



**Kate Fullagar.** *The Warrior, the Voyager, and the Artist: Three Lives in an Age of Empire.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. 320 pp. \$40.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-300-24306-2.

**Reviewed by** Bryan Rindfleisch (Marquette University)

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## **The Entangled Worlds of Empire and Indigenous Peoples in the Eighteenth-Century: The British Empire, the Cherokee Indians, and the Pacific Islanders of Ra’iatea**

Kate Fullagar weaves together a masterful story of three disparate individuals whose paths intersected only briefly in early modern London, but together reveal much about the broader imperial, Atlantic, and Pacific worlds these three individuals inhabited in the eighteenth century. Drawing upon the experiences of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the royal painter, and Ostenaco of Little Tellico and Tomatley, the renowned Cherokee Indian diplomat and warrior, and Mai of Ra’iatea, a Pacific Island journeyman, Fullagar unites Atlantic and Pacific world historiographies in ways that scholars have long critiqued such scholarship. As she demonstrates, and through the lives of three individuals nonetheless, the peoples and places of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were profoundly connected to each other. Fullagar argues that the force that facilitated such connections was, of course, empire—that “these three men shared ... a connection to British imperialism (p. 4). Just as important to the imperial dimensions of the Atlantic and Pacific worlds, though, is the fact that Fullagar uses these narratives to “prompt an advance to the next stage in understanding” empire, “which should not be to indulge nostalgists but instead to go further in excavating empire’s culture.” While “empire has gone in and out of historical fashion over the gen-

erations,” and is currently in fashion, Fullagar asserts scholars need to “seek a reckoning with the British empire by looking more deeply into its rhetoric, critiques, regroupings, and redirections” and “not merely to appreciate the presence of the Indigenous people who faced this empire but finally to see it through their eyes” (p. 5). Altogether, Fullagar challenges historians of the British Empire (and early modern empires for that matter) to realize a more authentic narrative of empire that includes Indigeneity during the eighteenth century. And she blazes the way forward.

Fullagar’s work can be split into two parts. Part 1 revolves around Ostenaco and Reynolds, their brief encounter in London in 1762, and the revolutionary aftermath. Fullagar first brings to life the Cherokee and British worlds that Ostenaco and Reynolds came of age in during the early to mid-eighteenth century. For Ostenaco, his story “is an Indigenous story of empire, where empire is sometimes fateful but rarely engulfing, frequenting altering but never the sole plotline” (p. 13). To demonstrate this, Fullagar emphasizes how the Cherokee world revolved around family and clan systems as well as town and regional identities, while dictated by a worldview that demanded

“harmony” or balance between men and women, civil and priestly authorities, elder and younger generations, and in all things, and navigated through ritual and ceremony. When imperial forces intruded into the Cherokee world, namely through the deerskin trade and the imperial wars fought in North America during the eighteenth century, Ostenaco rose to prominence as a warrior and diplomat who navigated the various conflicts of empire by either negotiating peace or by leading Cherokee peoples in war against the British Empire (1759-61). Meanwhile, the Devon native Reynolds embodies what Fullagar characterizes as an imperial identity or British selfhood “shifting from an idea defined by how one related to others [like the Cherokees] ... to a notion considered much more the creation of a private independent soul” (p. 45). The world that Reynolds came of age in was quite different from that of Ostenaco; it was patriarchal, hierarchal, and imperialistic, although Fullagar makes a point to illustrate how Reynolds’s early life was quite provincial and relatively unattached to the imperial project. As a “phiz monger apprentice” and later an artist who specialized in painting the British aristocracy, through whom he accumulated patronship, Reynolds sought to resurrect neoclassicism as an art form by painting the *ideal* of who the person could be rather than who they were. And despite traveling in the same circles as some of Britain’s leading imperialists, Reynolds remained somewhat detached from the imperial project and thus his artwork reflected “mixed messages on the question of empire” (p. 77).

Fullagar then examines the brief meeting between Ostenaco and Reynolds. On the heels of the Cherokee War, Ostenaco led a Cherokee delegation to London in 1762 to meet with King George III and pledge their friendship for the future. But for Ostenaco, this opportunity was also a means of demonstrating to the British Empire “how immersed in native machinations they yet remained,” and making the point to the British sovereign himself (p. 80). It was during Ostenaco’s visit to London that he encountered Reynolds, who of-

fered to paint Ostenaco’s portrait. Although Reynolds finished the painting, he never showcased it at any of his art exhibitions, unlike Francis Parson’s portrait of Ostenaco’s counterpart, Cunne Shote. To Fullagar, this “portrait that failed” represented Reynolds’s troubled relationship with what it meant to be a Briton and an imperialist (p. 79). Fullagar then shifts back to Ostenaco in Cherokee Country, where his people experienced tremendous change in the decade after the war. Faced with unceasing encroachments upon their lands and using the opportunity of the Revolutionary War to try and defend them, Ostenaco and a faction of the Cherokees known as the Chickamagua, led by Dragging Canoe, removed themselves from the rest of the Cherokee and waged war against the American revolutionaries. Part 1 ends with Ostenaco, the Chickamagua, and Cherokee having to reconcile themselves to a new imperial threat in North America—the United States.

