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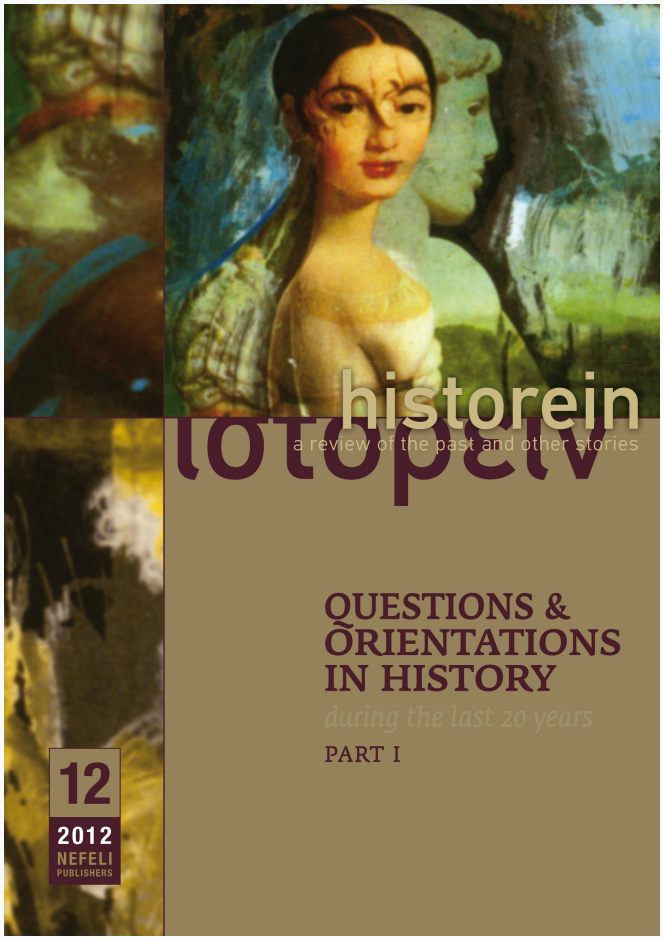

National, Imperial, Colonial and the Political: British Imperial Histories and their Descendants

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National, Imperial, Colonial and the Political: British Imperial Histories and their Descendants

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Is it an exciting moment to be an imperial historian? "Newfound vigour, dynamism, diversity and even fashionability" are some of the characteristics that imperial history is experiencing, marvelled a historian of British imperial history, in a recent reader about the "new imperial histories", who added that he was dazzled by the "striking variety as well as sheer volume of new work in the field".[1] That may be, but one has to take sides on which kind of imperial history one should celebrate. Is it a "new imperial history" or traditional "old imperial history"? Even more complicated seems the task of explaining what is "new" about the new imperial history, or the imperial turn as it is also known, and it is equally difficult to explain what is new about the "old" imperial history, which is also experiencing a revival. All along, imperial history has been a highly contested political issue, which often identified its practitioners as proimperialists, something which led historians and other scholars who studied formerly colonised countries or regions in the second quarter of the twentieth century to drop the imperial tag in favour of "area studies" – changing of course the point of view and method of research – to denote an anti-imperial attitude towards the study of the imperial experience. Furthermore, during the last 20 or so years, in which the historical profession was transformed by the so-called "turns", be they cultural, linguistic, imperial or other, the political nature of imperial history has rather intensified than abated.

In every moment of the expansion, consolidation, partial or total loss of the British Empire, the languages of imperialism as well as the meanings of this empire were fluid between political parties, the general public and wider scholarship. The historical works produced since histo-

ry writing emerged as an academic discipline responded to the different and variant discourses on empire and imperialism, as well as to the developments in historical methodologies, and to political circumstances. This article discusses pivotal moments of British imperial history, after a brief reference to the development of imperial history since the early period of historical writing. The reference to discussions as well as to books is selective and attempts to exhibit in each period the works which characterise the general arguments, the perceptions of ideas by the academic environment and the political resonance of the historiographical issues examined.

The emerging historical discipline and the canon of old imperial history

At the outset, Thomas Babington Macaulay, the greatest guardian of the pre-eminence of the history of the British nation and initiator of professional historical writing in England, was conspicuous in keeping things in their place. Macaulay did not want to pollute either his art or the nation with alien and remote peoples, albeit on their way to becoming civilised, that is modernised, and denoted that the empire should not be an object of historical enquiry. Catherine Hall suggests that Macaulay's "island story" "was paradigmatic in sharply distinguishing between the nation, a place that could be at home with its history, and the empire, a place for the people without history".[2] Macaulay made clear that his history "told of the glories of a prosperous modern commercial nation, of the kind of society that some already enjoyed and others could hope to emulate".[3] The peoples of the empire could hope to acquire history, but their societies could not be the subject of history because they had not yet achieved modernity. Macaulay, Hall notes, believed that "history belonged to the colonizers" and he was determined to give his readers a modern and civilised self to aspire to and identify with.[4] In so doing, Macaulay set the agenda for historians not only of the nineteenth but also for much of the twentieth centuries. The historical discipline was to examine British domestic history – a distinct subject from imperial histories, which were to appear later in the nineteenth century.

During the next 40 years, the empire truly became "great", adding to the old empire more places in Africa and Asia, by war and conquest. The term "Greater Britain" was initially coined as early as 1868 by one of the main advocates of imperialism, the politician Sir Charles Dilke, who described this empire, and especially the white colonies, as "an amplifier of England's voice to the world".[5] The historian J.R. Seeley, in his famous lectures published as *The Expansion of England* in 1883, appropriated the term "Greater Britain" and envisaged a single British nation extending to the white colonies beyond the British Isles, united by "blood and religion".[6] Both Dilke's and Seeley's beliefs about the empire denoted a benevolent mission which would bring representative institutions around the world. The empire thus had a moral dimension, which stood apart from ideas of conquest and violence, and it would also contribute to wealth at home. Furthermore, the fact that Seeley's British imperial history was at most British national history abroad, which was often taken as world history, led to the immense popularity of the book at the time of its publication and to its extraordinary political influence.[7]

At the turn of nineteenth century, the debate over the empire heated up yet again. The argument of the freeborn Englishman going off to establish representative institutions around the world lost currency after the Jameson raid of 1895 (the first ineffective attempt of the British to over-

throw the Transvaal Republic) and, of course, as the news of the treatment of the Boers and native South Africans during the Boer war arrived home. The war caused "a loss of moral content, from which it never completely recovered",[8] and, as a consequence, a new perception of Britain's mission was necessary. A renewed anti-imperialist spirit, both political and economic, developed at the same time that a popular imperialism and jingoistic aura were dominant and any differing opinion could be considered unpatriotic.[9] The strongest and most famous challenge on the political and economic benefits of imperialism of that time came from J.A. Hobson's critique *Imperialism*,[10] which contested the very idea of the expansion of democracy or the alleviation the white man's burden, as the mythology of the English nation would have it. The military power and organisation required for imperial conquest and occupation risked the advent of military autocracy and did not promote democracy, he argued. At the same time, investment overseas with lucrative returns was depriving the domestic economy of earnings which could have been gained if there were a redistribution of wealth via progressive taxation to be spent on social reforms.[11] Many other liberals and socialists opposed the Boer war, which they considered to be against the principles of "self-government and enlightened imperialism".[12] Most of them feared that such practices abroad would influence domestic institutions and lead to illiberal government in England itself. Similar concerns were expressed by the Fabians in the 1900 pamphlet *Fabianism and the Empire*, edited by George Bernard Shaw, where they opposed the militarist and speculative character of the new empire, which they criticised as unconstitutional,[13] and ideally envisaged an enlightened and disinterested exercise of authority. Yet, even within the Fabian Society the majority "regretted the South African War but found it unavoidable".[14] Neither Hobson nor the Fabians were anti-imperialists in the sense that they wanted to liquidate the empire. Rather, they wanted reforms which would benefit the indigenous peoples and establish nonauthoritarian government in the colonies.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as historical writing was becoming professionalised, imperial history found a place in mainstream universities in Britain (Oxford in 1905, Cambridge and London in 1919), English-language universities were set up in Hong Kong and South Africa and historical journals were published in the dominions.[15] Imperial histories written before and during the First World war by historians and politicians called for the federation or even the unification of the empire and the "fulfillment of Britain's Imperial destiny".[16] However, reflecting the grave contradictions of the new stage the British Empire entered after the war, imperial history entered a new phase in the interwar period. The historical circumstances sketched a blurred picture of the empire. On the one hand, the empire not only remained intact until 1939 but it also reached its apogee during the interwar period and it was augmented by the mandated territories ceded to it by the League of Nations, giving the impression that it was a permanent institution in British public life. However, at the same time, various anticolonial nationalist movements gathered steam, especially as the great contribution of the dependent colonies to the war effort – they provided troops and labour corps – left nationalist activists in various parts of the empire with the expectation that the colonies would be repaid after the war with political representation and, finally, independence.[17] At the same time, the dominions demanded equal status – a demand which was finally attained in 1931 through the Statute of Westminster. The white populations of the dominions, which by that time enjoyed partial self-government, developed a strong national assertiveness that led to the creation of the modern Commonwealth, whose members were no longer bound by British laws.

