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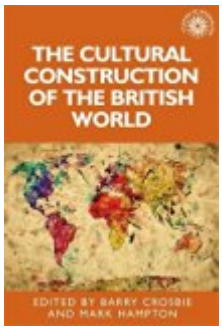

Barry Crosbie, Mark Hampton, eds.. *The Cultural Construction of the British World.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. 240 pp. $105.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7190-9789-8.

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Migration, networks, and culture remain organizing concepts in the history of the British world. The reason is not hard to see: between 1815 and 1914, 22.6 million people emigrated from the British Isles. Sixty percent went to the United States, but at least 13.5 million Britons settled in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. This mass movement affected a transfer of "Britishness" through emotional, commercial, cultural, and political networks that linked the colonies with Britain and with each other. Since the 1990s, historians of empire have labelled this geopolitical system the "British world." In ***The Cultural Construction of the British World***, Barry Crosbie and Mark Hampton push this concept beyond the Dominions, those areas of mainly white settlement. This edited collection offers fresh insights into the nature and experience of the British world, demonstrating the way it shaped British imperial expansion across the formal empire and areas of informal influence. In doing so, it offers a timely intervention into the study of the cultures of empire.

As Crosbie and Hampton assert in their introduction, this volume fruitfully combines the theoretical frameworks of the British world model with the cultural emphasis of "new imperial history" (p. 1). The former approach emerged in the late 1990s the result of a series of conferences attended by historians of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa who sought to nuance the colony-to-nation thesis of previous nationalist historians.[1] In the years following this has led to vibrant investigations in the role of remittances, journalism, religion, and tourism among others in the making of the British world.[2] A growing consensus on the importance of migration and empires as migration systems has emerged from the literature. What Crosbie and Hampton take from the British world model is the importance of movement; that the travel and careering of "expatriates, settlers and indigenous peoples" shaped the circulation of "people, goods, ideas and capital" across the British world and formed new systems of international exchange (p. 4). This analytical focus also allows them to follow their subjects

out of the preexisting, Dominion-based bounds of the British world and across areas as diverse as China, the Ottoman Empire, and Sierra Leone.

Here, Crosbie and Hampton's expansion of the British world model gains significant support from "new imperial history." Beginning in the early 1990s, this re-envisioning of British imperial history sought to emphasize the importance of culture as the driver of imperial expansion and the lens through which historians could see the interconnections of metropole and periphery. According to the advocates of this approach like Antoinette Burton, Catherine Hall, and John Mackenzie, culture traveled alongside the merchants, missionaries, diplomats, and adventurers who populated empire.[3] The movement of British subjects across the globe created new forms of cultural exchange which shaped the nature and trajectory of imperial expansion. Such insights provide the conceptual glue that holds Crosbie and Hampton's expanded British world together. Wherever Britons went, they argue, they "sought to recreate the institutions familiar to home: clubs, sport, educational systems and, where possible, family structures" (p. 6). This meant that even outside the settler colonies enough cultural uniformities existed to see diverse locations as part of a cultural British world.

The introduction and eleven chapters of the collection work to explicate the cultural British world. Crosbie and Hampton's introduction outlines the book's rationale, its arrangement, and its broader implications. The chapters themselves are divided into two sections. The first five chapters bring to the fore the people and ideas that held together the cultural British world. The chapters by Christopher Bayly and Michelle Tusan both argue for paying better attention to British men (and women) on the ground of empire. In both Asia and the Ottoman Empire these foreign merchants, journalists, administrators, or philanthropists pushed forward the reach of British imperial expansion and determined the kind of cultural exchanges that occurred therein. Alongside these the chapters by Philippa Levine, Philip Harling, and Martin J. Wiener illustrate the types of commercial, political, and sartorial ideas that underpinned the "Britishness" of the British world. In each, questions about dress, free trade, and "English rights" provide opportunities to explore the mechanics of cultural exchange and to examine how far these processes strengthened or weakened the British world.

The second six chapters work to decenter the cultural British world by mapping its networks and tracing the ways in which people, goods, and ideas circulated across them. The chapters by Barry Crosbie and Tillman Nechtman argue for a more precise understanding of how these networks were shaped by particular ethnicities and cultural practices. In different ways, Irish military, religious and professional initiatives in India, and the material possessions brought back home by British administrators of India formed specific circuits and understandings of cultural exchange. The chapters by John Carroll, Mark Hampton, and Bronwen Everill then broaden our understanding of the scope of the British cultural world. In their studies of China and Sierra Leone the recurring themes of legitimate commerce, the civilizing mission, and fixing understandings provide evidence of the ideas and practices that drove forward and integrated the British cultural world across the formal and informal empire. Finally, Christopher Hilliard's chapter on the career of Leavisian literary criticism in New Zealand and India suggests to historians that any expanded model of the British world still needs to engage with the Dominions and their place within this system.

