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The intimacies of four continents. Lowe argues erroneously that the Chinese replaced convict labour in colonial Australia. This was not the case. Convict transportation to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land ended in 1840 and 1853. Most Chinese emigrants to colonial Australia came to exploit the gold rush of the early 1850s, and arrived voluntarily, principally in Victoria: they were not a substitute for convict labourers. Lowe states that the British Atlantic slave system was in decline by the late eighteenth century, which is not the commonly accepted view: most historians argue that this did not occur until after 1815. She further argues that the British abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and slave emancipation in 1834 resulted from the potential of black revolution and attempts to resolve difficulties in the Caribbean sugar economy. However, most historians would argue that staving off black rebellion was not a prominent reason for the abolition of the British slave trade, and that slave emancipation was only partially related to problems arising in the international sugar economy.

The intimacies of four continents will join the list of sophisticated attempts to consider the limitations of liberal thought in relation to the tangled history of racial discrimination, slavery, contract labour, and the expanding British imperial possessions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Progress and development associated with the liberal norms of the modern world are subject to critical analysis in this account. Potential readers will need to be familiar with the work of Foucault, Hegel, Quijano, and others, and the use of concepts such as 'biopolitical', 'sublation', and 'coloniality', in order to understand the discursive material presented in the book. This is not to suggest, however, that *The intimacies of four continents* is difficult to read; on the contrary, it is lucid, cogent, and succinct in the development of its ideas.

The global transformation of time, 1870–1950

By Vanessa Ogle. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 279. Hardback £32.95, ISBN: 978-0-674-28614-6.

Reviewed by Johnny Fulfer
University of South Florida, USA
E-mail: jfulfer@mail.usf.edu

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In 1891, the chief of staff of the German military, Count Helmuth von Moltke, spoke to the German parliament to persuade officials to adopt uniform time, an effort he viewed as critical to national security. Universalizing time would create a more precise railway system and facilitate the mobilization of military forces and resources. Like Moltke, many European and American political leaders and scientific 'experts' pursued universal time, which they believed would facilitate both military and economic modernization and offer a way to establish greater political influence. Examining the contested nature of global time reform in her book *The global transformation of time, 1870–1950*, Vanessa Ogle reconsiders the universal nature of global time reform and argues that the emergence of universal time was largely inspired by political motivations.

The emergence of globalization in the late nineteenth century and the consequent 'time conscious' were grounded in European efforts to strengthen the relative influence of nation-states. While the advent of uniform time came to be viewed as objective and universal, Ogle writes that it was a Western 'ideological formation' which consolidated Western cultural and political influence (p. 204). She considers the Western perception of time and how these temporal values shaped and extended both national and cultural borders. European and American public officials considered their relative political positions within an

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increasingly global context. Globalization was not only an economic and political process but a psychological phenomenon, which emerged from Western cultural exchanges and the circulation of 'orthodox' ideas of time.

Using government archives and a diverse range of cultural sources, Ogle provides an analysis that moves beyond conventional views of global time reform. 'Time talk' emerged at the height of Western imperialism. Germany, Britain, and France worked toward making 'uniform time' a process of state-building. Globalization emerged within a context of 'sustained political, economic, social, and cultural interconnections, exchanges, and dependencies between world regions and states' (p. 3). The relative nature of economic and political status provided a lens for observers to understand and evaluate their own societies and their role in the global community. Ogle argues that comparison was the most important intellectual device used by 'nineteenth-century observers' to understand and evaluate the growing interconnectivity and competitiveness (p. 5).

Historians have assumed a relationship between the rise of mechanical clocks, which removed the 'natural rhythms' of time, and the advancement of industrial capitalism. In his influential 1967 essay 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', E. P. Thompson argued that time was transformed from 'task time', which stressed the time that it took to complete a specific task, to 'time sense', a more abstract sense of time, which grew out of factory life with its rising emphasis on the monetary value of time and the growing demand for efficiency. Ogle argues that Thompson's thesis needs to be reassessed. If time sense came to embody an influential aspect of industrial capitalism, she argues, then the growing need to save daylight, which gave rise to Daylight Savings Time, would not have occurred. While historians have elevated Thompson's thesis to an 'axiomatic status', Ogle provides a narrative that moves beyond Thompson's argument, extending the notion that history is in motion (p. 71).

Rather than taking economic relations as the source of 'time sense', as Thompson maintained, Ogle examines the symbolic status of clocks, which were signs of 'modernity and progress', arguing that the cultural influence of clocks generated the widespread inclination to follow abstract time (p. 73). She maintains that industrial capitalism benefited from more efficient time-management practices, but it did not 'require abstract time, and not even widely available accurate time, to conquer the globe and reap unprecedented profits' (p. 49). Supporting Timothy Mitchell's 2002 book *Rule of experts: Egypt, techno-politics, modernity*, Ogle argues that capitalism did not necessarily need abstract time discipline; it was more flexible. 'Time sense' was not the 'natural' outgrowth of industrial capitalism. Rather, Ogle situates the mechanical clock within a network of normalization, creating a system of power and subjecting people to the self-regulation of abstract time.

While Ogle's argument for a more flexible view of industrial capitalism is persuasive, we must consider the fiercely competitive nature of industrial capitalism. Competitors were forced to maximize efficiency to make goods as cheaply as possible. Those who did not use their time efficiently had to spend more on labour to create goods, which would result in less profit relative to their competitors. Eventually they would be removed from the market altogether if conditions persisted. The only competitors that would last were those who were able to maximize efficiency and profit. So, given the competitive nature of industrial capitalism, how can we interpret Ogle's (and Mitchell's) notion that industrial capitalism was more flexible than it is commonly understood to be? In other words, how can we come to terms with the idea that capitalism was flexible in an environment of fierce competition?

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Furthermore, while imperialism is usually given a negative connotation, how can we interpret the ethical aspect of global time reform, with its imperialistic roots? Ogle argues that global time reform facilitated the expansion of markets and the development of industrial capitalism, which 'permitted the emergence of a global consciousness' (p. 212). While there were consequences of global time reform for non-Western cultures and religions, one could also make the argument that Western society created a 'public good', which facilitated the development of modern capitalism and the rise of living standards. Considering the idea of 'public goods' is problematic, however, because it is also a Western creation that is assumed to be universally valued. Ogle's discussion reminds us that public goods may not be equally valued in every culture, and her analysis of global time reform provides historians with a way to understand the contested nature of ideas conventionally considered to be natural and universal. Her book provides a valuable contribution to the literature on globalization that would be especially interesting to historians focused on transnational developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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