The historiography of the interwar period reflected general questions entwined with political colonial issues concerning accountability, such as whether the colonies should be under the supervision of the British parliament or the League of Nations, whether there should be a local administrative reform or whether it was time to retire completely from remote places in the world. At the same time, there was revival of the idea of the British colonial mission and an affirmation of the moral purpose of the empire.[18] To oppose this jingoistic perception of the empire, the Hogarth Press, created by the Bloomsbury circle, published books and pamphlets attacking the colonial administration and British rule in Africa and Asia, and echoed the views of that part of general and intellectual British society willing to admit the exploitative, inhumane aspects of imperial practice.[19] In the 1930s, a few historians also studied non-European nationalist movements such as in India and Palestine, in an attempt to understand these movements on their own terms. However, mainstream historians dealing with constitutional history emphasised the "dual duty" of British imperial officers "to protect indigenous subjects and to promote economic development of the world at large".[20] In another case, they indicated "the moral capacity of the British Empire to shape a better world and to help dependent peoples advance towards self-government".[21] In 1929 the first volume of the *Cambridge History of the British Empire* was published; the series was completed nine volumes later in 1959. The spirit of this work in its entirety was a Whiggish celebratory history of "a great empire which was built with so little show or use of force", as the Cambridge professor and its first editor, E.A. Benians, noted.[22] Very characteristically, Sir Charles Lucas, the author of the introduction to the first volume, made clear that the expansion of the empire, which forced British officials to rule huge non-British populations, called into play those unique English characteristics of "the capacity to rule, which is among the Englishman's best qualities" and "the sense of trusteeship for coloured people".[23] Some conclude that most of the series' writers "encouraged consensus on what was believed to be the underlying, essentially noble, purpose of the Empire".[24]

On the whole, as David Fieldhouse explains, the canon of old imperial history, which was established in late nineteenth century and epitomised by the completion of the *Cambridge History* in the late 1950s, had the aim "to explain how and why the metropolitan states had grown from small European societies into world powers and also to analyse what significance this expansion had for the metropolis and dependencies alike". Traditional imperial history, argues Fieldhouse, did that by examining the reasons and motives behind European expansion, the process or mechanics of empire building, imperial organisation and the costs and benefits of the empire.[25] In other words, old imperial history was organised around the "subject", which was the metropole, and the "object" of observation, which was the colonies. Its main purpose, others have argued, was to serve as an "ideological adjunct" of the empire by "contributing historical insights into past exercises in overseas power that could be used to inform and inspire contemporaries to shoulder their obligations as rulers of a world-wide imperial system".[26]

The legacy of Robinson and Gallagher

It is not a surprise, thus, that the most significant turning point for British historiography of the empire – the publication of John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson's 1953 article "The Imperialism of Free

Trade" – came at a time when decolonisation was well under way and the mission of imperial history serving as an "appendage to imperial politics" was no longer valid.[27] William Roger Louis argues that this article, and its authors' subsequent book (with Alice Denny) on *Africa and the Victorians*,[28] brought a "conceptual revolution" by insisting on the chronological continuity of the forces of imperialism throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, opposing Hobson's view that there was a difference between mid- and late Victorian imperialism.[29] Robinson and Gallagher introduced and expanded the notion of an informal empire of trade and commerce and emphasised the degrees of political control of places where there was no acquisition of territory in a constitutional sense. They also focused on the interaction between the British and indigenous peoples without – as the case used to be – accepting the assumption that "the springs of European expansion lay wholly within Europe".[30]

The difference this article made was that it opened a different angle on the study of the empire by viewing it not exclusively as a territorial entity but as an economic relationship with local collaborators and, most importantly, turning attention to the peculiarities of the imperial centres, the structures of indigenous societies and the evolution of politics and society in the periphery. In this way, the colonies were not the passive victims of events in the metropole but active agents which could codetermine the relationship with both their massive subject populations and British imperialists.[31] Furthermore, by insisting on the notion of the continuity of formal and informal empire, they gave a line of interpretation not only for nineteenth-century British imperialism but also for twentieth-century decolonisation and, indeed, even for the American empire. As Louis notes, these committed British socialists writing at a time of great anxiety about the impact of American assistance in Europe through the Marshall plan and in the aftermath of the Suez crisis of 1956 managed to relate situation of the national uprisings in the 1950s and decolonisation with that of mid- to late nineteenth-century Victorians in Africa.[32] Mid-Victorian "trade not rule" anti-imperialism was false, Robinson and Gallagher claimed. Instead they supported the idea that "by informal means if possible, or by formal means if necessary, British paramountcy was steadily upheld".[33] Robinson pointed out, in a subsequent essay, that British imperialists preferred to manipulate rather than directly dominate, because that was the way to have maximum return at minimum cost and risk.[34] Therefore, the imposition of formal empire represented a failure of this policy and was adopted reluctantly when informal control broke down. This explains the differences in various areas of the empire and the successful version as in the case of white colonists who were willing collaborators – whereas in Africa and Asia the absence of a local bourgeoisie meant imperialists had to turn to ruling oligarchies and local elites. The ensuing destabilisation of local political systems was the direct effect of these policies in Africa and Asia and left imperialists with the choice either to retreat or to take over the ruling of a colony. Criticism of Robinson and Gallagher came in the late 1960s and early 1970s,[35] when a whole new generation of historians were nurtured by these new stimulating ideas about what the empire really had been.

Postcolonial Britain: new imperial historians

The initial period after the Second World war was one of rapid decolonisation for Britain and the remaining European imperial powers. From the late 1950s to early 1960s, much of Africa gained

independence from Britain, and by the mid-1970s Britain had decamped from its remaining colonies around the world – often after violent struggles with nationalist groups which opposed British occupation. This was despite Clement Attlee's claim that Britain stood out among the imperial powers in history as "the only empire that voluntarily surrendered its hegemony over subject peoples".[36] Furthermore, the dynamic flow of immigrants from the former colonies after the Second World war made the peoples of the empire visible domestically and raised the issue of race disrupting what many wanted to believe was "a hitherto homogeneous white society".[37] Some argued that decolonisation and immigration to Britain combined produced "recurrent bouts of anxiety about 'the condition of Britain', questioning who belongs to the nation; what does that belonging entail; and what does it mean to be British?"[38] Empire, the colonies and immigration were gradually becoming major political issues which were further contested in the general political climate of the cold war tensions between the superpowers.

In this context, imperial history became a "politically incorrect" term and was replaced by titles – in university programmes, curricula and matriculation examinations as well as in general studies – such as "third world studies" or "area studies" both in Britain and the USA. It has been argued that area studies is the legacy of Robinson and Gallagher's work, in that it responded to the "pressing need in the polarised cold war world to know more about the nations and societies that were breaking free from European domination".[39] What was eroded from the 1950s onwards was the basic assumption which held the intellectual unity of old imperial history, that is, the idea that colonial self-government would lead to postindependence associations such as the Commonwealth. Once this expectation faded, especially given that even countries which became independent from the empire and were eligible to become members of the Commonwealth declared their reluctance to do so and their willingness to become totally separated from Britain, old imperial history as an evolution towards institutions aspiring to continuity and unity with the metropole was completely discredited. In their place, as David Fieldhouse has argued, "the proper unit of research and analysis was the individual society in the process of becoming a nation, not the colony being laboriously prepared to qualify as a Member of the Commonwealth".[40] Mid-twentieth-century imperial histories thus stressed the exploitative relation of the empire, with the west bringing under examination large parts of the world to be studied as historical entities before, or regardless of, the advent of the Europeans. Moreover, texts by scholars from former colonies such as the work of philosopher and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, the earlier work of historian and social theorist C.L.R. James and poet Aimé Césaire gained worldwide acclaim because they opposed the dominant image of old imperial history which depicted non-Europeans as backward and uncivilised.[41]

From 1971 to 1980, Gallagher held the Vere Harmsworth chair in imperial history at Cambridge – he had been Beit professor at Oxford since 1963 – and Robinson succeeded him to the same university chair at Oxford in the same year.[42] A new generation of historians (often known as the Cambridge school of imperial historians, which had a focus on India) worked on the assumption that the British Empire was continuous, be it formal or informal; that it was not only territorially specified; that Europe, and more specifically Britain, was not the only or the most important imperialist player and, most of all, that the imperialist experience involved active agents and negotiable relationships at every stage of interaction between the conquerors and conquered. Critics of Robinson and Gallagher's views did not seriously undermine their influence. In 1976 a collection of es-

says presented the criticisms for and against their theories, but what is obvious from subsequent publications is that their legacy survived until the end of the twentieth century parallel to the more dynamic developments in the field, as we shall see.[43]

The appearance of the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* in 1972 marked the beginning of a new era in imperial history. This journal, which remained unchallenged until 2000, became the flagship publication of the field of new imperial history. Methodologically it was determined to develop, alter and even seriously oppose the arguments of Robinson and Gallagher, who were members of the editorial board, as one can see in the first issue on methodology.[44] A new generation of historians – a few of them connected to the journal and involved in the Robinson and Gallagher dispute – provided the first samples of examining the empire from a different angle than the traditional imperial historians, at least in the sense that they distanced themselves from the moral mission of liberalism that Britain allegedly had towards the colonies and concentrated on the interaction of the British Empire with indigenous political, economic and social institutions, and the effect of British imperialism on them.[45]

Transformation and challenges

As a general transformation of the historical discipline took place from the late 1950s well into the 1980s, social history came to the ascendant.[46] Social, political and economic history was being approached in an interdisciplinary way, which was also the result of British Marxist historians who were in full sway in the mid-1960s.[47] Since its establishment in 1964, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was essential not only in putting cultural criticism and social history on the agenda but also responding to the issue of the increasing racial tensions that had emerged in the late 1970s,[48] a decade when Britain experienced, in the words of Geoff Eley, "a populist racism which moved from the fringes of society to its centre with the new right politics of Margaret Thatcher solidifying the authentic identity of Britain as white nation".[49] The riots in Brixton, London and other inner cities around Britain, the Falklands war in the early 1980s and the economic problems which had already challenged the purported postwar consensus and led to social discontent among the native British population are characteristic of the levels these tensions reached. In addition, they highlighted the problematic of race and the meaning of empire in postcolonial Britain. Paul Gilroy's edited collection of essays entitled *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, published by the CCCS in 1982, demonstrated exactly the persistent way that the issue of race was determining contemporary British politics, after the rightwing radicalisation involved in the rise of Thatcherism.[50] Moreover, the general political climate in the 1980s pushed academic studies in a different direction, away from the valorisation of social history. The domination of market values within and outside academia, the collapse of communism, which gave the illusion of the victory of capitalism (with some, infamously, arguing that this also represented the end of history), and the decline of organised labour movements in Europe and North America, even led intellectuals of the left to disassociate themselves from classical materialist analyses of class struggle through the ages, which predominated in earlier social histories, in favour of the emergence of identity politics. In this context, even area studies programmes were

questioned (their institutional support was withdrawn) and seemed unable to answer contemporary questions after the end of the cold war, as the notion of globalisation and United States hegemony gathered momentum.[51]

