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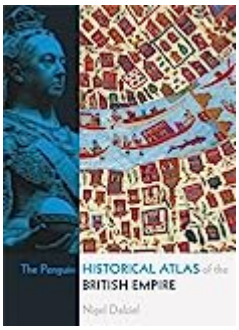
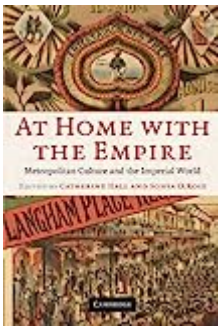
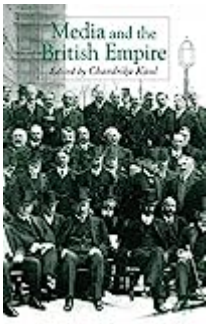


Nigel Dalziel. *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the British Empire.* London: Penguin, 2006. 144 pp. $20.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-14-101844-7.



Catherine Hall, Sonya Rose, eds. *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. ix + 338 pp. $29.99 (paper), ISBN 978-0-521-67002-9.



Chandrika Kaul, ed. *Media and the British Empire.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. xv + 266 pp. $75.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4039-4882-3.

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The British Empire, Domesticated, Mediated, and Recreated

In the introductory essay to *British Culture and the End of Empire* (2001), Stuart Ward contests what he calls the "minimal impact" thesis, the argument that Britain's imperial experience made little or no impression on British society and culture. According to Ward, the "minimal impact" thesis has been applied mainly to the period of decolonization. He contrasts this to scholarship on the nineteenth century where "the vast body of work on empire and metropolitan culture has collectively shown [that] an imperial outlook had been an integral feature of British public life." Angela Woollacott pronounces a similar judgment on the state of the field in *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity*, also published in 2001. "It is now well established" she writes, "that colonialism has been an interconstitutive process that shaped British society and culture."[1]

Yet, the assertion of a consensus may have been premature, for the success of the "New Imperial History" has created its own reaction. Andrew Thompson, in his recent survey of the impact of imperialism on the metropole, identifies three general schools of thought: the "maximalists," such as Ward and Woollacott, the "minimalists," who by and large reject such claims, and the "elusivists," who maintain that empire, rather than driving change at home, acted as a mirror "that reflected British political and cultural trends."[2] The most extensive minimalist critique of the New Imperial History has come from Bernard Porter, in his *Absent-Minded Imperialists*.[3] The maximalists, in turn, can be divided into two broad camps, described by Porter as the "Mackenzieites" and the "Saidists."[4] The former group, also dubbed "the Manchester School" by Catherine Hall, traces its origins to John M. Mackenzie's path-breaking work on propaganda and empire, and the other titles in his *Studies in Imperialism* series. The latter group draws its inspiration not just from Edward Said, but from a range of postcolonial, feminist, and cultural studies perspectives. Some scholars working within this paradigm find the "Manchester School" too confined by "the traditions of British social history" and "sceptical of new theoretical approaches."[5] The more theory-driven work has been criticized, particularly by the minimalists, on a number of grounds: its lack of engagement with the traditional concerns of imperial history, an inability to adequately account for historical change, and a failure to "track how empire-British connections worked in practice."[6] Recently, a number of historians have called for scholars to move beyond the minimalist/maximalist dichotomy and focus on writing precise, chronologically sensitive histories of the empire's impact on Britain that recognizes the tremendous diversity of both "the empire" and "Britain" and the uneven ways in which the former influenced the latter.[7]

The essays in *At Home with the Empire*, edited by Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, reflect, in a number of ways, the historiographic moment sketched above. Firmly ensconced in the maximalist school, Hall, Rose, and eleven other contributors explore the impact of empire on Britain. The contributors approach this question from feminist, Marxist, and postcolonial perspectives and focus almost exclusively on the nineteenth century, "in part" according to the editors, "because this has been the period which has been most researched to date" (pp. 18, 21). The essays cover a range of topics from missionary work (Susan Thorne) to sexuality (Philippa Levine), from consumption (Joanna de Groot), to women's activism (Clare Midgley). The book also includes an essay on Ireland by Christine Kinealy, who argues that although legally part of the metropolitan core, Ireland was, in practice, a colony.

