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**Mississippi Planters and Galway Landlords: Parallel Lives, Interlinked Worlds**

In *American Planters and Irish Landlords in Comparative and Transnational Perspective*, Cathal Smith uses case studies of two nineteenth-century men separated by an ocean—John A. Quitman, a plantation owner in Mississippi, and Robert Dillon, Lord Clonbrock, a landlord in Ireland—to illuminate the similarities and differences between two groups of landed elites that existed in the same era. As his title indicates, however, Smith's work does not stop at comparison. The author also explores the transatlantic connections between the societies of Clonbrock and Quitman. In so doing, he provides a nuanced view of how the operations of these two men were linked by their connections to Great Britain, their exploitation of dependent laborers, their relationships to wider structures of industrial capitalism, and their expressions of regional identity within a larger nation-state.

Smith begins his study by delving into the pre-nineteenth-century developments that helped to shape both Irish landlordism and American slavery. He anchors his discussion on Immanuel Wallerstein's “world-system” model, which outlines a global network of exchange that included “core” countries that produced manufactured goods, “peripheral” regions that supplied raw materials and agricultural staples, and a “semi-periphery” that combined both economic activities. Both Quitman and Clonbrock, Smith argues, were part of a landed class that took shape within the context of the development of peripheral commodity frontiers that emerged in this larger world system, and both were dependent on labor arrangements resting on what Smith calls “rural subjection” (p. 20). Acknowledging that there was a difference between the race-based slavery that existed in North America and the system of tenancy that was used in Ireland, Smith points out that both systems nevertheless fostered a dependent laboring class that generated wealth for the landowners. Also providing a point of comparison are the British origins of both areas under consideration. Both men were part of regions that were incorporated into the world economic system by British colonization, and so they operated within similar legal, economic, and social frameworks. Thus, although local conditions affected the experiences of Quitman and Clonbrock, the larger struc-
tures of capitalism and colonialism placed them in similar circumstances.

The experiences of Quitman and Clonbrock were also linked by the way the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain shaped labor relations in Ireland and the US South, which gave rise to a new system of “second slavery” and “second landlordism” that replaced older colonial arrangements (p. 54). Quitman and Clonbrock embraced modern management and production techniques and participated in economic speculation aimed at material gain in their respective operations, combining modern capitalist ideas with premodern commitments to hierarchies grounded in dependent labor arrangements. Both men also embraced an ideology of paternalism to justify their commitments to these hierarchical labor arrangements as well as to encourage efficiency and discourage disruptive behavior within their workforce. Quitman and Clonbrock thus simultaneously embraced premodern and modern attitudes. In this, Smith sees the two men as representative of a large portion of their fellow elite landowners in Ireland and the US South.

Smith also compares the political relationship that Ireland had with Great Britain with the relationship that the US South had with the US North. According to Smith, both Quitman and Clonbrock, along with other landed elites of their respective regions, were “peripheral nationalists” who sought protection for their agrarian interests from national leaders (p. 188). That said, rural elites in the US South and in Ireland followed different paths in their expressions of peripheral nationalism over time, with southern leaders increasingly jealous of their autonomy while Irish landlords remained more supportive of the union with Great Britain during the nineteenth century. Both groups, however, eventually found themselves in decline: southern plantation owners after their defeat in the American Civil War and Irish landlords when the British enacted twentieth-century land reforms.

Although Smith’s book rests on case studies of two individuals, the work is more of a macro-level intellectual history than a microhistory that explores the ideas and experiences of those individuals. Quitman and Clonbrock function as representative men who are there to explain the larger forces that shaped their world as landed elites. In this exploration, however, Smith’s work is informative and effective, and readers will finish it with a much broader understanding of how larger global forces shaped the worlds of these individuals. The book’s scope makes it an important historiographical contribution both to the body of works that compare American slavery to other labor systems in the Atlantic World and to works that examine larger global structures, with particular emphasis placed on those that underpin a capitalist world economy. Finally, for those curious as to how to combine comparative history with transnational history, Smith’s work provides an effective model in his application of a “cross-national comparative history” to his subject matter (p. 12).
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