How were racial tensions and political developments interpreted by academia, particularly within the realm of imperial history? Many new researchers embraced the new methods to come up with new imperial histories, which were critical not only of their contemporary postcolonial society but also the imperial and colonial past. The contribution of anthropology has been very important since many colonial anthropologists abandoned the view that anthropology's mission was to study the "primitive" or the people without history and history's mission to study the "modern", that is historical peoples.[52] The view that cultures are not fixed or unique – therefore, they have to be studied in their plurality, historicity and interconnectedness, avoiding an analysis of the dominant or the subjugated – gained prominence.[53] Here it is imperative to mention the work of Bernard Cohn, who, in a series of essays written between the mid-1950s and the early 1980s, applied an anthropological perspective to the history of colonialism and its forms of knowledge. Cohn, before Said and Foucault, used the notion of "knowledge" to show the "cultural technologies of rule" applied by colonisers in order to manipulate Europeans' perceptions and opinions about other societies which seemed remote and hostile to them.[54] Cohn's work clearly demonstrates the direct relationship between the acquisition of knowledge about subject peoples and the imposition of authority over them.

Furthermore, seminal works of postcolonialism coming from the United States challenged the powerful new historians of Gallagher's Cambridge school and the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* who had been dominant in the 1970s and 1980s; some of them at least were considered as the new "old imperial historians" or mainstream imperial historians. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the key text of postcolonial theory and the general cultural or linguistic turn with which it "coincided and interacted",[55] is so well known that it requires no extensive analysis here.[56] Said's thesis targeted not only the British Empire but western colonialism in general, providing a powerful critique of western structures of knowledge and the way in which colonial discourse constructed the colonial subject. In the 1980s, the Subaltern Studies Collective, represented by South Asian scholars interested in the postimperial world, focused in particular on the masses of the underprivileged and those of inferior rank, and in so doing rejected all existing historiography as western minded and nationalist, which aimed at portraying how the east failed to become the west; instead of history, they proposed the turn to the study of texts.[57] Gramsci's theoretical work on the cultural hegemony of the state, as well as Foucault's theories on the centrality of knowledge in theories of governmentality and the manipulation of language, became the theoretical backbone of the transformation of a part of literary studies into postcolonial theory, a move that also affected cultural studies.[58] As regards British imperial history, the turn to postcolonialism stressed the necessity to study the effects of imperialism in both the metropole and the colonies and to insist on the mutual cultural, institutional or economic effects they had on one another.

Reluctant cohabitation: Major debates in British imperial history in the 1990s

What were the major debates and major transformations that British imperial history underwent as a result of the turn in the 1980s and 1990s? Could old imperial history survive? Did a different imperial history emerge? Stephen Howe claims that historians of empire are still embroiled in a "slow-burning civil war", between the exponents of "new imperial history" and those who, by default, are presumably termed "old imperial historians" despite the fact that some of them had been the "new" of the 1970s and 1980s.[59] Those who, in researching imperial history focus on ideas of culture and discourse, study gendered and racial relationships or representations of colonisers and colonised or study the impact of colonial power and culture on the metropole and the colonies during and after the ending of formal colonial rule are the practitioners of "new imperial history". Those who insist on studying high political, economic, military and state history are categorised by some as old or traditional imperial historians. But as we shall see, innovation in method and new approaches can affect high political, economic, military and state history, which involves a combination of empirical and theoretical work. Moreover, old tools such as the scrutiny of the archives can be used in different ways, for discursive analysis where their content is not taken at face value. It is important, thus, to turn first to those historians that many, including the writers themselves, would consider unrelated to the cultural, linguistic, postcolonial or, finally, new imperial turns to see whether there is some new in the old imperial history and, then, to turn to those who wholeheartedly state that they are the pioneers of new methods.

To start with, one of the most prominent works in the field of imperial history discussed in academia on imperial history in the 1980s and early 1990s connected Britain's alleged economic and political decline with the loss of the empire. P.J Cain and A.G. Hopkins' book *British Imperialism*, published in two volumes in 1993, with a new edition in 2000, was the product of the ongoing debate about "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas", which aimed at explaining not only the reasons for the acquisition (and loss) of the British Empire but also at an assessment of the British enterprising classes. Their thesis was that the roots of British imperial expansionism are to be found in the needs of "gentlemanly capitalists", drawn from the land and finance rather than from industry, who were also responsible for the relative decline of Britain in the twentieth century. Others argued that, on the contrary, it was the industrialists and the material base of industry that mainly supported the expansion of the empire.[60] The debate, which involved more scholars and publications than those mentioned here, followed classic economic history with a Marxist and post-Marxist theoretical approach and an empiricist method of research, paying attention to state formation but also to cultural factors in economic decision-making to interpret the reasons for imperial growth and imperial loss.

Other mainstream historians of imperial history continued very successfully to write "business-as-usual" imperial history, that is, grand narratives about the economic, political and military development of the empire, mostly empiricist, concentrating mainly on formal and, to a lesser extent, informal imperialism, marginalising gender and race and perpetuating the historical divide between British domestic history and British imperial history. P.J. Marshall, a very influential expert on the British in India and America in the eighteenth century, worked on the assumption that the British in Asia were not alien aggressors but collaborators with Indian elites, to whom they simply delegated power

and generally sustained a prosperous economy. His synthetic work, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, published in the 1990s, has been criticised for emphasising the benevolent or neutral role of the British Empire in the evolution of colonised subjects.[61] He rejected the triumphalist civilising mission and racist narrative and favoured the idea that the empire emerged in a rather accidental and disorganised way; ultimately, however, he seemed to be in denial of the violence and appropriation that the empire entailed. The work of Andrew Porter – another Cambridge historian, and joint editor of the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* during the 1980s – ranged widely in time and theme from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, contributing solid empirical history of the empire in military, state, economic and business matters and, in the last ten years, religion.[62]

The work of C.A. Bayly stands out without "succumbing" (as he would have it) to the cultural turn. His early works on India from the late eighteenth century to the Indian mutiny are not mere accounts of the decay of the Mughal Empire and the British imperialist takeover. In giving voice and authority to the merchant communities and analysing the culture and business methods of the Indian merchant families, he discusses the administrative inadequacies of both indigenous states to resist the British, as well as the weakness of the East Indian Company to discipline the locals, and puts forward the case of cultural history entwined with political, social and economic relations.[63] In another book, Bayly, by studying British intelligence networks operating in India and analysing the reasons why so much of the information gathered was "lost in translation", and also by examining the social and intellectual origins of the informers and the disparity between them and the perceptions of the colonial authorities, advances the case of microhistory connected with power networks and, finally, the state.[64] In his two major works of global history, namely *The Imperial Meridian* and *The Birth of the Modern World*, Bayly challenges the long-established self-perception of the British Empire as a modernising force with liberal institutions, by depicting it as an authoritarian state based on mainly agrarian, rural-based elites which came to conquer Muslim empires weakened by tribal revolts.[65] He examines the uses of ideologies of power, the evolution of the state and the hierarchy of society for both the imperial aggressors and the conquered societies; he shows that there was an integral relationship, one consisting of interaction and connections between peoples and regions, and that modernity was not a European achievement but a development of world history.[66] Tony Ballantyne claims that despite the fact that Bayly, in the *The Birth of the Modern World*, recognises other poles of modernity than Europe, by stressing the coterminous history of the "great acceleration" of modernity (and by that he means modern financial services, science, medicine and even the nation-state as originating in Europe), and the rise to global dominance of European empires after 1820, he rather provides a traditional geography of modernity. Ballantyne also is critical of the fact that Bayly in his history ignores the postcolonial criticism that slavery and empire building were central to the creation of "Europe" prior to modernity and that these entanglements provided the very basis of Europe's modernity.[67] Nevertheless, Bayly wrote a new global history, avoiding both general sociological approaches of world systems as put by Marxist theories of causation and culturalist descriptions of microhistory which are devoid of grand narratives.[68] Despite the fact that Bayly himself stated his reservations on postcolonial history, he produced a history that would be the envy of many postcolonialists.

John MacKenzie is perhaps the best-known contributor to social and cultural imperial history in Britain. His pioneering *Propaganda and Empire* (1984) and his subsequent edited volume *Imperial-*

ism and Popular Culture (1986) have contributed in moving history away from the grand narratives of high politics and the economy to focus on the multifaceted parts of cultural history both at home and the colonies, which contributed to forming ideology and feeling about the empire.[69] The popular press, ephemera and visual material, theatre and public entertainment, children's books and toys, art and architecture – all could be subjected to the study of imperialism to show the variety of cultures around the empire and the different perception of the empire in Britain itself.

Yet MacKenzie differentiated himself from Said's postcolonial theories. In 1996, he published his own *Orientalism*, a polemic to oppose and differentiate himself from Said's work, in which he joined forces with the many critics of postcolonial theories.[70] He maintained that Said was excluding historicity from his own work by insisting on the negative image of the Orient that Europeans cultivated through high literary texts, and excludes the period when Europe admired and imitated the east. To treat all periods and all colonialists in an undifferentiated way, homogenising diverse relationships between colonisers and colonised, was wrong, MacKenzie argued.

Despite the fact that all of the above historians themselves claimed to be traditional or have been categorised as such, they are credited with using many of the methods which some would consider particularly postcolonial. Cain and Hopkins studied the economic consequences of imperialism in both home and colony as did Bayly, who also studied the personal lives of eighteenth-century Indian informers to understand perceptions of the empire. MacKenzie has always prioritised culture, especially popular culture and its relations in opinion making for home and empire, both through arts and through the state.

