing of the environment as a global object of governance was the outcome of the three decades of institutional and scientific cooperation and capacity building that *The Postwar Origins of the Global Environment* has traced. A global environment had been constructed by scientists and policy makers through the numerous organisational and collaborative ventures sponsored by the United Nations, and an agreed vision of the nature and importance of that global environment as an entity allowed for the shared purpose embodied at Stockholm.

A brief concluding chapter notes the extent to which the postwar construction of a shared discourse of the global environment had no sooner reached its apogee as a consensual object of policy at Stockholm than it began to be deconstructed by the neo-liberalist politics of recession in the 1980s with its scepticism about the Keynesian order whose global environmental regulatory regime Selcer has chronicled. And yet Selcer is surely right that even as this consensus came under threat, so it began to be reworked by new bodies of international governance such as the IPCC which play such an important role in our contemporary framings of the environment as an object of science and governance. *The Postwar Origins of the Global Environment* is an important text uncovering the genealogy of our attitudes to the environment and our framing of it as a global discursive reality.

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Nature Translated: Alexander von Humboldt's Works in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Alison E. Martin. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh (2018). 268 pages, £80.00 hardcover

Whatever else he was - pioneering natural scientist, political economist, intrepid explorer possessed by empirical fervour and

Romantic sensibilities - Alexander von Humboldt was a prolific author in an age of prolific authors. Yet even Humboldt, in his lifetime a veritable one-man literary machine, would have expressed surprise at the range and strength of the Humboldt Industry that has flourished after his death in 1859. In his *Alexander von Humboldt: A Metabiography* (2007), Nicolaas Rupke showed how Humboldt has served different intellectual purposes at one time and place or another. A recent prize-winning Humboldt biography, Andrea Wulf's *The Invention of Nature* (2015), manages in its subtitle - *The Adventures of Alexander von Humboldt: The Lost Hero of Science* - to both render as a general icon that more particular Humboldt, the one famed for his South American travels between 1799 and 1804 together with French botanist Aimé Bonpland, and to belie the fact that Humboldt, in his lifetime and certainly since, has been far from lost.

Alison Martin's *Nature Translated* is a significant addition to Humboldt studies. Martin's central concern is in exploring how various translators, in different ways and for different books, went about the 'Englishing' of Humboldt (p. 39). Some contemporaries read Humboldt's books in their original German (or French) and many of his influential arguments were disseminated as journal articles. Yet Humboldt's rise to prominence as an author and natural scientist in nineteenth-century Britain was the result of translation. Translation is always, Martin shows, an interpretative process, hardly ever a matter of semantic fidelity and direct correspondence in meaning. The work of translation, and in particular of female translators hitherto marginalised or overlooked entirely, was central to the meaning and mobility of Humboldt's words and to his reputation as a man of action and of letters.

The Introduction outlines the rise of literate audiences for science in early and mid-nineteenth-century Britain and the need for persons who, through translation, could bring the words of foreign authors to Britain's eager publics. Chapter 1 examines the importance of style in scientific writing. Nature might be complex, its specialist study evident to the cognoscenti in a more and more recondite vocabulary. Yet scientific narratives, whether Humboldt's or others', were never intended to be read solely by a specialist readership. Style mattered to authorship and in translation. Authorial accessibility - readability and comprehension - depended upon it. So did sales and, from that, reputation. Publishers knew this better than authors. Audiences, especially reviewers, were never shy to highlight dull prose, flatness of tone or, alternatively, to praise narrative elegance. As Martin explains, however, style could be understood and practised quite differently in translation: as plainness in writing; an emotive register; or, through the use of footnotes and other paratextual devices, as something that justified and even elaborated upon the author's intentions (such as omitting large parts of the original text in order to make the translated version read better).

Nature Translated focuses principally upon four key Humboldt books and upon the lives, working processes and concerns of their respective translators. The first of Humboldt's major works in English translation appeared in 1811. Humboldt's *Essai politique sur le royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne* (1808–1811) was that year rendered into English by a Scottish journalist, John Black. If Humboldt was keen to be seen as an author of substance and style and an explorer of consequence, Black was equally keen to use his opportunity in translating the German's work to advance his own standing. Humboldt's *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* attracted wide and immediate interest in Britain. It did not do so, however, in ways that satisfied Humboldt or which reflected faith in the German's *Essai politique*. In addition to his highly literal translation from the French, Black added footnotes whose content 'complemented, criticised and contradicted' Humboldt (p. 72).