As a whole, the volume provides historians of the British world and imperialism with numerous exciting areas for exploration. Obviously, it reinvigorates the debates around culture and empire. Some chapters do revisit the conventional themes and sources of cultural history. Paintings and engravings of explorations throughout North Ameri-

ca and the Pacific provide the basis for Philippa Levine's discussion of the twinned tropes of the "noble savage" and "naked native" (p. 18). Paintings produced in India also feature in Tillman Nechtman's chapter as the source of William Hickney's "feud with the [British] tax collector" and the definition of Britishness (p. 181). Where this volume really pushes forward historians' understanding of culture in empire, however, are the chapters that expand its remit. In this context, a stand-out contribution is Philip Harling's chapter on sugar, which uses a commodity as a lens to draw out the competing economic and cultural imperatives of empire. Seeing culture as more than just "sport, film, theatre and the media" (p. 2) therefore forces historians to look across disciplinary bounds and understand the ways in which culture, economics, diplomacy, and politics together drove forward British imperial expansion.

Together these chapters also reinforce the need to be specific about the direction and manner in which culture interconnected the British world. Barry Crosbie's chapter argues that "Britishness" often conceals the distinctive English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh contributions to imperial expansion. Because of this Crosbie examines Irish initiatives in India to demonstrate how they were differentiated by a distinct Irish understanding and culture of empire. Clearly, the cultural British world, like the broader empire, was not "one big thing."[4] The volume further argues for specificity in understanding imperial culture through comparative studies. The chapters by Martin Weiner and Christopher Hilliard show that similar ideas had remarkably different careers across the British world. In Weiner's study the recourse to "English rights" bolstered British dominance in Trinidad, but also supported an indigenous campaign against the repeal of jury trials in India. Similarly, Hilliard's chapter suggests that Leavisian literary criticism found a stronger following among intellectuals in New Zealand than it did in India. Here, each study demonstrates that instead of being "one big thing" the British world was comprised of multiple, overlapping networks of imperial cultures.

The volume's strongest contribution is its commitment to localize the cultural British world. Doing so bridges the discussions of culture and networks by zooming in on the encounters and exchanges of specific communities. For example, at the heart of the studies by Christopher Bayly, Michelle Tusan, and John Carroll are discussions of individual initiative and agency. For Bayly the "British people who worked in Asia for significant periods" (p. 39) gained a privileged view of empire that made them effective critics for reform. Likewise for Tusan the men and women on the spot in the Ottoman Empire--consuls, diplomats and philanthropists--brought with them a sense of a humanitarian mission and used their position to influence British policy in the Near East. Carroll's merchants, diplomats, and professionals in pre-1839 Canton may have been more transient, but they still used their unique vantage point to fix understandings about China with less hostility than previously assumed. For each study, following British subjects abroad supports the argument that British initiatives oversea created an expansive cultural British world beyond the bounds of the Dominions and the formal empire.

As a final comment I would have liked to see the cultural British world placed within a broader comparative framework. Crosbie and Hampton themselves state that this is one of the aims of the volume. Their cultural British world is one "often precarious 'system'" amid others, engaging equally with "small kingdoms and stateless tribes" and with "such empires as the Qing, the Ottoman and the Mughal," not to mention the "newly emergent United States of America" (p. 7). Yet, this view of the cultural British world as a competing player on the world stage is not always clear in the chapters that follow. Michelle Tusan's and John Carroll's chapters concern the Ottoman Empire and Qing Empire, respectively. But, the emphasis on

British actions on the ground, while necessary to explicate the cultural British world, obfuscates the subjectivity of the other imperial powers. Equally, there are multiple references to the United States scattered across these chapters. American consuls and missionaries appear briefly in Tusan's chapter (p. 85), again as merchants in Carroll's study (p. 138), and again in Bronwen Everill's discussion of the settlers to Sierra Leone (p. 198). How this competition among empires for space, resources, and loyalty shaped the cultural British world is a question posed and left unanswered.

Still, there is much here to applaud. Even the question over the global context of the cultural British world is less a criticism than an area of research for future scholars to explore. By expanding the definition of the British world, by tracing culture's circulation through its networks, and by demonstrating how "culture" itself can be a more encompassing field of study, these collected studies offer up many new ways to think about the histories of the British world and imperial expansion. The volume will no doubt provide a useful addition to the existing scholarship.

Notes

[1]. For the first of these see Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, eds., ***British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*** (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003).

[2]. Gary B. Magee and A. S. Thompson, ***Empire and Globalization: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1815-1914*** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Simon J. Potter, ***News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922*** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Charles V. Reed, ***Royal Tourists, Colonial Subjects and the Making of a British World, 1860-1911*** (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); and Hilary M. Carey, ***God's Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c. 1801-1908*** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[3]. Antoinette Burton, ed., ***After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*** (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Catherine Hall, ***Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and John MacKenzie, ***Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*** (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

[4]. Richard Price, "One Big Thing: Britain, Its Empire, and Their Imperial Culture," ***Journal of British Studies*** 45 (2006): 602-27.

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