Perhaps the most compromising text in the debate was an article by the American historian Dane Kennedy called "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory".[71] In the first part of the article, published a year after MacKenzie's *Orientalism*, Kennedy tackles all the great failings of postcolonialism. He included the "ugly neologisms", which were particularly resented in Britain as a distortion of language, pointing especially to the irony of literary critics trying to "liberate" people through language while addressing them in incomprehensible texts. It also refers to "the suspicion of history as an accomplice to the West's discursive drive to dominate the Other" – for example, Spivak urging members of the Subaltern Studies Collective to "break from the premises of historical analysis altogether" because, as another member of the collective pointed out, "Europe works as a silent referent to historical knowledge itself" and instead to turn to texts as the only source of truth.[72] By adopting an ahistorical way of thought, Kennedy argued, among others, postcolonialists were biting their own tail, since we cannot reduce history to textuality because text is also context and has a historical dimension. Over-emphasising texts versus facts and material relations leads also to an ahistorical universe, provoking A.G. Hopkins' conclusion that postcolonial practitioners have replaced "modes of production with modes of discourse"; he emphasises, rather, the need for world history to turn to hard political and economic questions and not cultural ones.[73]

However, Kennedy's article, unlike MacKenzie's book, is not at all dismissive of postcolonialism, despite its flaws. Rather, he celebrated the immense forces that it liberated and the divergent works it inspired. Postcolonialism, he argued, reoriented and reinvigorated imperial studies, raising "provocative questions about epistemological structures of power and the cultural foundations

of resistance, about the porous relationship between metropolitan and colonial societies, about the construction of group identities in the context of state formation, even about the nature and uses of historical evidence itself".[74] Kennedy favoured those studies that combined the theoretical positions of postcolonial theory with empirical researches, particularly those in anthropology and the history of ex-colonial societies. The examination of the colonial construction of collective identities inspired a particularly successful body of scholarship without excluding history and historical method. If we are to hold the postcolonial premise that the categories of identity which gave meaning to colonisers and colonised alike cannot be taken for granted but must be problematised and presented within the context of power, then we will produce better historical works.

And indeed the work of those who took the postcolonial turn in examining British imperial history during the 1990s has been remarkable for the wide range of themes and the new perspectives they opened. Out of the thriving historiography, a few examples of the dynamism of imperial writing will demonstrate the insight postcolonialism brought to the study of the experience of the empire.

Gender, race, class – very often called the holy trinity – and the empire is of particular importance. Seminal works on the themes concerning the role of women in the formation of identities at home and colonies have been produced. The interest of British middle-class women in the antislavery campaign was considered to have laid the foundations for mid-nineteenth-century feminism.[75] The role of women in consolidating the ideology of imperialism and the cultural interaction between British and colonised women were common themes in the publications of the 1990s dealing with feminism and imperialism.[76] Masculinity, sexuality and gender, either as a factor of identity formation or as a cause for racial suppression or a means of moulding ideology, were crucial issues in historical research.[77] Class was also among the important subjects to be studied not only in the grand narratives and economical context but in terms of identity formation in the empire,[78] as are the politics of national identity formation within an imperial framework as well as debates on political reform and citizenship both for home and colony, especially regarding issues of race and gender.[79] As a matter of fact, the most successful among these studies are those where the politics of culture intersect with the politics of gender, race, class and even high politics.

Moreover, studies on the environment, showing how the British altered the colonial landscape intentionally or unintentionally, and studies on science and medicine, religion and missionary action, were elaborated and analysed from the new perspectives of postcolonialism, even to the point of becoming synonymous with new imperial histories.[80] Not all these works were strictly limited to one method nor avoided the connections with traditional narratives of imperial histories. But most of them, to one degree or the other, aimed to show, among others, the proliferation of hybrid identities in the empire and the mingling of cultures, the chameleon properties of power, including the psychoanalytic construction of the self and intimacy as well as the construction of collective identities.

However, when at the end of the decade, Oxford University Press embarked to show the "state of the art" in British imperial history, a work commissioned to an American editor (but a known Anglophile trained in Oxford and a fellow of St Antony's College), a large part of the academic community was surprised to find that new imperial history, as it had been practiced in the 20 years or so prior to the publication of the series, had but a cameo appearance in this magnum opus.[81] *The Oxford History of*

the British Empire (hereafter *OHBE*), published in five volumes from 1998 to 1999, came thus as a disappointment to many. One critic, commenting on the overall contribution of the publication, argued that it would be "an invaluable resource for many decades to come – not simply for understanding what imperial history has historically been, but also for evidence of how its apologists reacted to and represented the challenges which confronted it in the twentieth century".[82] These volumes host a variety of chapters devoted to a wide spectrum of regional and thematic units, examining the connections across the empire made by trade and finance, free and forced migration, the exchange of ideas and beliefs, the initiatives undertaken by colonised peoples both to collaborate with the British and the initiatives to rebel against their rule. In many chapters the "informal influence" of the empire, in the Robinson and Gallagher sense, in Latin America and China as well as the settlement territories, were examined. In addition, unlike the previous attempts to provide a total history of the empire (i.e., the *Cambridge History* in the 1930s and 1950s), this series devoted a few chapters to Ireland, as one of the first examples of British imperialism, although not everybody agrees that Irish history should be read as imperial history.[83] Credit was also given to the contributors because they "reject the old triumphant and racist narrative of inevitable and ordained British expansion in favour of an enthusiastic emphasis on the disorganised and *accidental* nature of this empire's emergence", and because they highlighted the British as opposed to English nature of the empire and investigated the impact of empire on a range of people around the world, and, in a few cases, the impact of traded goods, conquered people and acquired territories on Britain itself.[84] However, the persistence in traditional narratives of empire, be it political, economic or military, organised in such manner to avoid too many entanglements with cultural, linguistic or postcolonial subjects and methods, was impressive given the abundance of publications by the end of the century coming from scholars from the five continents, formerly colonised or not. Most of the issues and themes discussed in these volumes were predictably conservative both "politically and imaginatively",[85] with only a few chapters on culture, gender, race, science, medicine and art which rather proved the rule.[86] Perhaps the most controversial volume was the last one, entitled *Historiography*. The fact that in this volume the theoretical insights that postcolonialism offered the field of imperial history were caricatured and presented by many contributors as "passing trends which offer no real threat to the kind of imperial history the British Empire project is dedicated to preserve" aroused great disapproval among historians.[87] In total, this was an uneven work. While several chapters did follow the historical preoccupations of the end of the twentieth century, they were only a small exception to others, which represented, in the very angry words of Richard Gott, "a Memorial to Empire" and a very nostalgic one at that.[88]

The open debate that this publication provoked came at a time that the necessity for another journal on colonial history seemed imperative. Launched in 2000, the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* was determined to house those excluded by what was once the platform for new imperial history, the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, which by the end of the twentieth century was thought by many to be conservative and myopic towards the new trends of history writing. The new journal aimed to cover subjects from the pre- to postcolonial eras, was open to theory and interested in the social effects of imperialism on the population, the lasting impact of living under colonial rule as well as the political structures of imperial power.

If the *OHBE* was a reason to start an open debate about how effective the historiography of the postcolonial turn had been by the end of the century, or whether there was a new imperial his-

tory, the publication of David Cannadine's *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire*, as a rather belated response to Said's *Orientalism*, set off a small skirmish in the imperial historians' civil war.[89] This book, which some have characterised as an "abridgement"[90] of the *OHBE*, stated its intention to put *class* (as opposed to *race*, which Cannadine mistakenly believed has been overemphasised in recent historiography) back into the focus of interpretation of British imperial history. Seeing the empire as "a vehicle for the extension of British social structures to the end of the world", he concentrated on one particular class which, he argued, was the most important. It was the aristocracy and the upper classes, Cannadine maintained, who most invested in an elaborate system of status and hierarchies that really mattered in what constituted the complex dynamics of the empire. By "ornamentalism", Cannadine was referring to the visible effects of attempts to order the empire by binding its hierarchies together, on the one hand, to offer an image of the empire as a conservative and hierarchical society, predicated on individual inequality, and on the other, claiming that the empire was more free of racist assumptions as regards collective identities that bedevil more egalitarian societies. This book had, for many, a parallel agenda, namely, to condescend postcolonial historiography which was based on racial discrimination and cultural difference, which, of course, provoked controversy and drawn daggers.[91]

These publications, which were the spark that ignited the debate about British imperial history, engaged scholars, activists and various communities in many parts of the world and proved wrong William Roger Louis, who, in the foreword to all volumes of the *OHBE*, noted that this was a time that "the passions aroused by British imperialism have so lessened that we are now better placed than even before to see the course of the Empire steadily and to see it whole".[92] Had passions really lessened? In the final decade of the twentieth century, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the alleged end of the cold war, area studies were set aside and postcolonialism appeared amid grave controversy. The "invading hordes" of historians influenced by postcolonial theorists, literary theory and cultural studies were writing "politically and ethically engaged" history.[93] The 1990s was, for many, a time when the nature and legacies of British imperialism were topical in various political ways. Tony Ballantyne mentioned a few:

> In their very different ways, settler colonies such as Canada, Zimbabwe and New Zealand have been grappling with questions of indigenous sovereignty and land rights, while the question of native title sprung to the foreground of Australian politics after the landmark Mabo decision in 1992 (which transformed Australian legal and political culture by recognising the existence and persistence of Aboriginal land ownership). The legacies of colonialism have also been at the forefront of political life in South Africa following the dismantling of the apartheid regime, framing many of the histories of racial exclusion and violence produced by the 20,000 witnesses that testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In South Asia the role of British colonialism in engendering the region's "underdevelopment," environmental degradation, and religious and ethnic conflict is the subject of constant debate in bazaars, newspaper editorials, and classrooms . . . In Britain itself, many saw the transfer of power in Hong Kong in 1997 as marking the final act in the great drama of the rise and fall of the empire; but such a nostalgic view ignores the persistent legacies of British imperialism which are at the heart of ongoing debates over Northern Ireland, immigration, and the very nature of Britishness itself.[94]