The contributors to this volume are interested in both the explicit connections between the empire and Britain as well as the " 'unconscious acceptance' ... of the burdens or benefits of empire" (p. 2). That the empire had an impact at home is a kind of "taken-for-granted" that animates many of the essays. The purpose of *At Home with the Empire* is not so much to demonstrate the existence of the imperial in Britain (although many of the essays undoubtedly do this), but to tease out the sometimes subtle ways in which imperialism shaped British politics and culture.

Hall's own contribution to *At Home*, a consideration of Thomas Babington Macaulay's *History of England*, exemplifies this shift. It is an engaging essay, as noteworthy for its analysis of gender in the *History of England* as for what it says about imperialism and Macaulay's work. Hall, in what could be read as a wholesale rejection of Porter's minimalism, refuses to posit "how much" the empire affected Macaulay. Rather, her project is to explain why the empire is almost entirely absent from his work. Hall argues that Macaulay must banish empire to the margins of his history because he cannot integrate the colonized–and that includes Irish Catholics and Scottish Highlanders–into his story of an England conceived as a homogeneous, hierarchical nation. For skeptics like Porter this will seem like putting the cart of theory before the horse of evidence, but Hall makes a convincing case.

Other essays in *At Home with the Empire* take a slightly different tone and tack, identifying specific im-

perial influences in Britain while making cautious claims. Laura Tabili, in her attempt to delineate the links between empire, immigration, and xenophobia, acknowledges that imperial rivalry was only one of several "structural shifts and historical contingencies [that] rendered different 'internal others' visible" (p. 53). Antoinette Burton, in tracing the development of the welfare state in a broader imperial context, takes care not to discount the influence of continental European models. The judicious claims of these authors defuse the minimalist suggestion that the New Imperial History tries to attribute all important historical change to empire.[8] Similarly, James Epstein, in his essay on class, echoes Thompson and Linda Colley in noting that understanding the "constitutive impact of empire" requires scholars to "move beyond generalizations" to "analysing specific contexts" (p. 274).

Several of the essays in *At Home with the Empire* cluster around questions of politics and class. In "New Narratives of Imperial Politics," Burton proposes a number of different possibilities for rewriting British political history in the nineteenth century. She considers the work of Maud and William Pember Reeves, a New Zealand wife-and-husband team who made a significant impact on British Fabianism. William aided in the drafting of the Old Age Pensions Act, while Maud wrote *Round About a Pound a Week* (1913), a key text in "shaping the culture of care at the heart of the emergent ... welfare state" (p. 226). Epstein, as noted above, takes on the vexing issue of class and empire. For the minimalists, the working class is something of a trump card, for while there is ample evidence of imperial propaganda directed at the working class, it is exceedingly difficult to know what exactly they made of imperially themed cookie tins, juvenile literature, films, holidays, or spectacles. Minimalists have used such evidence as exists to argue that the empire meant little to the working class.[9] Epstein suggests four possible ways to consider the empire's impact on class: its role in maintaining elite rule, the relationship between the middle-class anti-slavery movement and the working class, the empire's role in creating languages of exclusion and belonging in the late nineteenth century, and the military experience of workers. This last proposition is intriguing as military service represented one of the few ways in which the working class gained direct experience of the empire. Further, returned soldiers, sharing stories at work or at the pub, represent another conduit by which the empire came home. In final essay of *At Home* Sonya Rose and Keith McClelland examine the interplay between discourses of citizenship and empire. As suffrage expanded citizenship was increasingly conceived in terms of service. Although the First World War discredited militaristic notions of service, support for the empire remained an important component of "good citizenship." Rose and McClelland also note how this idea of citizenship was gendered; for example, in the 1920s women were encouraged, through official campaigns and BBC broadcasts, to show their good citizenship by consuming empire products.

Like *At Home with the Empire*, the essays in *Media and the British Empire*, edited by Chandrika Kaul, build on the vast work of the New Imperial History as well as recent scholarship on the development of media and communication networks in the imperial context.[10] The book consists of fifteen empirically based essays that cover a period from the early nineteenth century to the 1970s. One of the strengths of this collection is its twentieth-century focus, with several essays, including contributions by Philip Woods, Joanna Lewis and Philip Murphy, and Susan Williams, considering the role of newspapers and film in mediating imperial decline. The collection begins with a helpful introduction by Kaul, in which she identifies a range of themes addressed in the book: the power of new media technologies to make the empire smaller by facilitating flows of information around the world; the ability of mass media to bring the Empire "home" to British audiences; media's role in constructing identities, whether British, imperial, nationalist, or cosmopolitan; and the attempts by the government to manage media coverage of imperial crises.