Things were otherwise for what became, through the work of Helen Maria Williams, Humboldt's significant and enormously popular *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent* (1814–1829). Unlike Black, of whose translation Humboldt despaired and with whom he had no direct contact, Williams and Humboldt collaborated over the 'Englishing' of the *Personal Narrative* (the English version of his *Relation historique*, principally his explorations with Bonpland). Even so, notes Martin, a common feature of William's translation was the heightening of Humboldt's sense impressions: her translation 'added value' (p. 113) to Humboldt's sensibility. The second English translation of Humboldt's *Relation historique* to appear was Thomasina Ross's version, in 1852–1853. Where Williams' version was nearly 4000 pages in seven volumes, Ross reduced the work to three volumes, and reduced the price per volume. Accessibility here equated to affordability, clarity through (relative) brevity.

Humboldt's *Ansichten der Nature*, an essay collection first published in 1808, contains some of Humboldt's most influential and shorter works on the physical geography of the natural world. An English edition appeared in 1849, translated by Elizabeth Sabine under the title *Aspects of Nature, in Different Lands and Different Climates*, jointly published by Longman and Murray. Elizabeth Sabine was Humboldt's most accomplished translator and mediator. Yet she has remained virtually unacknowledged as such, her work overshadowed by that of her husband, the physicist and polar explorer Edward Sabine. This 'invisibility' (p. 162) was an all-too-common feature for women in nineteenth-century British science (whether as translators, authors, or reviewers). Martin commendably recovers Elizabeth Sabine, and documents not just the working relationship between her and Humboldt but between wife and husband as they together worked to do appropriate justice to Humboldt's range and depth of meaning. The same qualities of judicious scholarship and historiographic recovery distinguish Martin's discussion of that second English translation of *Ansichten* in this period, Elise Otte's *Views of Nature* (1850).

The final empirical chapter is devoted to Humboldt's *Cosmos*, three different versions of which were available in English by mid-century. The differences between the editions revolved not only around questions of structure, authority (Humboldt's and the translators'), but also around price and, thus, the relative ease with which they could be consumed by Britain's scientific public. The task for the translators, hard enough given the topic of the book - effectively, the physical geography of the natural world and its interconnectedness - and given Humboldt's often dense style - was made more difficult by the fact that the original volumes appeared over a seventeen-year period, from 1845 to 1862.

Nature Translated is important, thoughtfully written, and thought provoking. It is a study of four books and of their English translation in relation to British literary culture and scientific society in, roughly, the 1840s and 1850s. How might this analysis extend to scientific cultures in other languages? To the emergent scientific markets in the United States? To literate society in mid-nineteenth-century British India? Martin's focus is with translation of the texts. We hear almost nothing about the translation and 'mobility' of his maps, illustrations and statistical diagrams, many of which were vital in emphasising the interconnections of natural phenomena and which were widely incorporated in physical and national atlases, in Germany and in Britain. The book's many insights - on authorial style, translation as process, the collaborative nature of authorship, and, not least, on the geographies of translation (London, Edinburgh, Paris and, less grandly, St Andrews and Torquay) will reward the close attention of historical geographers and others interested in book and print history and in the making, mobility, and reception of science.

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Humanism and Empire: The Imperial Ideal in Fourteenth-century Italy, Alexander Lee. Oxford University Press, Oxford (2018). 464 pages, UK£70.00, hardcover

Humanism and Empire is an impressive feat of erudition and may well become a landmark for historians of medieval political thought. At the heart of its achievements, this book breaks with a historiographical tradition which, from Simonde de Sismondi to Quentin Skinner, has represented Renaissance humanists as pre-modern republicans who defended communal liberty against feudal tyranny. Displacing this commonplace, Lee paints a much more fluid landscape, marked by humanists appealing to Holy Roman Emperors to deliver peace and liberty to Italy. For historical geographers interested in late medieval and early modern Europe, this is a significant book and has much to offer in questioning the geographical assumptions at the foundations of modern political thought.

Humanism and Empire is divided into two parts, one chronological and the other thematic. In the first part, four chapters each explore a coherent moment in humanist appeals to Empire. Interestingly, each of these 'moments' is tied not only to a set of distinctive arguments and thinkers but also to the political calculations of specific Italian city-states in the context of impending war. In its second part, *Humanism and Empire* offers three thematic chapters, which weave across the four moments of Part I, to discuss how humanists understood the geography of Empire, the balance of temporal and spiritual powers, and the role of nobles, popes and the people in the election of Emperors. Given the richness of *Humanism and Empire* it is worthwhile summing its arguments by chapter.

Beginning in the period between 1260 and 1335, Chapter 1 discusses the emergence of historical chronicles narrating the 'golden past' of Italian cities in Roman times, and of panegyrics casting virtuous *signori* and emperors as the restorers of peace and liberty. Be it in Milan, Vincenza or Padua, the chapter shows how writers such as Stefanardo da Vimercate, Ferreto de' Ferreti and Albertino Mussato contributed to this new literature and drew their language of virtue and decadence from ancient texts by Cicero, Sallust and Virgil. Focusing mostly on Mussato, this chapter traces how he consistently sought to convince his fellow citizens that only a renewal of imperial vassalage could secure the survival of Padua's liberty against the ambitions of the Veronese *signore* Cangrande della Scala. This appeal, whilst apparently grounded in pragmatism, dispels the image of defenders of communal liberty decrying the Empire.