Part 2 starts in the Pacific and focuses on the early life of Mai from the Society Island of Ra’iatea, followed by Reynolds’s ascension to president of the Royal Academy of Arts, followed by Mai’s life in London during which Reynolds painted his portrait, and then Mai’s return to the Pacific. Whereas Ostenaco exemplified how empire was shaped by Indigenous forces and actors, Mai and his experiences with empire embodied a growing British anxiety with imperialism by the late eighteenth century, while still demonstrating how Indigenous peoples engaged with the empire in the hopes of promoting their own interests. For Mai, his home island of Ra’iatea had been invaded and conquered by the peoples of Bora Bora, a rival island, which forced Mai and his family to flee to Tahiti and then Huahine. It was within this exile that Mai and his people encountered James Cook on his several expeditions into the Pacific, during which Mai attached himself to the captain of the *Adventure* who brought Mai back with him to London. As Fullagar demonstrates, though, Mai “was playing [the] long game,” nurturing hopes for vengeance against the Bora Borans with the aid

and technologies of the British Empire (p. 154). First, he had to sail to Britain in 1774 to learn more about the opportunities the empire could provide for him and his people. Meanwhile, Reynolds was appointed president of the Royal Academy and knighted by King George III, while his paintings continued to reflect his anxiety over the imperial project, particularly in light of Cook's expeditions into the Pacific. Reynolds also painted the portraits of several of the adventurers who sailed with Cook, through whom he met Mai in 1775. In the past year, Mai had met with King George III and delighted the British press as well as cultivated a cosmopolitan reputation despite his Indigeneity, which ushered him into elite aristocratic circles where he met Reynolds. As Fullagar argues, Reynolds's portrait of Mai "evoke not only the European and the Oriental but also the Arabic and the Pacific," complete with African skin tones and Native American tattooing, that represent "Mai ... [as] an everyman from everywhen as well as everywhere" (p. 206). Mai was, at least to Reynolds, the embodiment of what the empire could become, its *ideal*. Unfortunately for Mai, his hopes for revenge failed to materialize when he returned to the Pacific with Cook, who failed to provide "the means that their extensive empire had always suggested in Mai's mind" (p. 235). In the end, "Mai never realized his main ambition. But his adventures had made an indelible impression on the people he lived among" on both sides of the globe (p. 237).

While Fullagar's work is biographical in nature, along the lines of the "New Biography" in imperial studies, it is a transcendent biography that delivers on the promises of that genre in spite of its limitations. For example, there is a lack of Indigenous biographies when it comes to the study of empire, for "the sources [are] so compromised—so scant or so filtered by colonial bias" (p. 9). But Fullagar navigates the colonial source base to articulate how Indigenous peoples like Ostenaco and Mai, no matter how fleetingly they appear in the archives of empire, interpreted their interactions with the empire, and their attempts to use the em-

pire for their own ends. Ostenaco and Mai thereby offer "little-considered facets of empire in the eighteenth century" that privilege "how Indigenous people always confronted newness through their own framing rather than those of the newcomers," as well as the British "empire's incompleteness ... [and] the limits of its interests to Indigenous peoples" (p. 250). Meanwhile, Reynolds and his artistic work reveal the growing "diversity of opinion about imperialism [in eighteenth-century Britain].... Some Britons were proud of it. Other were critical" of it (p. 251). No matter what, though, by midcentury "none could avoid it," be it Ostenaco, Mai, or Reynolds.

Fullagar's Indigenous-centric approach to empire, at least in the case of Ostenaco, is also the source of weakness in her work. Although Fullagar appropriately and responsibly establishes the matrilineal, familial, and clan dynamics of the Cherokee world in the eighteenth century, she treats Ostenaco as his own individual throughout her book, while only gesturing at his broader responsibilities as a family member and kinsman to other Cherokees. In other words, whenever Ostenaco spoke to or interacted with Europeans, or whenever he traded or waged war against Europeans, he did so as a member of a particular family and clan rather than as an individual. Ostenaco, then, was beholden to family and clan interests in ways that Reynolds and Mai were not, although Mai had his family in mind when he sought revenge. Ostenaco never acted in the capacity as an individual, but rather as a vessel for his family and clan's interests. However, this should not detract from the importance of Fullagar's work, because scholars have yet to fully articulate such familial and clan dimensions of the Southeastern Indians' world, although the scholarship is getting to the point now that it can and will be done. Altogether, Fullagar provides an insightful and innovative template for future study of the imperial, Atlantic, and Pacific worlds and particularly their intersections within the early modern era.

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