Global calling from history: new imperial and colonial histories

So imperial history can only be a political subject, a point on which historians as different as Seeley, Bayly and other postcolonial historians would agree. Indeed, the pivotal moment for imperial history in the twenty-first century would be major world political developments. Some even give a date for the explosion of interest in imperial history, more specifically the fatal day of 11 September 2001 when the global present revoked imperial history from its alleged decline and put it back on the ascendant, at least when compared to its antagonist, that is, colonial history, in all its varieties, after the academic turns since the 1980s.[95] The global present was begging for global histories, and imperial history found itself in a privileged position. Global, transnational or nonterritorial empires were now put under scrutiny by both historians and political scientists to unravel or discover new kinds of polities.[96]

As regards British imperial history, the tag "new" found various uses, some influenced by the previous decade and some developing in a different direction. There have been several attempts to come up with an all-inclusive definition of what this "new" is supposed to include.[97] Stephen Howe, in his *New Imperial Histories Reader*, notes that those who claim the "new" tag share, despite many differences, a core understanding by what they mean by new:

They mean approaches to imperial history centred on ideas of culture and, often, of discourse; ones with strong attention to gender relations and/or to racial imaginings; ones which emphasise the impact of colonialism's cultures on metropole as well as on the colonised, and tend to urge its continuing effects after the end of the formal colonial rule. They pose questions – or make assumptions about the relationships among knowledge, identity and power, including a high degree of explicit self-consciousness about the positioning of the historians themselves.[98]

Yet, innovative work using the new methods from "traditional" circles devoted to diplomatic, high-political or military historical themes showed that the binary of old/new is not enough to capture the whole story. It is thus misleading to speak of one single "new imperial history" but, instead, we can now speak of new imperial histories to include "fresh, creative histories of imperialism" out of the great range of publications that appeared.[99] To sketch the course of British imperial histories since 2001 and the intermingling of old and new methods, we have to refer both to debates and different historical practices.

Empire and metropole

One of the dominant debates at least for the last 15 years has been the study of the impact of the empire on the metropole. Some argue that the presence of the empire in Britain itself has been ubiquitous in every aspect of British public life, from the beginning of colonisation, during decolonisation and since the total loss of the empire. Catherine Hall in Britain and Antoinette Burton and Kathleen Wilson in the United States are among the protagonists of this debate who support the idea that the presence of the empire in British public and private life was formative for British na-

tional identity, as well as the British polity, ideologies and mentalities about the self and other.[100] The greatest opponent of this line of argument is Bernard Porter, who insists on the old view of the relative indifference of the British people towards the empire, arguing that there was not one dominant culture about the empire in the various sectors of British society but several entirely different and even contradictory ones.[101] Andrew Thompson has also attempted a more balanced view of the topic by pointing out that the diversity and pluralism of both empire and British society has been multifaceted and concluded that the influence of the empire at home was not negligible; in fact, it was a significant but not an all-pervasive factor in the lives of the British people.[102] Of course, historians who study the presence of colonial peoples in Britain are part of this debate, since they, too, have shown the emergence of hybrid identities in Britain since the beginning of the presence of nonwhites, which occurred long before decolonisation.[103]

Global, world, transnational history: cultural traffic, networks, peoples and ideas

Global history and the building of imperial networks has inspired many works concerning the British Empire. These histories could be studies on networks, models of administration and patterns of rule, as well as ideologies within the space of the empire, which could be categorised as "old imperial histories". They could also be studies of networks of race, gender, class or cultural and artistic encounters and the proliferation of hybrid identities again within the space of the empire, which could be categorised as "new imperial histories". We have already mentioned Bayly's and Hopkins' "global" histories, which in accordance with newer methodologies reject the nation-state as the centrepiece of analysis and take a transnational view; nevertheless, they are concerned with political, broad ideological and economical issues.[104] The work of Thomas Metcalf also belongs in this category, adding a cultural dimension too as it concerns architecture. John Darwin studies the British Empire as a global phenomenon – an empire which created an imperial web and collapsed as a result of globalised historical developments.[105]

There are works which examine "imperial networks" in a globalised world from the angle of the "turn". Some examples of transnational imperial history are the works of Tony Ballantyne and Alan Lester. The former, who was supervised by Bayly, is famous for his work on the British imperial networks by which ideas of "race" and "Aryanism" travelled across the British imperial world, India, New Zealand and beyond and also for his works on gender and globalisation.[106] Lester studied the competing projects of colonialism – of missionaries, empire officials as well as British settler networks, in South Africa's Eastern Cape in the nineteenth century, and the way these different groups shaped the discussion of the morality and purpose of the empire, as they bargained with the metropole for more subsidies to maintain colonial power in the region.[107] Imperial networks are also the subject of global histories which examine multiple imperial sites and not merely relations between metropole and colony. An example is the volume published as a companion to the *OHBE* about the "imperial" experience of sub-Saharan African blacks since the sixteenth century, who were among the most uprooted and dislocated people; they travelled immensely within the empire and formed part of a transimperial culture.[108] In another companion volume to the *OHBE*,

the migration experience of British subjects in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and several other places in the empire such as south Asia, Africa and the Pacific and their return to Britain after 1945 from the Commonwealth were analysed, taking into consideration the multiple levels of migrant histories.[109] Other works on sexuality and prostitution also use the idea of imperial globalised networks. Philippa Levine's work *Prostitution, Race and Politics* discusses the incidence and significance of venereal disease and prostitution across the empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She examines sexual practice and disease among British imperialists across social levels, aiming to illuminate, in the words of Kathleen Wilson, "the dense webs (from India, the Straits Settlement, and Hong Kong to Queensland and, more allusively to Britain) of signification that the nationalised bodies of prostitutes and their clients were made to bear, and its creation of new historical chronologies and typologies to make sense of the changing fortunes and reputation of commercial sex workers within the British empire".[110]

Some of these works reflect the critique that British imperial history itself has been figuring as global history, underestimating the effect and the interaction of other contemporary empires, such as the Russian, Ottoman, Chinese and Japanese, and emphasising the exceptionality of the British Empire. Antoinette Burton argues that there is a need to decentre the British Empire from global history so that British imperial history is no longer understood as self-evidently synonymous with global history. Furthermore, she argues that there was a need to "begin to write the history of the British Empire into world history in terms of its proportionality rather than its exceptionalism, in terms of its role in the co-production of imperial globality rather than its originary character, in terms of its limits rather than its inflated and ultimately self-serving all-powerful image".[111] As a matter of fact, this self-serving image has been especially well served by the literary blockbusters of the history of British Empire, such as Niall Ferguson's publications and television programmes – not only through an emphasis on the exceptional globality of the empire but also by bringing back the civilising mission in a neoliberal form, arguing that it was in sum a benevolent empire and Britain's retreat from the colonies was against the interests both of Britain and the colonies.[112]

Localities, globalities and hybrid identities

Global networks were paradoxically the best tools to locate and examine the creation of hybrid subjectivities. As Kathleen Wilson argues, "the local and the global have been difficult to disentangle since at least 1492".[113] Microhistory on the lives of subalterns, European and non-European, were excellent fields of study of the empire as territories where power and ideas were contested. Among the excellent works of new imperial history are biographies that reaffirm the omnipotence of the British Empire and – according to some historians –Europeanness to an extent as a determining factor in the identity formation of individuals. Durba Ghosh comments on some of these monographs that they have "subjects whose emotions, sentiments, lifeworlds, and sexualities are part of a complex narrative that is embedded within family structures and economic systems that were produced by colonialism and colonial activities".[114] These might include convicts and other subalterns across the Indian Ocean, as in Clare Anderson's *Legible Bodies: Race, Criminality and Colonialism in South Asia*. The life of a middle-class woman traveller through the British Empire in Linda Colley's *The Ordeal of*

Elizabeth Marsh is exemplary of identity formation through the sites of the empire. David Lambert and Alain Lester's *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* examines the "map" of imperial professions onto the various spaces of the empire to outline "trans-imperial life-paths".[115] Thomas Gallant's *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity and Power in the British Mediterranean* examines hegemony and identity in the Ionian Islands in the nineteenth century under the scope of the atypical colonial encounter of Ionian Greeks, a population that was white, Christian and a descendant of Europe's classical heritage – but not obedient to British rule.[116] Durba Ghosh's *Sex and Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* is an important work, which connects the world of family and politics through an examination of mixed families (British husband, native wife and mixed-race children) in India of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which were fundamental to the operation of the East India Company, demonstrating the pressures these families underwent as the company governors tried, unsuccessfully, to stop mixed-race subjects entering the civil service and military and keep the whiteness and Britishness of the company intact.[117]

The new archaeology of the archive

The return to the archives, although not everybody agrees that cultural historians ever abandoned them, was another development in the last decade. As we have seen, most historians of the turn did use archives and most of them in a very elaborate way. Those who examined the relations between home and colony immersed themselves in archival material, be it texts or artefacts, children's textbooks and advertisements, in a way that cultural historians would approve. Others working on a global scale examining imperial networks also used archives to excavate or discover social, racial and gender relations, among others; again, these were not limited necessarily to state archives but to catalogues, diaries, police reports, inventories, registration records and other materials. Ethnographical approaches which showed how the archive could be used for deconstructive readings of the texts or the research of gender, racial and subaltern absentees are now common among historians and anthropologists.[118] Archives, be they imperial or other, are now seen not as spaces where information is stored waiting to be extracted but as spaces which are themselves objects of observation which do not contain coherent texts but fragments on which the historian must reflect.[119]

