well-researched areas as landlord–tenant relations or Irish republicanism, these articles do go a long way towards justifying the programmatic aim of the collection.

However, the collection is less successful in achieving its second goal of promoting interdisciplinary studies precisely because, as the editors noted, historians have been reluctant to utilize theoretical constructs from other disciplines. Not surprisingly, the best examples of interdisciplinary enquiry contained in the volume come from a literary scholar and a social anthropologist. Angela Bourke makes compelling use of folklore, literature and history to demonstrate the way in which the stories and tradition of Saint Brigid were appropriated and utilized to support particular clerical and bourgeois values in the late nineteenth century. Marilyn Cohen effectively combines her own discipline of social anthropology with economic history to trace the family and household patterns of Irish emigrants from the linen town of Guildford in north-east Ulster to Greenwich, New York, in the United States. In some of the other contributions, however, the exposition of the theoretical framework at times takes precedence over a lucid explanation of the primary argument. The editors are surely correct to note that 'Ireland has been grossly under-theorized' (6), but a more subtle presentation of the theoretical underpinning might make more of an impact on sceptical historians reluctant to move out of their 'particularist empiricism' (6).

One of the reasons which might be offered in defence of a more explicit articulation of this theoretical framework is that it facilitates the realization of the third aim of the volume, the mainstreaming of Irish Studies. A number of the contributors bring in theoretical debates which have been formulated in other national contexts and use the Irish case as a means of testing their explanatory power. Kathryn Conrad builds on the debate over the nature of the public sphere to analyse the manipulation of information in the public domain in Northern Ireland, while Jane Gray fits her study of the nineteenth-century economy of County Cavan into the wider discussion of the impact of proto-industrialization and de-industrialization on rural economies. Marilyn Cohen's work approaches the issue of mainstreaming Irish Studies from the perspective of a comparative study. Her article underlines the potential for further comparative analysis of the Irish experience.

This volume raises provocative questions about the theoretical framework of the disciplines incorporated into Irish Studies. In particular, it suggests myriad possibilities for widening its heretofore rather narrow theoretical base. The majority of Irish historians may ignore the call to theorize or to utilize gender as a tool of analysis, but if even a few respond this collection of essays will have made an important contribution to expanding our understanding of Irish history and society.

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Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (1998), x + 634 (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, $35.00).

The originality of Daniel T. Rodgers's *Atlantic Crossings* is evident from its unconventional opening. Whereas most studies of social policy would commence with a portrait of urban blight or working conditions in Chicago's packing houses, proceeding then to a study of the social reformers' attempts to ameliorate such conditions, Rodgers chooses to begin his study guiding the reader through the stalls at the Paris Exposition of 1900. From these no doubt prosaic and

humdrum displays erupts an array of proposals for social change. Commencing thus, Rodgers invites the reader to think anew about the Progressive era and to cast aside assumptions, some of which may even have been shaped by his own earlier work. Further, placing the reader at the heart of the exposition and mentioning Henry Adams in doing so, Rodgers teases the reader into recognizing that he may actually be turning the pages of his own autobiography – *The Education of the American Progressive*.

Many historians will remember Rodgers's 1982 dissection of Progressivist historiography, in which he asserted that 'Progressivism as an ideology is nowhere to be found' and that progressive social thought consisted only of constellations or clusters of ideas towards which Progressives gravitated.[1] Now we find that it is possible to talk of a Progressive social politics that was meaningful not just for the United States, but also for Britain, Germany and France, and basically for the northern Atlantic world. Yet not only might one find clusters of reform ideas in the United States, there were many different kinds of reform in these other countries as well. 'In France the pioneers of social politics styled themselves radicals, *solidaristes*, economic *interventionistes*, or simply proponents of *la réforme sociale*. In England they went under the name of the "new Liberals", "new radicals", Christian Socialists, Fabians or "collectivists". In Germany, a dozen rival socio-political parties and pressure groups constructed themselves around permutations of the core term *sozial*' (52). One may wonder whether Rodgers has contrived a new conjuring trick, pulling out of his hat one well-formed and rather attractive bird, when, after reading the historiography of American Progressivism alone, a flock of mangled pigeons straight from numerous dingy cities might have been anticipated.

