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By investigating how the most fundamental element - water - was 'conquered' by draining fens and marshes, straightening the courses of rivers, building high dams and exploiting hydro-electric power, The Conquest of Nature explores how over the last 250 years, the German people have shaped their natural environment and how the landscapes they created took a powerful hold on the German imagination.

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It investigates how the most fundamental element - water - was 'conquered' by draining fens and marshes, straightening the courses of rivers, building high dams and exploiting hydro-electric power. The book begins in the 1740s with Frederick the Great of Prussia, who regarded the reclamation of marshland as 'conquests from barbarism'.

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The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany. by. David Blackbourn. 3.94 · Rating details · 124 ratings · 13 reviews. "Brilliantly conceived.... [A] tour de force in historical writing."—Ian Kershaw. David Blackbourn tells the story of how the German people transformed their landscape over 250 years from a waterlogged swampland into one of the most powerful countries in the Western world.

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The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape and the Making of Modern Germany by David Blackbourn, 497pp, Jonathan Cape, £30 "Draining the swamp" is such a familiar metaphor that we tend to forget how...

[Review: The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape and the ...](#)

Majestic and lyrically written, The Conquest of Nature traces the rise of Germany through the development of water and landscape. David Blackbourn begins his morality tale in the mid-1700s, with the epic story of Frederick the Great, who attempted by importing the great scientific minds of the West and by harnessing the power of his army to transform the uninhabitable marshlands of his scattered kingdom into a modern state.

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The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape and the Making of Modern Germany, by David Blackbourn. London, Jonathan Cape, 2006. xiii,

497 pp. \$29.95 US (cloth), \$17.05 US (paper). A well-told set of stories in an engaging volume is a rarity among historical studies.

~~The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape and the Making of...~~

It ' s a fun challenge but nature always wins. Strange as it sounds, this desire to pursue the conquest of nature has historical roots and global consequences. From Mao ' s Cultural Revolution to the rise of Christianity and birth of Newtonian Science after the Dark Ages, humanity has been fumbling with this core dilemma of how we relate to our environment.

"Brilliantly conceived....[A] tour de force in historical writing."—Ian Kershaw Majestic and lyrically written, *The Conquest of Nature* traces the rise of Germany through the development of water and landscape. David Blackbourn begins his morality tale in the mid-1700s, with the epic story of Frederick the Great, who attempted—by importing the great scientific minds of the West and by harnessing the power of his army—to transform the uninhabitable marshlands of his scattered kingdom into a modern state. Chronicling the great engineering projects that reshaped the mighty Rhine, the emergence of an ambitious German navy, and the development of hydroelectric power to fuel Germany's convulsive industrial growth before World War I, Blackbourn goes on to show how Nazi racial policies rested on German ideas of mastery of the natural world. Filled with striking reproductions of paintings, maps, and photographs, this grand work of modern history links culture, politics, and the environment in an exploration of the perils faced by nations that attempt to conquer nature.

The modern idea of 'mastery' over nature always had its critics, whether their motives were aesthetic, religious or environmentalist. By investigating how the most fundamental element - water - was 'conquered' by draining fens and marshes, straightening the courses of rivers, building high dams and exploiting hydro-electric power, *The Conquest of Nature* explores how over the last 250 years, the German people have shaped their natural environment and how the landscapes they created took a powerful hold on the German imagination. From Frederick the Great of Prussia to Johann Gottfried Tulla, 'the man who tamed the wild Rhine' in the nineteenth century to Otto Intze, 'master dambuilder' of the years around 1900, to the Nazis who set out to colonise 'living space' in the East, this groundbreaking study shows that while mastery over nature delivers undoubted benefits, it has often come at a tremendous cost to both the natural environment and human life.

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Taming the Great South Land is the first full-length landscape history of an entire continent occupied by one nation. It is also, in William Lines's telling, a brutal and controversial story. Examining the ways European society rapidly, radically transformed Australia's physical and human landscapes, the author writes candidly of repeated environmental devastation--from the early slaughter of seals and whales to the destructive spread of sheep, through gold rushes and land settlement to British nuclear tests and the modern mining and timber industries. Lines shows how Enlightenment ideas of progress, economic growth, and development were reconstructed on Australian soil, and how the promise of the conquest of nature became a mockery in fact, resulting in the mass dislocation and destruction of indigenous populations. This shocking narrative, thoroughly researched and accessibly written, combines environmental, social, and political history to hard-hitting effect. *Taming the Great South Land* is the first full-length landscape history of an entire continent occupied by one nation. It is also, in William Lines's telling, a brutal and controversial story. Examining the ways European society rapidly, radically transformed Australia's physical and human landscapes, the author writes candidly of repeated environmental devastation--from the early slaughter of seals and whales to the destructive spread of sheep, through gold rushes and land settlement to British nuclear tests and the modern mining and timber industries. Lines shows how Enlightenment ideas of progress, economic growth, and development were reconstructed on Australian soil, and how the promise of the conquest of nature became a mockery in fact, resulting in the mass dislocation and destruction of indigenous populations. This shocking narrative, thoroughly researched and accessibly written, combines environmental, social, and political history to hard-hitting effect.