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So how ahistorical were the new imperial histories, as the critics in the 1990s maintained? How damaging was the prioritising of the cultural factor in the examination of historical empires? Were the issues of class, capital and the power of the state (the hardcore of the "proper" historical method, as traditional historians maintain) marginalised in these studies? Writing about what she calls the new "critical imperial studies", Kathleen Wilson states that the new imperial histories did deal with the heart of the old historical method:

> By bringing multiple perspectives to bear on the hallowed records of legislatures, trading companies and families in order to historicise connections previously taken as read, such cultural and political work has broken new ground in the study of the most traditional organs of em-

> pire, the state and world economies included. Here analyses of discursive and epistemic violence are balanced by accounts of physical, sexual and state-sanctioned forms of violence, the power of colonial discourse is concretised through attention to the material, political, sexual, and cultural *practices* of imperial rule, and *difference* itself is thought through matrices of interconnection and exchange.[120]

New imperial histories are not void of the preoccupations of the "old" histories with the state, the economy or ideologies. And by the same token, old imperial histories are not unconcerned with the cultural dimension on a micro- or a macroscale. Temporality, thus, is not the best way to classify imperial histories. What emerges as a conclusion is that any careful examination of the works on imperial history shows that the historical works are much closer than the theories may suggest. But as mentioned above, a genuine political issue such as imperialism has the obvious agenda to defend or challenge its role either as an institution which contributed to the improvement of the life of societies or an institution which is responsible for the terrors and losses in these conquered societies. From nineteenth-century historians who wanted to keep colonised subjects far from the realm of history, we arrived at the imperial historians of the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries who celebrated the role of imperialists in the world at large and even accepted under the wing of history the white dominions which, in their view, at some point could mature, acquire modernity and even become independent. The decolonisation period and cold war polarity drove imperial history to the margins of historical interest, only to reappear after the collapse of the Soviet Union. New trends in the historical profession found in imperialism a very fertile ground where hybrid identities could be examined and cultural aspects were prioritised to reveal the subaltern, racial and gender discrimination since the beginnings of the imperial enterprise. The thematic range of the analyses, which encompassed globalities, localities, networks and the fluidity of the formation of private and collective identities between metropole and empire, among others, opened a wide intellectual spectrum which expanded to include not only knowledge of the imperial experience but also of the historical methodology. Parallel to that, more traditional historians with proimperial attitudes were also apologetic about the empire, referring to "accidental empire" or "absent-minded imperialists", after Seeley's famous expression, who did not bare sole responsibility for imperial activity.

These days, a few neoliberal, neoimperialist televangelists have a separate parallel career preaching the misunderstood benefits of the empire and lamenting the British withdrawal from imperial territories, a message that is popular among a general public often thirsty for flattery and susceptible to illusions of national grandiosity. Yet this is a good time to be an imperial historian because of the dynamism of the production of works on the subject, be they "old" or "new", critical or theoretical, or strictly empirical, since they are almost compelled to interact with expanding methodologies in historiography and dismantle barriers to the study of national, imperial, colonial identities.

NOTES

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1 Stephen Howe, *New Imperial Histories: A Reader*, Routledge, London and New York, 2010, 1.

2 Catherine Hall, "At Home with History: Macaulay and the *History of England*", in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006, 32–52, here 32.

3 Catherine Hall, "Macaulay: A Liberal Historian?", in Simon Gunn and James Vernon (eds), *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011, 19.

4 Ibid., 27.

5 Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in the English-Speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867*, London: Macmillan, 1868, cited in Richard Gott, "Little Englanders", in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and the Unmaking of British National Identity*; vol I: *History and Politics*, London: Routledge, 1989, 90–102, here 97.

6 J.R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures*, London: Macmillan, 1931 [1883], 60. According to Seeley, the British Empire was unique in the sense that it conveyed "a sense of organic links uniting a single imperial nation", meaning that the white colonies could be considered as one nation, which, if it could be fully realised, "Canada and Australia would be to us as Cornwall and Kent, as if it were no Empire but an ordinary state". See Stuart Ward, "The End of Empire and the Fate of Britishness", in Helen Brocklehurst and Robert Phillips (eds), *History, Nationhood and the Question of Britain*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 242–259. Seeley was interested in British expansionism, that is, the study of the process of British people colonising the world, even the impact of British civilisation abroad, but was indifferent to the study of the history of the colonised indigenous peoples. As Peter Mandler has noted, Seeley's book was didactic for the British nation, aiming at instructing how to keep the second British Empire – after the first one in North America was lost – cultivating patriotism and building national cohesion. See *History and National Life*, London: Profile Books, 2002, 44.

7 Benedikt Stuchtey, "Literature, Liberty, and Life of the Nation: British Historiography from Macaulay to Trevelyan", in Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan and Kevin Passmore (eds), *Writing National Histories, Western Europe since 1800*, London: Routledge, 1999, 36–37.

8 A.P. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies: A Study in British Power*, London: Macmillan, 1959, 109, cited in Benedikt Stuchtey, "England's Mission and its Critics: The South African War and Anti-imperialism at the Turn of the Century", paper read at the Neal Colloquium in British History, *The Consciousness of Modernity in Britain, c. 1870 to 1940*, at University College London, 27–28 February 1998, manuscript.

9 See the most recent: Mira Matikkala, *Empire and Ambition: Liberty, Englishness and Anti-Imperialism in Late Victorian Britain*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2011; Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of the Empire, 1850–1920*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010.

10 J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, London: James Nisbet, 1902.

11 Ewan Green and M. Taylor, "Further Thoughts of Little Englandism", in Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism*, 106–109. See also Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey*, London: Routledge, 1980, 73–87. D.K. Fieldhouse offered a strong critique on Hobson's ideas in his article on "'Imperialism': An Historiographical Revision", *Economic History Review* [n.s.] 14/2 (1961): 187–209, which is responsible for the lack of interest in Hobson's work for a few decades. However interest was restored in the 1990s by P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins' *British Imperialism Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914*, London: Longman, 1993. Of course, Hobson's work on imperialism is best known from his influence on the pamphlet published by V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, and the work of the economist Joseph Schumpeter *Imperialism and Social Classes*, published in 1917 and 1918. Among

the modern supporters of Hobson, see also Robert J. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, 98–100, also P.J. Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, New Liberalism and Finance, 1887–1938*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002, P.J. Cain, "Capitalism, Aristocracy and Empire: Some 'Classical' Theories of Imperialism Revisited", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35/1 (2007): 25–47.

12 The idea of "true" imperialism, which recognised the right of all colonies to constitute themselves as self-governing republics, as suggested by Hobson, versus the "new" imperialism, which was based on speculative militarism, is discussed in Taylor, "Imperium et Libertas? Rethinking the Radical Critique of Imperialism during the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19/1 (1991): 14–16.

13 George Bernard Shaw, *Fabianism and the Empire: A Manifesto by the Fabian Society*, London: G. Richards, 1900, cited in Stuchtey, "England's Mission", 6

14 Stuchtey, "England's Mission", 7. On the contradicting ideas of the Fabians and other Edwardian intellectuals on imperialism, see Andrew Thompson, "The Language of Imperialism and the Meanings of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics, 1895–1914", *Journal of British Studies* 36/2 (1997): 147–177, here 155–161.

15 Ronald Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010, 473–4, Wm. Roger Louis, "Introduction", in Robin W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of British Empire*: vol. 5; *Historiography*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999, 16–17; David Fieldhouse, "Can Humpty Dumpty Be Put Together Again? Imperial History in the 1980s", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 12/2 (1984): 9–23, here 9.

16 Conservative historians such as Hugh Egerton continued Seeley's argument on the need for the federation of the empire, writing at a time when politicians such as Alfred Milner and George N. Curzon rallied for a movement which "combined race patriotism" and empire idealism aiming at the strengthening and eventual unification of the empire. Yet there were other historians such as Nigel Angel and Henry Brailsford writing in 1910 and 1914 in agreement with Hobson who argued "that wars were essentially irrational and were exploited by those making financial profit from munitions and armaments and not benefitting the aggressor" – views which on the whole remained unpopular and misunderstood. See Louis, "Introduction", 12–17.

17 Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*, Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007, 166–209.

18 Louis, "Introduction", 18–21.

19 Among others, writers such as the novelist E.M. Forster as well as socialists such as Hobson and the Afro-Caribbean historian C.L.R. James published here. See J.A. Hobson, *Notes on Law and Order: The Hogarth Essays*, London: Hogarth Press, 1926; Sydney Haldane Olivier, *White Capital & Coloured Labour*, new ed., London: Hogarth Press, 1929, C.L.R. James, *The Case for West-Indian Self Government*, London: Hogarth Press, 1933.

20 See F.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1922.

21 Historians of the empire such as Lionel Curtis, Reginald Coupland and W.K. Hancock championed the idea that the empire would justify itself by the end result of equal nations be freely associated in the British Commonwealth. Louis, "Introduction", 7 and 21–24.

22 Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire*, 476.

23 P.J. Marshall, "The Fist British Empire", in Winks, *Historiography*, 51.

24 Louis, "Introduction", in Winks, *Historiography*, 11.

25 Fieldhouse, "Can Humpty Dumpty Be Put Together Again?", 10–11. Fieldhouse's article seems like a defence of old imperial history, which he could see being reassembled after "the great fall" it had after the Second World war.

26 Dane Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24/3 (1996): 345–363, here 345.

27 John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* [ns] 6/1 (1953): 1–15.

28 John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, London: St. Martin's Press, 1961.

29 For a discussion of this point, see Durba Ghosh, "Another Set of Imperial Turns?", *American Historical Review* 117/3 (2012): 772–793, here 777. This article, which was published as this article was being finished, has been of immense help to me, if only by allowing me compare and contrast my conclusions.

30 Wm. Roger Louis, "Foreword", in Winks, *Historiography*, ix–x.

31 A Marxist analysis of Gallagher and Robinson's work is given in Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism*, 256–259.

