

## Guest Editor's Introduction

It is a great pleasure to introduce the articles of the Empire in World History Forum in Issue 18.3 of *World History Connected*. Although I cannot hope to claim this introduction approaches a comprehensive overview of the works included it does point out several common threads among an impressively diverse collection of topics. They all lend insightful historical analysis and evidence-based conclusions that advance research and lend themselves to thoughtful application in World History classrooms of all sizes and shapes delivered across various mediums and modalities (an all-important consideration in 2021).

Ian Morley's "City Planning, Social Progress, Colony, and Metropole," following in the great tradition of American cultural historians, explores the connections between urban forms and civilizational narratives. Morley sees urban spaces such as cities as storehouses of contemporary culture and values, embodying and reflecting the society which designed and built them. But unlike most American scholars, who have typically examined this dynamic through the lens of national developments within the territorial boundaries of the United States, Morley's investigative aperture is widened to encompass a world historical view and instead examines the "development of cities as they experience global historical forces." One focus here is how currents of late-19th and early-20th century American ideology such as "modernity" and "liberty" became literally embedded in the urban fabric of the Philippine capital of Manila following the Spanish-American War of 1898, when it became an outpost of the nascent American empire in the Pacific. The result is a compelling study that not only offers insight into the interconnectedness between empire, colonialism, city planning, environment, and ideology that offers a framework for the critical exploration of this dynamic for teachers and students in World History and American History classrooms.

Morley reminds us that contested spaces are the essence of the imperial enterprise, and an imperial power's claim to a territory and the expression of its hegemonic control (real or imagined) often manifested itself monumentally, as in urban design. However, the agents of empire-building need not be spectacular or overt, and the acquisition of territory not pre-planned (or necessarily desired). Indeed, as Moritz Pöllath argues in his article, "The Case of the German Protectorate of Wituland: Reflections on Teaching the History of

Empires in Conflict and Cooperation in East Africa," imperial expansion was often facilitated by individuals with no government mandate, but whose involvement precipitated crises that compelled government intervention. Pöllath's focus is on the events of the 1880s which led to the German Empire's annexation of the East African Sultanate of Wituland. Employing primary source documents, Pöllath uncovers a nexus of private interests and African agency in which European powers were skillfully manipulated to establish a protectorate and to guard African interests against regional competition. Although short-lived, the marriage of local African politics and European empire-building provides historians and students of empire with a unique case study that ought to serve as an entrée for similar work. At the same time, Pöllath's study provides further evidence that when the concerns of European imperial powers aligned, African interests were subordinated, often violently.

The focus of Pöllath's work is on the influence of non-state actors on empire-building. That concern is central to the Forum contribution by Wesley Renfro and Dominic Alessio. In "Empires, Corporations, and the Second Scramble for Africa," Renfro and Alessio explore the intense competition for African resources by modern international commercial interests. This study looks at the efforts of South Korea's Daewoo Corporation to lease fully half of the island of Madagascar to help meet South Korea's need for maize. It is a unique study in that it not only explores the role of multinational corporations engaged in a form of modern colonialism, but also looks at an area of Africa that is underserved by the historiography. As the authors point out, Madagascar is frequently overlooked in the study of imperialism, an oversight made all the more glaring given China's headline-grabbing attempts to secure tens of thousands of square miles for its own use. The authors conclude that their case study of the Daewoo Corporation's efforts in Madagascar is a further example of neocolonialism and, therefore, that theories of empire formation ought to be revised and extended to include private, corporate actors.

The spatial contest that defines empire-building does not manifest only in the physical occupation or neocolonial exploitation of a territory, but also in the vivid imaginary of imperial powers. Arguably, this is nowhere better illustrated than in the maps produced by empire-builders, a phenomenon elaborated by Masako Racel's contribution to the Forum. In "Bringing Japan's Imperial Vision into the Classroom by Employing a Japanese Illustrated Map of the World," Racel deconstructs a map produced by Japanese mapmakers in 1932 and reveals it as an "overt expression of the world views of the map's creators and publishers." On the one hand, the map depicts the world gripped by the Great Depression, with the rise of Nazism in Germany and the advent of the Roosevelt Administration in the United States featured among the developments illustrated. On the other hand, the map is also a geopolitical snapshot of the Japanese imperial vision. Freightened by what Mark Monmonier refers to as symbols of power and nationhood, the map depicts Japanese-occupied Manchukuo