Turning to the 1290s–1330s, Chapter 2 focuses on how a new form of appeal to empire arose amongst Veronese humanists such as Riccobaldo da Ferrara and Giovanni Matociis, as well as Giovanni da Cermenate. Influenced by the Christian theology of Augustine and Orosius, this generation of humanists envisaged the Empire as a providential form of world monarchy, where emperors stood above the sinful fray of factionalism and tyranny (pp. 78–79, 83–84). This vision of empire, Lee shows, relied on emphasizing an 'economy of salvation', whereby emperors used clemency to bring about reconciliation among divided societies (p.87).

Chapter 3 draws together texts by Petrarch, Convevole da Prato and Cola di Rienzo and tracks their calls for the renewal of

Empire and of the city of Rome (*renovatio Imperii, renovatio Romae*). Dismayed with the 1350s Venetian–Genoese War, Convevole and Petrarch appealed to the emperor Charles IV to intervene directly in Italy. Indeed, drawing on Dante's *Commedia*, they often personified Rome as a woman begging the emperor to restore her. Disappointed by Charles IV's inaction, these authors began to call upon other monarchs for a 'spontaneous rebirth of Rome' through its own citizenry (p. 117). This division, as Lee notes, opened a break with the assumption that *imperium* would coincide with the contemporary Empire. On the one hand, Petrarch and Convevole turned to the idea that the mantle of empire could be passed on to Robert of Naples, a monarch whom they portrayed as 'the acme of virtuous rulership' (p.119). On the other hand, and more radically, Cola di Rienzo argued that a new Roman Empire could emerge from the people of Rome reclaiming their communal autonomy and their ancient right to confer *imperium* through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (pp. 125–131).

Closing Part I, Chapter 4 discusses how two Florentine Humanists, Coluccio de Salutati and Leonardo Bruni, came to disavow the imperial ideal in the context of the Visconti Wars and the ascension of emperor Wenceslaus (c.1369–1402). Opening with Salutati's disillusion with Charles IV's inaction over Italian conflicts, the chapter argues that humanists lost 'the Petrarchan vision of the emperor as an agent of Roman renewal' (p. 143) and returned to more provisional appeals to imperial intervention (pace Mussato). Ultimately, this generation would lose faith in the Empire and see it as 'a tyrant to all' (p. 143). This portrayal, as Lee shows, grew as the conflict between Milan and Florence raged on, and the Florentines feared Wenceslaus's support of Giangaleazzo Visconti. By 1402, as Lee notes, this position reached its extreme with Leonardo Bruni calling for Italy, including the papal states, to take up arms against the emperor in the name of liberty. Thus perished, Lee claims, the high age of humanist fascination with empire.

After this chronological account, *Humanism and Empire* follows with three thematic chapters on the 'dynamics of Empire', usefully drawing on the context set out in Part I. Chapter 5, 'The Bounds of Empire' addresses the question of how humanists conceived of the geography of Empire and Italy. Here, discussion turns foremost on how universalism was understood as the purview of Empire. Prefacing his humanist focus, Lee refers to imperial universalism in the ancient Roman texts by Virgil, Livy and Pliny the Elder, but also to key Christian texts by Eusebius of Caesarea, Ambrose and Augustine after the Donation of Constantine, and to early medieval texts following the Carolingian and Ottonian foundations of the Holy Roman Empire (pp. 185–189). After these antecedents, Lee turns to the 'varieties of universalism' in Italian humanism. Lee's efforts here hinge on emphasizing continuities with earlier medieval thought and complicating accounts which have framed the period as one of a burgeoning national patriotism. Significantly, Lee argues that humanists did much to restore ideas of Empire as worthy of world monarchy, given its providential mission to Christian peace and unity, with Rome restored as its spiritual center. Peace in Italy was then seen as the first test which Empire had to pass in reclaiming its moral worth to world dominion. Towards the end of the century, however, disillusion over imperial intervention led humanists to increasingly cast the Holy Roman Empire as 'a more limited, "national" entity' led by German monarchs whose claims to Italy ought to be contested (p.211).

Chapter 6 traces the humanists' engagement with the separation of *Imperium* and *Sacerdotium*, or of spiritual and temporal powers between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Papacy. Reviewing this question from Antiquity to the thirteenth century, Lee helpfully summarizes the foundations of this dualism through the early writings of Augustine and Pope Gelasius I, the bargains struck in the *translatio imperii* of Charlemagne, and the Investiture Controversy