32 Wm. Roger Louis, "Introduction", in Winks, *Historiography*, 39.

33 Gallagher and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," 3.

34 Ronald Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, London: Longman, 1972, 278, cited in Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism*, 256–259.

35 Among the first most important critics were D.C.M. Platt, "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Some Reservations", *Economic History Review* 21/2 (1968): 296–306; W.M. Mathew, "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Peru, 1820–70", *Economic History Review* 21/3 (1968): 562–79; D.C.M. Platt, *Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815–1914*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1968; D.C.M. Platt, "Further Objections to an 'Imperialism of Free Trade', 1830–60", *Economic History Review* 26 (1973): 77–91.

36 Clement Attlee, *Empire into Commonwealth*, London: Oxford UP, 1961, 1, cited in Levine, *The British Empire*, 203.

37 For an historical analysis of that period, see Chris Waters, "'Dark Strangers in Our Midst': Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947–1963," *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997): 207–238. The phrase "a hitherto homogeneous white society" is from Catherine Hall, "The State of Modern British History", *History Workshop Journal* 72/1 (2011): 204–210, here 208.

38 Sonya O. Rose, "What are we Now? Writing the Postwar 'Nation', 1948–2001", in Catherine Hall and Keith McClelland, *Race, Nation and Empire: Making Histories, 1750 to the Present*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2010, 154.

39 Dane Kennedy, "The Boundaries of Oxford's Empire", *International History Review* 23/3 (2001): 604–622, here 613.

40 Fieldhouse, "Can Humpty Dumpty", 16. The problems associated with nation making in the decolonised world led a few historians to conclude that they are failed societies. Dispesh Chakrabarty in "Provincializing Europe: Postcoloniality and the Critique of History", *Cultural Studies* 6/3 (1992): 337–357, discusses the transfer of the centrality of nation making in European history to societies which were considered subaltern because of their failure to reproduce a European model of nation state.

41 Durba Ghosh ("Another Set of Imperial Turns?", 783) argues that from the "generative" work of Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James and Aimé Césaire, we arrive at the postcolonial theory of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and Walter Mingolo. Among these emblematic works are Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (London, 1952), *The Wretched of the Earth* (London, 1961); C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L' Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York, 1938) on the Haitian Revolution, and Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955).

42 Louis, "Introduction", in Winks, *Historiography*, 40.

43 Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy*, New York: New Viewpoints, 1976. More recent publications discuss the empire as the formal or informal state. See the essays in Winks, *Historiography*, by C.M. Turnbull, "Formal and Informal Empire in East Asia", 379–462; Peter Sluglett, "Formal and Informal Empire in the Middle East", 416–436; Rory Miller, "Informal Empire in Latin America", 437–449. Most essays in these series published in the 1990s refer to Robinson and Gallagher's work.

44 Katharine West, "Theorising about 'Imperialism': A Methodological Note", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 1/2 (1973): 147–154; B.A. Knox, "Reconsidering Mid-Victorian Imperialism", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 1/2 (1973): 155–172.

45 Some of the following works are characteristic of the first new imperial history without being strictly in the same methodological pattern and definitely not of the same political convictions. D.K. Fieldhouse, *Economics and Empire, 1830–1914*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973; John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal, *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870 to 1940*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973; Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1971; A.G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*, New York: Columbia UP, 1973; C.A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1975, P.J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1976; A. Porter, *The Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895–99*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1980.

46 The work of literary critics Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart, who initiated the importance of the cultural dimension of history, as well as the work of historians such as Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm and E.P. Thompson, mostly writing about domestic and European history though, is more famous for the interdisciplinary approach where social history, cultural and anthropological factors were elaborated alongside issues relating to the economy and the state, proposing thus a different method of historical analysis. For an analysis of the transformation of the historical profession in the second half of the twentieth century, see Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to History of Society*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

47 Ibid.

48 See especially Stuart Hall's collection of essays in Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, London: Macmillan, 1978. Geoff Eley argues that though race was central in the analysis of the book, it receded into a broader argument about the state, hegemony and class. *A Crooked Line*, 138. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, a postgraduate research centre at the University of Birmingham, was founded in 1964 by Richard Hoggart with the aim to inaugurate research in the area of contemporary culture and society. Until its closure in 2002, after obtaining poor results in Research Assessment Exercise, the CCCS initiated the interdisciplinary approach on the study of culture, drawing on sociology, feminism, literary criticism, history and critical race theory among others. The CCCS is considered the founder of modern "cultural studies" in Britain. For the early period of CCCS, see Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, Paul Willis, *Culture, Media, Language: Working*

Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–1979, London: Routledge, 1980, 1–35.

49 Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994, cited in Rose, "What are we Now?", 162.

50 Paul Gilroy, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, London: Hutchinson, 1982.

51 See Ravi Arvind Palat, "Fragmented Visions: Excavating the Future of Area Studies in a Post-American World", *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 19/3 (1996): 269–315, and Richard D. Lambert, "Domains and Issues in International Studies", *International Education Forum*, 16/1 (1996): 1–19, cited in Kennedy, "The Boundaries of Oxford's Empire", 614.

52 Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, "Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire", in Hall and Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire*, 1–31, here 9.

53 Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982. Sydney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, New York: Viking, 1985, explored the production, distribution and consumption of sugar, not only by undertaking a Marxist analysis of capital and power exploitation but also analysing these relations in identity formation.

54 Nicholas B. Dirks, "Forward", in Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton: Princeton UP 1996, ix. His greatest work, another collection of essays, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Delhi: Oxford UP, 1986, was compiled from essays which were written over 30 years before their publication in one volume.

55 The phrase comes from Stephen Howe, "Introduction: New Imperial Histories", in Stephen Howe (ed.), *New Imperial Histories Reader*, Oxford: Routledge, 2010, 3.

56 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage, 1978.

57 Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing Histories and the West*, London: Routledge, 1990; Ranajit Guha and Gayarti Chakravorty Spivak (eds), *Selected Subaltern Studies*, New York: Oxford UP, 1988. For an analysis of subaltern scholars' perception of the importance of history, see Bill Schwarz, "Conquerors of Truth, Reflections on Postcolonial Theory", in Bill Schwarz (ed.), *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History*, London: Routledge, 1996, 9–31.

58 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings, 1921–1926*, trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1978; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, New York: Pantheon, 1972, also *Power/Knowledge*, London: Pantheon, 1980.

59 Howe, "Introduction: New Imperial Histories", 1.

60 The debate began in 1980 and involved many scholars. See P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, "The Political Economy of British Expansion Overseas, 1750–1914", *Economic History Review* [n.s.] 33/4 (1980): 463–490; P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas I: The Old Colonial system, 1688–1850", *Economic History Review* [n.s.] 39/4 (1986): 501–525 and "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New Imperialism, 1850–1945", *Economic History Review* [n.s.] 40/1 (1987): 1–26. M.J. Daunton initiated a debate by responding with the following articles "'Gentlemanly Capitalism' and British Industry, 1820–1914", *Past and Present* 122 (1989): 119–158 and "'Gentlemanly Capitalism' and British Industry, 1820–1914: Reply", *Past and Present* 132 (1991): 170–187. The volumes of P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914*, London: Longman, 1993, *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction, 1914–90*, London: Longman, 1993 and the subsequent review article by M.J. Daunton, "Home and Colonial", *Twentieth Century British History* 6/3 (1995): 344–358, debated these issues. See more recently Andrew Thompson, *The Empire*

Strikes Back?: The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from Mid-Nineteenth Century, Harlow: Longman, 2005, 17.

61 Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*; Idem (ed.), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

62 Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*; *Victorian Shipping Business and Imperial Policy: Donald Currie, the Castle Line and Southern Africa*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986; editor of *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Vol. III; The Nineteenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999; *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004.

63 C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1780–1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983; Idem, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.

64 Idem, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

65 Idem, *The Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830*, London: Longman, 1989; Idem, *The Birth of the Modern World: Global Connections and Comparisons, 1780–1914*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.

66 See also Ghosh, "Another Set of Imperial Turns?", 780.

67 Tony Ballantyne, "Putting the Nation in its Place?: World History and C.A. Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World*", in Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake (eds), *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, Canberra: Australian National University, 2005, 41–42.

68 Catherine Hall, review of C.A. Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, *Reviews in History* 420 (2009), www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/420, accessed 31 Dec 2012. See also D.K. Fieldhouse, review of *The Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (1989), *English Historical Review* 106/418 (1991): 128–129.

69 John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984; Idem (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986.

70 Idem, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995. For other critics of postcolonialism, see A.G. Hopkins, "Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History", *Past & Present* 164 (1999): 198–243, Rosalind O'Hanlon and David Washbrook, "After Orientalism: Culture, Criticism, and Politics in the Third World", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34/1 (1992): 141–167.

71 Other texts also present the pros and cons of postcolonial theories in a historical perspective. Schwarz, "Conquerors of Truth", 9–29; Patrick Wolfe, "History and Imperialism: A Century of Theory, from Marx to Post-colonialism", *American Historical Review* 102/2 (1997): 388–420; Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post Colonial Theory", 148–149.

72 On the concept of history being a European invention and a "cultural and political liability for non-Western peoples", see Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of the Self under Colonialism*, Delhi: Oxford, 1983, xv, cited in Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post Colonial Theory", 350–351. Durba Ghosh, throughout her essay on imperial turns, discusses the burden of European history on the non-western world and urges for decolonisation from European history. "Another Set of Imperial Turns?", 773. See this point as well as a more extensive critique in Wolfe, "History and Imperialism", 388–420.

73 Hopkins, "Back to the Future", 198–243, also cited in Barbara Bush, *Imperialism and Postcolonialism*, Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006, 59. Hopkins' imperial history bears a strong resemblance with the aims and means of the cultural turn. Dane Kennedy argues that like cultural historians, Hopkins does not take the state to be the centrepiece of analysis; he too insists that historians should turn to transnational and multiethnic forces that shaped contemporary world, he too proposes to cut across traditional boundaries arguing that the study of imperialism can serve as the fulcrum for "a fundamental reappraisal of world history". Kennedy "The Boundaries of Oxford's Empire", 621.

