INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to the first issue of 2020. In **‘American vines, European potatoes: An evolutionary history of European migrations in southern Brazil’**, Claudio de Majo and Eduardo Relly examine the differing environmental and social experiences of two migrant groups to the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Germans and Italians, the authors show, each centred their activities on growing potatoes and a particular variety of grape. De Majo and Relly’s lively work as a whole demonstrates the fascinating overlay of migrant expectations, environmental reality and economic opportunities. As well, it charts the complex pathways of species introduction and reintroduction.

In contrast to the broad sweep of de Majo and Relly’s article, Alexander Trapeznik and Austin Gee explore the impact of the motor car’s introduction into early twentieth-century New Zealand. In **“‘The madding Wheels of brazen Chariots rag’d; dire was the noise’: Motoring and the environment in New Zealand before the Second World War’**, they unearth concerns about dust, noise and visual pollution amongst the public. Their work provides a valuable southern hemispheric perspective on an area of scholarship dominated by research from North America and Europe.

Kate B. Showers presents her third and final article on biofuels. In **‘Biofuels’ unbalanced equations: Misleading statistics, networked knowledge and measured parameters. Part 3: Modelled marginal and spare land versus observed ecosystems’**, Showers shows the consequences of model-driven policies to shape African land use. Her work is a cautionary tale of the need to interrogate closely systems of modelling and production as we seek to sever our links to fossil fuel production. Showers’ work does not advocate a rejection of biofuels, but rather a more careful awareness of their production and environmental and social impacts. As she concludes: ‘Biofuels can provide an alternative to fossil fuels, but applying an industrial approach to their production simply continues the destructive logic responsible for global degradation.’

In **‘British huntswomen in colonial India: Imperialism and gender hierarchies, 1890–1921’**, Vijaya Ramadas Mandala examines an early manifestation of another aspect of global degradation. Mandala’s work considers the manner in which ‘British huntswomen successfully contested the limitations of female participation (imposed by the male-dominant Victorian society) by partaking in big game pursuits in colonial India’. Through a detailed study of figures such as Nora Beatrice Blyth, Mrs W. W. Baillie and Isabel Savory, Mandala illustrates at once the manner in which such women upheld imperial ideals, utilised indigenous knowledge and engaged with local nature, all the while using the opportunity India presented to extend their own role in hunting.

In the final article, **‘Temporalising nature: Chronologies of colonial species transfer and ecological change across the Indian Ocean in the age of empire’**, Ulrike Kirchberger explores the collision of different timescales on environmental exchange. Her work considers such factors as the lifespan of different species and their ecological requirements and sets these against the short-term demands of empires, the long-term thinking of conservationists and the impacts of differing transportation modes and species behaviours. She also examines the manner in which different groups of conservationists enlisted the deep time of particular species and groups, as well as projections of future resource demands, in their consideration of which species to introduce, how and where.

Call for papers

I particularly encourage submissions on topics related to history and energy, the atmosphere and water, especially in relation to Africa, South America and Asia. Please also contact me if you are interested in guest editing a special issue.

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James Beattie, Editor,
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