

**Review: Restoration and History: The Search for a Usable Environmental Past
By Hall, Marcus (Ed.)**

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Hall, Marcus (Ed). *Restoration and History: The Search for a Usable Environmental Past*. New York, London: Routledge, 2010. 330 Pp ISBN 978-0-415-87176-1.

Restoration and History: The Search for a Usable Environmental Past is a brilliant collection of articles edited by Marcus Hall on environment, history, restoration, and its political usages. This collection of twenty seven articles explores how a consideration of time can improve the practice of environmental restoration. To put simply, the book is an application of what generally people say, "You can't touch the same water twice". Based on this premise, these brilliantly argued articles call for the preservation of forests and ecological pasts, and critically look at the consumerist conception of nature and resources. This also means that the ecological destructions carried out by human movements throughout the history constitute an area of enquiry and concern for the book.

Structurally, the book is divided into six parts in chronological and topical order, with each chapter working on the broad premise of considering the pasts of restoration as future possibility. The crisis of and importance for the preservation of original natural conditions is debated at length. The book also explores the devastation brought on to the nature, and seeks possible remedies for bringing back the lost culture of forests, fauna, flora and other ecosystems. These themes and ideas are contextualized in the broad spectrum of Gospel, enlightenment, architecture, sculpture, painting and music for bringing back what the authors think better ways of restoration.

Also, many chapters extensively examine case studies from history such as the Rhine River, South China Sea etc and critically look at the role of human interaction in changing the ecological landscapes. The book argues that any efforts to reclaim the lost originality of particular must consider the efforts of our past generation and bring into debate their methodology. This means, the state initiatives based on modern scientific awareness tend to negate traditional knowledge systems of past societies, and bring back the question of originality from commercial viewpoints. Commercial viewpoints are inspired by human desire to dominate over time and space by transforming nature into a commodity, and therefore it makes negative impacts. Overall, the book is critical towards these attempts, and argues for the restoration of time back into our efforts to preserve landscapes. This attitude is important to uphold the traditional systems of knowledge and our histories to bring back pasts of ecological restoration for better future.

At the end, *Restoration and History* is a combined attempt of historians, anthropologists, sociologist, philosophers, geographers, and ecologists to address the questions of ecosystems'

health and integrity from an interdisciplinary perspective. One of the central premises of the book is that, historical fidelity, one of four keystone concepts defining good ecological restoration, can be achieved by being faithful to historical knowledge. As well, the book argues that just growing trees would not be restoration unless it is done carefully by respecting scientific values and natural sensibilities. And, the authors hope that the present book will contribute to achieve a rich ecological restoration by respecting our pasts.

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