

This is an excellent book that deserves wide reading by historians of south Asia and of empire more broadly, as well as historians of the emotions, although this book is not directly located within that scholarly agenda. Yet, it falls to this reviewer to raise a minor matter, which may fruitfully position this book as the point of departure for new lines of inquiry. At issue is the uniqueness of colonial insecurity. In the Mughal Empire, too, anxiety was an important emotional driver of imperial politics well beyond wars of succession at times of regnal change. Anxiety structured the *mansabdari* and other imperial institutions that incentivised and strengthened vertical bonds of loyalty to the emperor over horizontal alliances against the centre, while also necessitating performances that made examples of rebels through extreme violence or signalled imperial power through the exercise of mercy. Anxiety was the impetus for pacification and payment of subsidies to restive frontier tribes (the very same that later troubled the British) as well as the removal from the landed elite of gentry remnant from previous dynasties (a strategy analogous to colonial-era policies that created a new intermediary layer loyal to British rule). In other words, once again, colonialism is too quickly rendered exceptional. What, if anything, it may be asked, was unusually or uniquely disruptive about *colonial* anxiety (and, thus, violence) except its relation to *modernity*? <jagjeet.lally@ucl.ac.uk>

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EMPRESS, QUEEN VICTORIA AND INDIA. By MILES TAYLOR. pp. xiii, 371. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2018.

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Miles Taylor's new volume is long awaited, the author having first broached its subject in article form nearly fifteen years ago. *Empress: Queen Victoria and India* gathers up certain threads Taylor has thrown out in publications since, but for the most part presents completely new material. It is a seriously ambitious, and in many ways pioneering, scholarly production. The book sets out to offer a panoptic account of the relationship between the British monarchy and the Indian empire in the age of Queen Victoria. It rests on an innovative fusion of the tools of biography with both 'high' and 'popular' varieties of political history. But Taylor does not indulge in interpretative pyrotechnics: this is a sustained, mature treatment of a series of knottily connected problems.

The book has two main sets of concerns, both of which represent 'uncharted territory' for historians (p. xiii). The first is Victoria's engagement with India: her interests, ideas, and initiatives with regard to the subcontinent. The second is the place of Victoria, and of the Crown more generally, in Indian political life: both in the rhetoric and activities of the government of India, and in the ways the Empress was understood and deployed by Indian princes, politicians, and communities. Either of these subjects could fill a book by itself. The point of joining them together is to show us how Victoria's own priorities for her Indian empire were transmitted and renegotiated by other political actors. This approach also highlights the ways in which Victoria's status as an Empress was minimised in Britain, as rebarbative to domestic political tastes, but harnessed to definite political purposes in India.

Taylor's account is brilliantly alive to the possibilities of its subject. Any development which bears even tangentially upon the book's central themes—be it biographical, political, literary, religious, or architectural—is fair game. Among many other things, *Empress* offers accounts of the Queen's extensive

personal contacts with Indians; of her patronage of Indian exhibitions; of royal tours undertaken by her relatives; of victory medals issued in her name; and of her influence in the popularisation of paisley. It deals with constructions of the Empress as a model for female rulers of princely states; with the ways Victoria was wielded discursively by Indian political movements; and with her penetration into popular cultures across the subcontinent. Familiar episodes in nineteenth-century Indian politics—the Mutiny, the Ilbert bill, the early phases of the Indian National Congress—are given new life by being looked at through the lens of the Queen and the monarchy. A sizeable selection of illustrations helps us to appreciate the range and richness of the evidence Taylor has turned up. The centrepiece of the book, however, is its account of the origins and subsequent career of the 1858 proclamation announcing India's transition to Crown rule. Taylor caresses this problem from all sides, examining Victoria's role in framing the proclamation, the process of its dissemination, and the lasting significance it assumed in Indian public politics. In doing so he makes the most powerful argument for the unity of his subject. With this much on his plate, it is understandable—albeit a pity, given his ground-breaking earlier work on the subject—that Taylor says relatively little about the role of the Indian empire in British domestic politics.

The book is evidently aimed towards a wider readership than most academic monographs. This is signalled clearly enough by Yale University Press's decision to emblazon the dustjacket with not just one, but two endorsements from Tristram Hunt. But it also comes across in the writing style. From a historian who does not usually pull his argumentative punches, the book reads as deliberately under-conceptualised, and as even more deliberate in refraining from controversy. Nearly seventy pages of dense endnotes betray the committed scholarship which lies behind the volume. But this hard-won material is handled in the text with an almost ascetic lightness of touch: various single sentences must have cost days of labour, and not a single competing historian's name is mentioned in the main body of the book. *Empress* is, ultimately, more interested in telling a story than in defending a thesis. Academic readers, as a result, may find that not all the book's claims are given the robust contextual and historiographical scaffolding which specialist historians of modern Britain or India might desire. They may also find that the volume is diffident about reflecting on its broader implications.