74 Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory", 356.

75 Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780–1870*, London: Routledge, 1992; Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994; Kumari Jayawardena, *The White Woman's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia during British Rule*, London: Routledge, 1995; Nancy Rose Hunt, Tessie P. Liu and Jean H. Quataer (eds), *Gendered Colonialisms in African History*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997; Moira Ferguson, *Colonialism and Gender Relations from Mary Wollstonecraft to Jamaica Kincaid*, New York: Columbia UP, 1993; Ian Christopher Fletcher, Laura E. Nym Mayhall and Philippa Levine (eds), *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire*, London: Routledge, 2000.

76 Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late Victorian Britain*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998; Margaret Strobel, *Gender, Sex and Empire*, Washington DC: American Historical Association, 1994; Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*, Leicester: Leicester UP, 2000. Edited volumes expanded on these themes in various parts of the empire and through different angles. Clare Midgley (ed.), *Gender and Imperialism*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998; Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Stroband (eds), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992; Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi, *Women in African Colonial Histories*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2002; Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernity*, London: Routledge, 1999.

77 Mrinalini Sinha, *Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate" Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995; Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, Cambridge: Polity, 1995; Idem, "Rethinking Imperial Histories: The Reform Act of 1867", *New Left Review* 208 (1994): 3–29; Idem (ed.), *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries; A Reader*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000; Idem, "Men and their Histories: Civilizing Subjects", *History Workshop Journal* 52 (2001): 49–67, Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, New York: Routledge, 1995; Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education on Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and Colonial Order of Things*, Durham: Duke UP, 1995; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997; Indira Chowdhury, *The Frail Hero and the Virile History: Gender Politics and Culture in Colonial Bengal*, Delhi: Oxford UP, 1998; Antoinette Burton, "Thinking Beyond the Boundaries: Empire, Feminism and the Domains of History", *Social History* 26 (2001): 6–71; Schwarz, *The Expansion of England*; Idem, "Black Metropolis, White England", in Mica Nava and Alan O'Shea (eds), *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity*, London: Routledge, 1996, 176–207; Idem, "Reveries of Race: The Closing of the Imperial Moment", in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters (eds), *Moments of Modernity? Reconstructing Britain, 1945–1964*, London: Rivers Oram, 1999; Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919–1945*, London: Routledge, 1999.

78 Jonathon Hyslop, "The Imperial Working Class makes itself 'White': White Labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa before the First World War", *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12 (1999): 398–421; Idem, "A Ragged Trousered Philanthropist and the Empire: Robert Tressell in South Africa," *History*

Workshop Journal 51 (2001): 65–86; Gyan Prakash, *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working Class History: Bengal, 1890–1940*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989.

79 Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann and Catherine Hall (eds), *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Oxford: Berg, 2000; Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, London: Sage, 1997.

80 On the environment, see John MacKenzie, (ed.), *Imperialism and the Natural World*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990; R.H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996; T.R. Dunlap, *Nature and the English Diaspora: Environment and History in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999; Richard Grove, Vinita Damodaran and Satpal Sangwan (eds), *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia*, Delhi: Oxford UP, 1998. For missionary work, see Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Leicester: Apollos, 1990; Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England*, Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999. For science and medicine, see Robert A. Stafford, *Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration and Victorian Imperialism*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989; Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999; David Arnold, *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989; Idem, *Colonising the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993; Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, Cambridge: Polity, 1991.

81 This project was overseen by William Roger Louis and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Rhodes Trust. The editors of *The Oxford History of the British Empire* were: Nicholas Dirks, *Vol. I: The Origins of the Empire*, P.J. Marshall, *Vol. II: The Eighteenth Century*; Andrew Porter, *Vol. III: The Nineteenth Century*, Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, *Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century*, and Robin W. Winks, *Vol. V: Historiography*.

82 Antoinette Burton, "The Oxford History of the British Empire: vol. III; The Nineteenth-Century, and: The Oxford History of the British Empire: vol. V; Historiography (review)", *Victorian Studies* 44/1 (2001): 167–169.

83 Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

84 Alison Games, "The Accidental Empire", *Reviews in American History* 28/3 (2000): 341–350, here 341.

85 Burton, "The Oxford History".

86 Ibid. Angela Woollacott, "The Oxford History of the British Empire: vol. IV; The Twentieth Century (review)", *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3/2 (2002).

87 Stephen Howe, "The Slow Death and Strange Rebirths of Imperial History", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29/2 (2001): 131–141, offers a rather reconciliatory review. For a more polemical one, see Kennedy, "The Boundaries of Oxford's Empire". Most of the reviewers mentioned above (Alison Games, Angela Woollacott, Antoinette Burton) stress the absence of and general hostility towards postcolonial history in this collection. See also Tony Ballantyne, "The Oxford History of the British Empire: vol. 5; Historiography (review)", *Journal of Colonialism and Postcolonial History* 3/2 (2002); Hall and Rose, "Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire", 12.

88 Richard Gott, "Shoot them to be sure", *London Review of Books* 24/8 (25 April 2002), 26–29, here 26.

89 David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire*, London: Allen Lane, 2001.

90 Madhavi Kale, "OHBEhave! The Mini-Me version", *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3/1 (2002).

91 A whole issue of *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* (3/1 in 2002) was dedicated to review articles of this book and involved many historians of the "turn" creed such as Geoff Eley, Mrinalini Sinha, Peter Hoffenberg, Peter Hansen, Antoinette Burton, Jane Samson, Madhavi Kale and Jean Marie Allman. More reviews of the book in the press criticised the diminishing of the racial factor, see Sarah Lyall, "Was the Sahib, Then, Just a Snob? A Provocative Book Says Class System, Not Racial Price, Rule Britannia" *New York Times*, 25 Aug 2001, B7 and B9; Richard Gott, "White Wash: How Can A History of the British Empire Underplay Racism?", *Guardian*, Saturday Review, 5 May 2001. John MacKenzie's generally positive review "Prejudice Behind the Pomp and Baubles", *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 27 July 2001, comments on the inadequacy of Cannadine's argument because of the absence of any other social class than aristocracy in the book. On the contrary, P.J. Marshall's review was full of praise about the fact that this book has contributed to new appreciation of "the cult of hierarchy which is going thereafter to take a prominent place among the perspectives devised by British people to try to make sense of their vast empire". See P.J. Marshall, "Review Article: Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire", June 2001 www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Empire/reviews/marshall2.html (accessed 19 Jan 2013).

92 Wm. Roger Louis, "Foreword" to all the volumes of the *OHBE*, iv–viii; here in iv, this point is also commented in Ghosh, "Another Set", 785.

93 The phrase "invading hordes" comes from Stephen Howe's review of the *OHBE*, "The Slow Death", 133, as he comments on the fear of some of the contributors to the *OHBE*'s last volume, *Historiography*, towards postcolonial, postmodernist, linguistic or cultural histories on empire as a threat to good old imperial history. So is the phrase "politically and ethically engaged" where he comments on postcolonialists ironically being the true inheritors of the old imperial history in the lines drawn by Seeley, Curtis, Lugard or Coupland, that is, politically engaged. Ibid., 139.

94 Tony Ballantyne, "Introduction: Debating Empire", *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3/1 (2002).

95 Stephen Howe, "Imperial and Colonial History", in the *Making History: The Changing Face of the Historical Profession in Britain* website, Institute of Historical Research, www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/imperial_post_colonial_history.html (accessed 31 Dec 2012).

96 Geoff Eley, "Historicizing the Global, Politicizing Capital: Giving the Present a Name", *History Workshop Journal* 63/1 (2007): 154–188, discusses the historical rationales that underpin the developments after 9/11 and the uses of globalisation in history and modern politics. Out of the debate this article provoked, the *History Workshop Journal* published a special feature titled: Global Times and Space: On Historicising the Global. See especially Antoinette Burton's positive review of Eley's article, "Not Even Remotely Global? Method and Scale in World History" in *History Workshop Journal* 64/2 (2007): 323–328, for a discussion on the relation of local and global in historical enquiry.

97 Howe, *The New Imperial Histories*, 2; Kathleen Wilson, "Old Imperialisms and New Imperial Histories: Rethinking the History of the Present" *Radical History Review* 95 (2006): 211–234; Hall and Rose, "Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire"; Kennedy, "The Boundaries of Oxford's Empire", 621.

98 Howe, *The New Imperial Histories*, 2.

99 Ibid., 3. By the same token, it is misleading to talk of one single cultural history in the new landscape of history after the turn. It is a general debate among historians as it concerns empiricist cultural history versus theoretical approaches to cultural history after the discursive turn continued in the 2000s. See the Debate Forum in the first volume of the journal *Cultural and Social History*, especially Peter Mandler, "The Problem with Cultural History", *Cultural and Social History* 1/1 (2004): 94–117; Carla Hesse,

"The New Empiricism", ibid. 1/2 (2004): 201–207, Colin Jones "Peter Mandler's 'Problem with Cultural History', or, Is Playtime Over?", ibid. 1/2, 209–215, Carol Watts, "Thinking about the X Factor, or, What's the Cultural history of the Cultural History?", ibid. 1/2, 217–224.

100 Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002; Idem, *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries; A Reader*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000; Hall and Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire*; Antoinette Burton, "Rule of Thumb: British History and 'Imperial Culture' in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Britain", *Women's History Review* 3 (1994): 483–500; Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century*, London: Routledge, 2003; Stuart Ward (ed.), *British Culture and the End of the Empire*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001. See also Wendy Webster, "'There'll Always be an England': Representations of Colonial Wars and Immigration, 1948–1968", *Journal of British Studies* 40/3 (2001): 557–584; Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire 1939–1965*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. On Ireland and colonial culture, see Howe, *Ireland and Empire* and also his *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of the Empire, 1918–1964*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993.

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