The strengths of this volume are so manifold that they cannot be captured in the single review, and interested readers should, in addition to reading the volume itself, take in the compelling H-Net Review symposium that accompanied its publication.[2] This reviewer found Rodgers' assault on American exceptionalism welcome and his account of the multiple transatlantic connections among the hosts of social reformers, drawn from as many archives, awe inspiring. Certain passages, like that of Randolph Bourne travelling through Europe on the eve of the 'explosion' in 1914, were luminous. In addition, Rodgers's description of 'crossings' that occurred in both directions produced fresh interpretations of some old topics. A case in point is his reading of Roosevelt's New Deal, here described as a 'culmination', with Americans, dusting off ideas that had been developed earlier in the century across the Atlantic world, taking the lead in social policy (though this apparent leadership role may result from the author's pushing of imperialism and racism to the margins, so that fascist and Nazi initiatives appear as occasional influences, and not essential to the dialogue).

The work is innovative not just for its attempt to reconceive Progressive politics. It also continues Rodgers' larger enterprise of refamiliarizing scholars raised on the social historical monograph with intellectual history, though guided by a clear understanding of the actual achievements of social historians of the 1970s. However, an awareness of Atlantic connections is not itself new. Old-style intellectual history had Men of Good Hope getting their ideas from abroad (though generally the ideas seemed to flow only in a westerly direction from Hegel to

[1] Rodgers, 'In search of Progressivism', *Reviews in American History*, X, 4 (December 1982), 127.

[2] The symposium was posted on H-State, H-Urban, H-Sci-Med-Tech (October 1999).

Green to Dewey).[3] Social histories of Progressivism had focused attention elsewhere, honing in on the policy-makers, determining who they were, whom they represented and what their intentions might have been. Rodgers has taken us back – not to the men of good hope but to others, often the middle-level social policy wonks (artists caught up in the beauty of social form) who made pilgrimages back and forth across the Atlantic – and not with Hegel in their knapsacks but rather a Settlement House's baseline study or the Beveridge Report.

Working outwards from the World's Fair does suggest that Rodgers might have pursued other narratives and connections, and that this work represents a beginning not an ending in the writing of this kind of history. He has written as much in his response to those who have noted the absence of race, gender and empire in the study.[4] One wonders, however, whether such histories can coexist floating along different currents, or whether they do not begin to muddy the Atlantic waters. Moreover, a selection of topics that are conspicuous by their absence here might have summoned up different connections. A focus on temperance would have brought in conflicts over race both in the British Empire and the United States; it might also have cast the relative level of American state intervention in a different light. A focus on birth control might have found a Margaret Sanger on her way to study population growth in India, while the use of prostitution as a point of departure might have revealed a Teddy Roosevelt troubled by American prostitutes in Shanghai and Japanese ones in Sinclair's Chicago. And focusing on issues relating to disease would have made the Atlantic seem like a single Petri dish.

But what may be most absent is the anxiety that such connections could elicit. Henry Adams, confronted by electric generators in Paris, wondered 'where in hell' the world was heading. So, paraphrasing Ranajit Guha, we might ask whether we can 'afford to leave anxiety out of the story'. Doing so promotes an image of society 'as a sort of machine operated by a crew who know only how to decide but not to doubt, who know only action but no circumspection, and, in the event of a breakdown, only fear and no anxiety'. What we do not see in this volume is the 'crew agonizing' (along with Adams's incarnation of Teufelsdrockh) 'over the immensity of things in a world whose limits are not known to them'.[5] Such anxieties would help account for the fact that the Progressive era was the high noon of American racism and imperialism, and for the related concern Americans evinced in the aftermath of emancipation about the need to learn from others (most notably the British) how they had surmounted the 'problems' of freedom. The cover of this splendidly produced volume bears the picture of an ocean liner; this reviewer will suggest that it is the *Titanic*, about to take with it to the bottom of the ocean W. T. Stead, who wrote about every manifestation of corruption on both sides of the Atlantic (and elsewhere), and whose writings highlighted the sexual, racial and class anxieties of many Progressives.