Kaul organizes her collection geographically. After the introduction, *Media and the British Empire* opens with four chapters on Africa. Both John M. MacKenzie and John Lambert focus on white settler communities in South Africa, and the role of the press in forging a sense of "Britishness." MacKenzie traces the development of a free press in the Cape Colony through the work of three Scottish migrants, John Philip, Thomas Pringle, and John Fairbairn. He argues that their fight against press censorship in the Cape was a key component of a larger project to "transfer ... sets of European norms ... into a southern African environment" (p. 33). MacKenzie's essay also serves as a reminder that the creation of the "British world" was in no small part the work of enterprising Scots. Lambert picks up where MacKenzie leaves off, asserting that the English-language press in South Africa reproduced, and reinforced, the imperial identities of the British colonists. Press support for British intervention in South Africa was not simply a matter of its domination by mining capital, but rather represented the common interests of the Randlords, the South African press, and British

South Africans. Even the "independent" papers (i.e., papers not under the control of the mining concerns) took a strongly imperialist line, while anti-imperialist papers like the *South African Telegraph* found themselves out of business.

Chapters 6-9 of *Media and the British Empire* focus on India. These essays demonstrate how media facilitated the presence of the empire in the metropole, whether through representations in newsreels and the press, or through the movement of colonial peoples to London. In her own contribution, Kaul examines the participation of Indian newspapers in the Empire Press Union (EPU), specifically the EPU's three London conferences in 1909, 1930, and 1946. Although India's subordinate status within the empire meant that relations between the EPU and the Indian press remained complex, the EPU emerges, in Kaul's account, as a progressive institution. The Indian delegation in 1909 represented, almost exclusively, the Anglo-Indian press; by 1946 the Indian delegation, half of which included representatives from the radical nationalist papers, included only two British representatives. The EPU stood against official censorship in India and gave its Indian members the opportunity to network with a wide range of journalists. "It represented," concludes Kaul, "an example of Indians taking their place alongside the representatives of Britain and the Dominions" (p. 142). Far less progressive was Winston Churchill's 1930s press campaign against constitutional reform in India, as discussed by Ian St. John. Churchill's main ally against the Baldwin government was Lord Rothermere, proprietor of the mass-circulation *Daily Mail*. The *Mail* provided Churchill with a forum to air his criticisms of the government, and also gave him advance information on India and helped to organize anti-reform forces. Ultimately, Churchill's campaign failed, in part because of his inability to get support from a broader range of newspapers, including Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express* and the "quality" British press.

The remaining chapters of *Media and the British Empire*, with the exception of Alain Canuel's contribution on Canada, focus on the British Pacific. These include Deana Heath's study of attempts to stop the flow of obscene materials around the empire and Denis Cryle's analysis of antipodean challenges to Reuter's dominance of cable news. In her essay on the Penang newspaper, the *Straits Echo*, Su Lin Lewis questions the universal application of Benedict Anderson's thesis that the emergence of print culture fostered insular nationalisms. The *Echo*, she argues, an English-language paper that served Penang's Malay, Chinese, and India communities, instead constructed a cosmopolitan identity, beyond ethnicity or nation.

Some of the essays in *Media and the British Empire*, perhaps unintentionally, demonstrate the limits of historical inquiry into the media and its impact in the imperial setting. In a chapter on the *Inangahua Times*, a New Zealand paper serving the provincial town of Reefton, Ross Harvey poses a series of fascinating questions on how newspaper proprietors and readers in the distant corners of the empire experienced their connection to the imperial press system and by extension, the British world. "Was a sense of common citizenship sought," asks Harvey, or "can the decision [of local papers to pay for cable news] be explained on other grounds" (p. 190)? However, after chronicling the efforts of the *Times's* owner, a certain Mrs. Potts, to maintain her subscription to the cable services of the United Press Association, Harvey can only conclude that the *Inangahua Times* "remained determinedly a local newspaper, despite the inclusion of news from elsewhere in New Zealand and beyond" (p. 202). The enticing questions about Mrs. Potts's motives and Reefton's sense of identity with the British Empire remain unanswered. Similarly, Philip Cass proposes to analyze how Papua New Guinea's only daily newspaper, the *Post-Courier*, covered the 1969 conflict between the Australian government and the Nasioi people of Bougainville over the establishment of a copper mine on their traditional lands. It is an interesting study which considers the tensions between postcolonial statebuilding and micro-nationalism, and the role of the press in mediating such conflicts. But the piece actually says little about the *Post-Courier*. Save the introductory paragraph, Cass does not mention the paper until more than halfway through his essay, and he uses it primarily to construct his narrative of the conflict between the Australian government and the Bougainville opposition.

