

BARRY CROSBIE and MARK HAMPTON, eds. *The Cultural Construction of the British World*. Studies in Imperialism. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. Pp. 223. \$92.58 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.87

Bringing together new research on the relationship between culture, empire, globalization, and transnationalism, *The Cultural Construction of the British World* derives from papers given at a conference at Lingan University, Hong Kong, in 2012, and is dedicated to the memory of Sir Christopher Bayly, a key contributor who, sadly, died in 2015. Edited by Barry Crosbie and Mark Hampton, the book is organized around eleven essays that span the years from what Tony Ballantyne has dubbed the “globalising decade” of the 1760s to 1997 (the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong) and illuminate the interconnectedness of Britain’s empire. Conceptually, the collection builds upon the new imperial histories that emphasize the importance of empire in constructing metropolitan and colonial cultures and identities. It addresses the construction of a “British world system,” not limited to formal empire, as explored in the writings of John Darwin (2). Also incorporated are transnational perspectives that have challenged metropolitan dominance in the construction of imperial cultures in favor of more complex flows of ideas, personnel, and knowledge moving in multiple directions, sometimes bypassing Britain. The aim of the collection is to stimulate further research into rethinking the relationship between culture and empire through problematizing the concept of Britishness and critiquing an Anglo-centered empire in favor of what John Mackenzie has termed a “four nations approach.” The latter is exemplified in Crosbie’s illuminating article on the role of military, religious, and professional Irish networks in influencing British imperial culture and identities in India, which also highlights how the Irish were simultaneously a part of, yet separate from, the British imperial system.

The collection is loosely themed, moving from more overarching analyses to time-bounded, area case studies. The first six chapters, including Crosbie’s, focus on the role of British political ideals and culture in the British world. The first two chapters, by Philippa Levine and Christopher Bayly, tackle broad themes relating to cultural encounters—Levine between Europeans and “noble” and “naked” savages, and Bayly between British radicals and Indian intellectuals from 1820 to 1950. Levine’s interesting article is lavishly peppered with effective contemporary illustrations that chart the transition from “noble” to “naked” as it maps developments in European racial ideology, including the European obsession with the naked female body. Bayly considers the fusion of nineteenth-century metropolitan and Indian intellectual thought as a contribution to global intellectual history and also reveals how a number of British radicals in India who supported imperial reform and Indian nationalism were of Scottish and Irish origin. Both constitute strong opening chapters that provide a good basis for later, more specialized studies.

The following three chapters examine the significance of political ideals, including humanitarianism, in interlinking the British world. Philip Harling focuses on the Caribbean post-1846, specifically on debates about labor costs leading to the import of indentured Indian labor and subsequent humanitarian concerns. British expatriate networks centered on the embassy in Constantinople in the 1870s are explored in Michelle Tusan’s article, which recalls largely unsuccessful attempts to spread British humanitarian culture, and thus informal empire, in the Ottoman empire through, for example, initiatives to help destitute Bulgarian Christian victims of Ottoman atrocities. Such humanitarian interventions, she argues, reveal that the British cultural world was not confined to the boundaries of formal empire. The final article in this section, by Martin J. Wiener, illuminates the relationship between British political ideals and imperial governance, contrasting the struggles of colonial subjects in

Trinidad and Bengal in the 1890s. Engaging with Jack Green's concept of "exclusionary empire"—that is, the denial of democratic rights to the colonized in Britain's "empire of liberty"—Wiener makes a convincing argument for the "complex and contradictory" nature of the empire (95, 103). The final five chapters comprise an eclectic selection that, claim Crosbie and Hampton, demonstrate a "decentering" of the British cultural world (11). They span pre-Opium Wars Canton (John M. Carroll); post-1949 capitalist Hong Kong and expatriate nostalgia for nineteenth-century liberal economic discourse in one of the last bastions of empire; F. R. Leavis, literary criticism, imperial academic networks, and the colonial public in the 1930s and 1940s (Christopher Hilliard); British "nabobs," their "collectibles" in late eighteenth-century India, and the influence of Indian material culture in England (Tillman W. Nechtman); and, finally, material culture, the civilizing mission, and "Afro-Victorians" in Sierra Leone (Bronwen Everill). Such contributions provide for readers with a broad interest in empire and culture.

Crosbie and Hampton have done a sterling job in trying to coherently thread together scholarly contributions from different branches of historical research, spanning a wide time frame and geographical scope. Individual articles will certainly stimulate academic debate and open up new lines of enquiry for researchers working in the specific areas that they address. *The Cultural Construction of the British World* will also be of use to postgraduate students studying imperial history and culture. However, as with many edited collections of conference papers (as opposed to specially commissioned articles), there is only the loosest coherence in terms of themes, approaches, and arguments, particularly in the second part of the collection. Despite the broad sweep of imperial time intimated in the title, the dominant focus is the nineteenth century, and much has already been written about the relationship between culture and empire in this period. Imperial history is now moving on from the preoccupations of the "new imperial history" to the complexities of the ending of empires. Moreover, as Christopher Bayly has warned, we must beware of decentering empire at the expense of downplaying the economic and political dominance of the imperial center (cited by Crosbie, 122). On balance, however, this collection has much to commend it in that it extends our understanding of the relationship between empire and culture beyond formal empire and deepens our understanding of the cultural bonds and networks spanning the British imperial world, working within frames of transnationalism and globalization.

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JULIE V. GOTTLIEB. *"Guilty Women," Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 340. \$90.00 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.92

CLARISSE BERTHEZÈNE. *Training Minds for the War of Ideas: Ashridge College, the Conservative Party and the Cultural Politics of Britain, 1929–54*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015. Pp. 276. \$110.00 (cloth).

The new political history has greatly enriched our understanding of the success of the twentieth-century Conservative Party. By broadening political history beyond biography, elections, policy manifestos, and party maneuvering, historians have argued for the importance of political culture, emotions, language and gender. Two recent books that focus on the interwar Conservative Party, *"Guilty Women," Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain* by Julie Gottlieb, and *Training Minds for the War of Ideas: Ashridge College, the Conservative Party and the Cultural Politics of Britain, 1929–54* by Clarisse Berthezène, have done an excellent