Winner of the 2012 George Perkins Marsh Prize for Best Book in Environmental History In the twentieth century, the Mekong Delta has emerged as one of Vietnam ' s most important economic regions. Its swamps, marshes, creeks, and canals have played a major role in Vietnam ' s turbulent past, from the struggles of colonialism to the Cold War and the present day. Quagmire considers these struggles, their antecedents, and their legacies through the lens of environmental history. Beginning with the French conquest in the 1860s, colonial reclamation schemes and pacification efforts centered on the development of a dense network of new canals to open land for agriculture. These projects helped precipitate economic and environmental crises in the 1930s, and subsequent struggles after 1945 led to the balkanization of the delta into a patchwork of regions controlled by the Viet Minh, paramilitary religious sects, and the struggling Franco-Vietnamese government. After 1954, new settlements were built with American funds and equipment in a crash program intended to solve continuing economic and environmental problems. Finally, the American military collapse in Vietnam is revealed as not simply a failure of policy makers but also a failure to understand the historical, political, and environmental complexity of the spaces American troops attempted to occupy and control. By exploring the delta as a quagmire in both natural and political terms, Biggs shows how engineered transformations of the Mekong Delta landscape - channelized rivers, a complex canal system, hydropower development, deforestation - have interacted with equally complex transformations in the geopolitics of the region. Quagmire delves beyond common stereotypes to present an intricate, rich history that shows how closely political and ecological issues are intertwined in the human interactions with the water environment in the Mekong Delta. Watch the book trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gp1-UltZqsk>

"In this richly narrated and authoritative work--combining environmental and societal history--Giulio Boccaletti begins with the earliest civilizations of sedentary farmers on the banks of the Nile, the Tigris, and the Euphrates. He describes how these societies were made possible by sea level changes from the last glacial melt. He examines how this sedentary farming led to irrigation and multiple cropping, which, in turn, resulted in an explosion in population and the specialization of labor. We see how irrigation structure led to social structure--inventions like the calendar sprung from agricultural necessity; how, in Ancient Greece, communal ownership of wells laid the

groundwork for democracy; how the Greek and Roman experience dealing with water security was the seed for tax systems. And he makes clear how the modern world as we know it began with a legal structure for the development of water infrastructure. In its scope and clarity, *Water: A Biography* provides a fascinating framework through which we can more fully understand society's relationship to, and fundamental reliance on, the most elemental substance on our planet"--

New York Times Bestseller From the most celebrated heir to Darwin comes a groundbreaking book on evolution, the summa work of Edward O. Wilson's legendary career. Sparking vigorous debate in the sciences, *The Social Conquest of Earth* upends "the famous theory that evolution naturally encourages creatures to put family first" (Discover). Refashioning the story of human evolution, Wilson draws on his remarkable knowledge of biology and social behavior to demonstrate that group selection, not kin selection, is the premier driving force of human evolution. In a work that James D. Watson calls "a monumental exploration of the biological origins of the human condition," Wilson explains how our innate drive to belong to a group is both a "great blessing and a terrible curse" (Smithsonian). Demonstrating that the sources of morality, religion, and the creative arts are fundamentally biological in nature, the renowned Harvard University biologist presents us with the clearest explanation ever produced as to the origin of the human condition and why it resulted in our domination of the Earth's biosphere.

A vivid, searching journey into California's capture of water and soil--the epic story of a people's defiance of nature and the wonders, and ruin, it has wrought Mark Arax is from a family of Central Valley farmers, a writer with deep ties to the land who has watched the battles over water intensify even as California lurches from drought to flood and back again. In *The Dreamt Land*, he travels the state to explore the one-of-a-kind distribution system, built in the 1940s, '50s and '60s, that is straining to keep up with California's relentless growth. *The Dreamt Land* weaves reportage, history and memoir to confront the "Golden State" myth in riveting fashion. No other chronicler of the West has so deeply delved into the empires of agriculture that drink so much of the water. The nation's biggest farmers--the nut king, grape king and citrus queen--tell their story here for the first time. Arax, the native son, is persistent and tough as he treks from desert to delta, mountain to valley. What he finds is hard earned, awe-inspiring, tragic and revelatory. In the end, his compassion for the land becomes an elegy to the dream that created California and now threatens to undo it.

In the nineteenth century, the Qing empire experienced a period of profound turmoil caused by an unprecedented conjunction of natural disasters, domestic rebellions, and foreign incursions. The imperial government responded to these calamities by introducing an array of new policies and institutions to bolster its power across its massive territories. In the process, Qing officials launched campaigns for natural resource development, seeking to take advantage of the unexploited lands, waters, and minerals of the empire's vast hinterlands and borderlands. In this book, Peter B. Lavelle uses the life and career of Chinese statesman Zuo Zongtang (1812–1885) as a lens to explore the environmental history of this era. Although known for his pacification campaigns against rebel movements, Zuo was at the forefront of the nineteenth-century quest for natural resources. Influenced by his knowledge of nature, geography, and technology, he created government bureaus and oversaw state-funded projects to improve agriculture, sericulture, and other industries in territories across the empire. His work forged new patterns of colonial development in the Qing empire's northwest borderlands, including Xinjiang, at a time when other empires were scrambling to secure access to resources around the globe. Weaving a narrative across the span of Zuo's lifetime, *The Profits of Nature* offers a unique approach to understanding the dynamic relationship among social crises, colonialism, and the natural world during a critical juncture in Chinese history, between the high tide of imperial power in the eighteenth century and the challenges of modern state-building in the twentieth century.

France achieved national unity much later than is commonly supposed. For a hundred years and more after the Revolution, millions of peasants lived on as if in a timeless world, their existence little different from that of the generations before them. The author of this lively, often witty, and always provocative work traces how France underwent a veritable crisis of civilization in the early years of the French Republic as traditional attitudes and practices crumbled under the forces of modernization. Local roads and railways were the decisive factors, bringing hitherto remote and inaccessible regions into easy contact with markets and major centers of the modern world. The products of industry rendered many peasant skills useless, and the expanding school system taught not only the language of the dominant culture but its values as well, among them patriotism. By 1914, France had finally become *La Patrie* in fact as it had so long been in name.

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