Both these points apply to the account of Victoria herself. Taylor gives us all the information we could want about her engagement with India. But the significance of that encounter remains somewhat elusive, with regard to our understanding both of the Queen and of the framework of imperial politics. Without discussion of how Victoria thought about other British possessions, or the rest of the world, it is not easy to grasp the relative status of her interest in India. Without systematic reflection on the high politics of Indian administration, Taylor's attempts to stress the Queen's political agency cannot entirely persuade. Reading between the lines, it seems that except on rare occasions Victoria's ministers regarded her attempts to interfere in Indian affairs as an irritation, and claims that they "heeded her advice" (p. 72) seem hopeful. Indeed, the impression that gradually emerges of Victoria's engagement with India was that it was patchy, mostly inarticulate, not intellectually coherent, and not particularly distinctive. That Taylor has to work so hard to wring meaning from scattered phrases in Victoria's diaries and correspondence suggests that she did not leave an embarrassment of reflective riches. The book shows that she frequently allowed single accounts of events, or the arguments of preferred advisors, to shape her perception, and she does not seem to have had much interest in Indian literature (p. 52). What she appears to have responded to most enthusiastically, in fact, were the aesthetics of the subcontinent. Taylor's Victoria is consistently eager to accumulate Indian jewels and military trophies, and insistent that visiting princes dress in their native finery even after they had abandoned it at home. But she remains something of a cipher, and we are left wondering how Taylor would ultimately characterise her Indian ideas.

Victoria's political impact on India is similarly difficult to pin down. The book explores to great effect the ways in which her name and image circulated across the subcontinent: from her symbolic status as a focus of loyalism, authorising criticism of other aspects of the British regime, to her representation as a

charitable benefactor, to her role as the lead actor in hagiographic accounts of her life and reign. The Queen clearly carried considerable political and cultural capital in later-nineteenth-century India, and was flexible in the uses to which she could be put. As Taylor remarks, she was “all things to all people” (p. 242). But the book leaves us wanting to know more about why different groups in Indian society understood Victoria in the ways they did, and about the deeper dynamics which conditioned specific uses of her name and likeness. Which versions of the Empress were most common, which most powerful, which most controversial? Where precisely did Indians draw the lines between Victoria and the Crown? Which other figures and symbols did those appealing to the Queen appeal to, and in what hierarchies? What trajectories of change over time can we identify? And, crucially, what patterns of regional peculiarity can we establish? The book draws on evidence from all across the subcontinent, but some of Taylor’s distillations of the convictions of “the people of India” or “Indian nationalists” still seem to require a little artistic licence. *Empress* hints at answers to all the questions above, but never stays in one place for long enough to give entirely satisfactory responses. At times the sheer reach and velocity of the book threaten to turn it into an encyclopaedia of Indian Victoriana. There is ample scope for further, more focused case studies, and especially for the integration of Taylor’s findings within the wider currents of the endlessly vibrant field of modern Indian political history.

With that said, it may be that a full recapitulation of the place of the Empress in the Indian imagination is beyond the grasp of modern scholars. The most tantalising part of the volume is the bibliographical appendix of published nineteenth-century texts relating to Victoria and her family in sixteen Indian vernacular languages, of which only a small number has survived. These source issues presumably help to account for why the book lavishes so much space and detail on more tangible manifestations of Victoria and the monarchy in India, such as jubilees, statues, currencies, and (at greatest length) royal tours. But *Empress* hints at a more substantial intellectual dimension than it has time to excavate: it passes very lightly over numerous intriguing Indian texts and debates, drawing out just an illustrative quotation or two. Future labourers in this vineyard will be in Taylor’s debt for his indications of where to start.

Taylor’s achievement is to show that a single book on either of his subjects – Victoria and India, and the reception of ‘Victoria’ in India – would not be complete. *Empress*, as such, makes a major contribution to modern British imperial history, at the same time as it opens up an important neglected theme in the history of nineteenth-century Indian political culture. It is hard not to wonder what the book might have told us had it focused in greater depth on particular aspects of its subject, and engaged more closely with the vast historiographies around its varied concerns. But that would be a project of a different kind. Taylor tells a sweeping story with great verve, and succeeds in re-embedding the Victorian monarchy within our picture of the tangled relationship between Britain and India. <alex.middleton@history.ox.ac.uk>

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Chaghatay is an elusive term generally used in scholarly literature to designate the language of all Central Asian Turkic texts produced between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries in a vast geographical