In *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the British Empire* Nigel Dalziel combines the new historiographic trends discussed above with the more traditional concerns of imperial history. Divided into five sections of approximately ten maps each, the *Atlas* begins with the earliest European explorations and takes the reader through to the twenty-first century. Each section includes global and regional maps charting British exploration, exploitation, and expansion. The maps are accompanied by short essays which provide some historical context, making the work a brief introduction to British imperial history, as well as an atlas.

The great strength of the *Atlas* is, of course, the maps. They are beautifully rendered in full color and strike a good balance between information and clarity. When appropriate, Dalziel effectively uses the maps to provide a snapshot view of the British Empire at a given moment in history, while also capturing the dynamism of imperial expansion and conflict. The maps are accompanied by equally attractive illustrations and photographs.

The *Atlas* certainly reflects the tradition concerns of imperial history; readers will find maps depicting British political control, sites of conflict, troop movements, imperial trade, and investment in the Empire. But Dalziel's maps also reflect the "New British History" as well as the New Imperial History discussed above. Significantly, the *Historical Atlas of the British Empire* opens not with a map of Britain's overseas possessions, but with a map of the British Isles, depicting the process by which the southeastern core of England came to dominate its peripheries. Several maps chart Ireland's ambiguous status from colony, to part of the core, to quasi-independent dominion, to republic. One of the highlights of the atlas is Dalziel's incorporation of the New Imperial History. In a section titled "Imperial Themes," Dalziel includes maps of submarine cable connections, steamship lines, missionary activity, game preserves, botanical gardens, and imperial exhibitions. To Dalziel's credit, he also devotes a full section of the *Atlas* to decolonization. One only wishes that Dalziel had come full circle and concluded the *Atlas* as he began it, with a map of the British Isles, depicting migration flows and the presence of Black and Asian communities in postimperial Britain.

Each of the books reviewed in this essay merit our consideration. Dalziel's innovative and gorgeous *Atlas* would make a fine supplement for courses on British and imperial history, and a useful reference for instructors. *At Home with the Empire* commands our attention because of the heft of its contributors, who undoubtedly will continue to shape the New Imperial History. As several of the essays appear to be part of larger projects in progress, *At Home* provides a preview of what are likely to become important works in the field. Finally, historians and media scholars will find much to like in *Media and the British Empire*. Although weighted too heavily towards newspapers (there is only one essay each on radio, publishing, and film), these essays add much to our knowledge of how political, imperial, and commercial concerns impacted the development of the mass media throughout the empire. Significantly, many of the essays demonstrate how communications technologies and mass media undermined imperial power and assumptions. An important book, *Media and the British Empire* also represents a welcome addition to a still small body of research on the impact of empire on Britain during the period of decolonization.[11]

Notes

[1]. Stuart Ward, ed., *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 4; Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 9.

[2]. Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), 3-4.

[3]. Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[4]. Porter, *Absent-Minded Imperialists*, ix. Porter notes that the term "Saidists" was coined by John M. Mackenzie in *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

[5]. Catherine Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 21.

[6]. Richard Price, "One Big Thing: Britain, Its Empire, and Their Imperial Culture," *Journal of British Studies* 45 (July 2006): 603-604. Price's criticisms are directed largely towards that group of scholars grounding their work in theory, not the "Manchester school."

[7]. For example see Thompson, *Empire Strikes Back*. Linda Colley, "The Difficulties of Empire: Present, Past and Future," *Historical Research*, 79 (2006): 367-382. Simon Potter, "Empire, Cultures and Identities in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain," *History Compass*, 5 (2007): 51-71.

[8]. This claim is certainly one of the assumptions underlying Porter's accountant-like critique of the New Imperial History. Similarly, Richard Price asks "how would we demonstrate that empire overwhelmed ... other identities, subjectivities, and historical formations in defining British culture?" He seems to be holding the New Imperial History to an unreasonably high standard. See Price, "One Big Thing," 611.

[9]. For example see Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 321-322.

[10]. Simon Potter, *News and the British World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c. 1880-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[11]. Relatively little of the New Imperial History has focused on the twentieth century. Notable exceptions include Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire, 1939-1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), and Ward, ed., *British Culture and the End of Empire.*

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