Comparative historians, *Atlantic Crossings* informs us, now need to begin considering how societies intersect – to reveal connections. Rodgers notes that 'The crux of comparative history is difference. By masking interdependencies between nations, freezing historically contingent processes into ideal types, and laying across them a grid of social and political characteristics, the method of comparison throws a powerful light on differences.' While embracing this point

[3] Daniel Aaron, *Men of Good Hope* (Oxford, 1961); see also Kenneth O. Morgan, 'The future at work: Anglo–American Progressivism' in H. C. Allen and Roger Thompson, *Contrast and Connection* (Ohio, 1976).

[4] See Rodgers's rejoinder in the H-Net Symposium.

[5] Ranajit Guha, 'Not at home in empire', *Critical Inquiry*, XXIII (Spring 1997), 487–8.

and the need for an understanding of connections, or 'the world between', which make differences 'historically interesting', it is also important to remember Peter Kolchin's assertion that 'most historical judgments are implicitly comparative history'.[6] As such, the connections we make (or search for) comprise part of a particular comparative matrix, and presume something beyond – the unconnected (the world outside). There is a limit to what we can look for and the kinds of connections we can establish, of course, but those limits give high definition to the things we connect and examine. What also needs consideration, then, is whether the pursuit of connections can be extended so as to reconfigure our comparisons.

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John H. M. Laslett, *Colliers Across the Sea: A Comparative Study of Class Formation in Scotland and the American Midwest, 1830–1924* (2000), xiv + 413 (University of Illinois Press, Urbana, $49.95, paperback $18.95).

John H. M. Laslett takes for his subject two groups of related coal miners – the miners of Lanarkshire, Scotland and the largely British immigrant miners of Northern Illinois. *Colliers Across the Sea* demonstrates that, despite both the different pace of industrialization in Britain and the United States and the fact that American miners were richer and more upwardly mobile, colliers on both sides of the Atlantic showed many similar manifestations of class, diverging only on the question of party allegiance.

In chronological chapters, Laslett nicely documents the modernization of mining on both sides of the Atlantic. Nineteenth-century mining began with pick-and-shovel operations, lit by Davy lamps and conducted by artisans who had face-to-face contact with coal owners. Immigration from Ireland to Scotland and from eastern Europe to America added newcomers with the potential to stratify the workforce. In the 1870s, depressions in the coal industry resulted in pay cuts and strikes, and employers fought back by forming their own associations. Mining gradually became more complicated and controlled as shafts were sunk deeper. By the 1920s absentee owners managed a minutely orchestrated progress across the coal seam, conducting an army of the semi-skilled, who wielded boring machines and operated by electric light.

Along with this wrenching process of change, coal miners – no matter whether they lived in Illinois or in southern Scotland – faced continuities of discomfort. Falling roofs, explosions, runaway tubs and crashing cages made underground work, and financial survival of mine families, precarious. Both British and American workers had to contend with truck shops or company stores, buying supplies at inflated prices or facing the threat of dismissal. Although company-owned housing, with the possibility of eviction at any time, was more prevalent in Scotland than in Northern Illinois, workers and their wives often lived in small and rather squalid shacks that at the very least lacked cultural amenities. It is not surprising that both British and American miners were avid unionists.

Laslett's narrative is strongest in the book's early chapters, which deal with the towns of Wishaw and Larkhall in Scotland. Working with census material, the records of various societies and mine inspectors' reports, Laslett shows that, even in the period in which miners were most like artisans, coal owners attempted to impose some degree of social control through regulation

[6] Peter Kolchin, 'Comparing American history', *Reviews in American History*, x, 4 (December 1982), 65.