

MARK HAMPTON. *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945–97*. Studies in Imperialism. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. Pp. 234. \$105.00 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.43

Mark Hampton's *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945–97* addresses Hong Kong's place in British culture and Britishness, a subject largely absent from previous imperial scholarship and work on British national identity. Hampton explains this absence as a function of Hong Kong's one-time backwater status and, at the nearer end of the story, by decolonization and white England's "amnesia about empire" (for of course the colony became important at points in between, especially in postwar "metropolitan consciousness" [7]). Focusing on the colony's final half century, Hampton draws on a catholic range of sources, including documents, letters, books, and press articles. His book is well written and highly readable.

Intended as an examination of Hong Kong's depictions in British and "Chinese British" discourse and imagination rather than as a history of postwar Hong Kong, much of the book could be described as a miscellany of experiences and opinions, chiefly of British officials, business people, commentators, and others who lived and worked in colonial Hong Kong. These are paraphrased or copied, assembled into a fluent narrative, and interspersed with substantial passages of authorial commentary. Hampton's main themes are Hong Kong as the site of (1) "unbridled capitalism," (2) "modernisation projects," and (3) "good governance" (10).

The chapters on colonial Hong Kong's economics, politics, and administration are well researched, and the opinions Hampton quotes and weighs offer a fair, balanced view of the topics. His treatment of matters of culture and identity is, however, less compelling.

Hampton analyzes Hong Kong as a British creation, essentially avoiding its Cantonese dimension. Hong Kong is a Cantonese city, and cannot be understood apart from Cantonese language and geography. The distinction between Hong Kong and Guangzhou culture is in many ways artificial, for the two cities are closely joined, not only geographically, by their Guangdong hinterland, but also by ties of memory and kinship. Members of the postwar Chinese seafarers' pools in Liverpool thought nothing of asserting a Hong Kong provenance, even though many came from elsewhere in Guangdong and beyond. Cantonese culture, imported from Hong Kong and domesticated by the Chinatown connection, has deeply marked British and Western popular culture. European languages absorbed Cantonese words like *dim sum* and *chop-suey* into their vocabularies, together with Cantonese-derived pidginisms, and even modeled their names for Peking and Nanking on Cantonese pronunciation.

In a chapter titled "Chinese Britishness," Hampton asks how Britain's "Chinese subjects" participated in British culture and identified with British values. He concludes that their attachment to "rule of law, anti-corruption, fair play, modernisation (including, for example, not eating dogs, lining up in queues correctly), efficient but minimal government, even democratisation" suggests a "substantial dose of Britishness" in their values (180). His list rests on questionable assumptions. Hong Kong was a byword for official corruption until its last quarter-century, and the "British liberties" vaunted by its apologists did not include democracy until the colony's death throes, when a weak version was dangled before a doubting electorate. Hong Kong's attachment to democracy is not much greater than in mainland cities, if the 1989 nationwide protests are taken as its measure. The first serious call for democracy in Hong Kong itself came as early as 1925–26, in a general strike against the colonial autocracy. The history of queuing in mainland China is also longer and more complicated than Hampton implies.

Hampton extends his discussion of Chinese Britishness to a brief look at the role of the Hong Kong diaspora in the United Kingdom. Diaspora is a natural conduit of transnational and transcultural interaction, and should in principle loom large in a study on Britain's cultural

engagement with Hong Kong. However, Hampton's treatment of it is brief and superficial. His main focus is on the Man lineage from rural Hong Kong, which at one point dominated Europe's Chinatowns. He takes from James Watson's 1975 study on the London Mans the thesis that Hong Kong immigrants maintain a "cultural distance" from Britishness, an idea he sees borne out by Timothy Mo's novel *Sour Sweet* (1982). However, the Mans are an elite business group who came to form what Watson later called a "wired diaspora." They are not typical of the United Kingdom's Chinese communities, which have often formed ties to surrounding working-class communities. Most of Chinatown's other lineages have been unraveling at speed.

As Hampton notes in his introduction, he wrote his book from English-language sources, even, in the case of one chapter, having been advised by "Cantonese-speaking experts" that Chinese sources would not "add substantively" to it (180n2). This is a sad lapse in a book otherwise free from colonial presumption. Hong Kong is and always was overwhelmingly Sino-ophone. Chinese who lived under British rule have expressed strong views on cultural imperialism, and many would resent the idea that they have little worthwhile to say about it.

The biggest flaw in Hampton's book lies in his reified understanding of ethnic and cultural identity. For him, Britishness is a static property marked by a set of ways and values that form the basis for "subjective identification." He concludes that the great majority of Chinese in the colony, rather than "self-identify" with or "assimilate" to British values, rejected "affective Britishness" and, at best, adopted a self-interested "instrumental Britishness." A more fertile approach, consonant with today's celebration of mixed ethnicities and circulating cultures, would see identity not as a fixture but as an intercultural transaction. Young East and Southeast Asians in cities in the United Kingdom, including British-born Chinese and youngsters from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and elsewhere, have created a new syncretized identity, avowedly British in some respects, Asian and cosmopolitan in others, that they call "Oriental" (as distinct from British Asian, used for Britons of South Asian descent). This identity has been brewing in the United Kingdom since before Hong Kong's retrocession. Cantopop, a unique blend of Chinese, other Asian, and Western elements created in Hong Kong, is its music. Hong Kong culture is a main conduit through which Chinese martial arts entered British youth culture, just as an Anglicized version of Chinese food has, in the last half century, become a staple part of British diet. Perhaps because of his Anglocentric perspective, Hampton misses these developments.

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JONATHAN HOGG. *British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the Long Twentieth Century*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Pp. 231. \$114.00 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.44

"Cold War culture" and "nuclear criticism" have long been mainstays in the study of twentieth-century American literary and cultural history; as one of the Cold War's primary belligerents and the only nation to use nuclear weapons in wartime, the United States has held a privileged position in articulating the discourses by which they were understood and encountered—an encounter that was generally taken to be universal. Jonathan Hogg's *British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the Long Twentieth Century* challenges this assumption by arguing for a distinctly British nuclear culture, or rather *cultures*, as his history of the nuclear age in Britain (running from Ernest Rutherford's earliest experiments with radiation in 1898 to 2014) focuses not only on local and regional particularities, but also on the plural, overlapping, and often contradictory narratives of the nuclear age that