as being plagued by outlaws and brigands, and the region itself as ungovernable. The stability-inducing presence of Japan was the antidote, the map and its accompanying booklet argue, bringing with it good governance and security. Here, the mapmakers have cast Japan not as an occupying force, but as a liberating one; a benign presence bestowing on the anarchic the ideals of order and modernity. As Racel points out, the reality of the Japanese presence in a “free and independent” Manchukuo was designed as a self-interested bulwark against encroaching Communism and a territory to be exploited economically for the benefit of the Japanese. Racel demonstrates what Monmonier put very succinctly: a good mapmaker “knows how to shape opinion by manipulating maps” (Mark Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps*, 1991).

While Racel’s study of the 1932 map reminds readers that imperial propaganda comes in many forms, it also encourages students of World History to read against the evidence to develop a deeper understanding of the agenda and motives of creators. This dynamic lay at the heart of my own contribution to the Forum, which offers a critique of empire in fiction. In “Literature as Mirror of Empire: Examining the Dialectic Between Narrative Forms and Contemporary English and British Imperialism for the World History Classroom, from *The Tempest* to *Heart of Darkness*,” I examine three hundred years of English and British literary output (broadly defined) to show that writers used colonization as a device to raise moral questions about empire, the relationship between different races, and to show how new forms of wealth destabilized the prevailing social order in Britain and challenged tradition. I chart this centuries-long trajectory against parallel developments in the expansion of the English and then British empires, including English empire-building in the Caribbean, King William’s and Queen Anne’s Wars in North America, the socio-cultural ramifications of colonialism on the metropole, and the economic exploitation of Africa. Taken together, it is clear that authors and playwrights have struggled at times with the uncomfortable realities of imperialism and have used their work to shed light on the inequities, tragedies, and hypocrisies inherent of the imperial project. As with many of my fellow contributors to the Forum, I conclude my article with activities designed to help instructors develop lessons that introduce the topic of Empire in World History in the classroom.

In many ways, the ideas I discuss are also about contested spaces—overseas territories, to be sure, but also contested *interior* spaces in the form of identities, notions of self and belonging, and “otherness.” In this topsy-turvy world, empire and imperialism are not as monolithic as the words suggest, for the condition of the colonized prompted self-reflection among some Britons and a desire to act as agents of change. Yet such divergent ideas are fraught in imperial spaces, particularly, as Jason Freitag observes, with the advent of empires—like the British—that were steeped in nationalist and ethnocentric ideologies. Modern imperial iterations preferred and strove for homogeneity and employed

exclusionary practices galvanized by a sense of “self” that was very often defined in opposition to an “other.”

In “Empires and Diversity: Inclusion, Control, and Display,” Jason Freitag argues that the “us vs. them” dynamic which historically characterized modern empires was a less decisive motivating force in pre-nationalist imperial states, such as the Roman, Mughal, and Ottoman Empires. Reasoning that these empires provide a model that can “serve as cases to examine forms of inclusion and the large-scale tolerant management of diversity,” Freitag develops his theme by establishing that tolerance was key if the powers that be hoped to achieve stability. This, in turn, provided a foundation on which they could build their empires.

Shifting across time as well as space, Freitag identifies the political and sociocultural elements of the Roman, Mughal, and Ottoman empires that encouraged a broadly more cosmopolitan model of empire that aided their efforts to manage extraordinarily diverse spaces. The mechanisms varied, from the negotiation inherent to Roman citizenship as it diffused through encounters with others, the religious syncretism that was the outcome of Mughal emperor Akbar’s spirituality and its permeation of the mechanisms of state management, and the parallel development of the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, the millet system, and the meritocratic hierarchy of state, but all achieved the same ends: stability brought about by the pragmatic “acceptance and administration of difference.”

As each of the above studies suggest, the “calculus of empire” was anything but straightforward. Indeed, imperial history, like World History, *is enmeshed, multivalent, and complicated*. And it is the complexities of empire that are foremost in Baishali Ghosh’s contribution to the Forum, “Recovering Local Agency and Technology in the Trans-Roman-Deccani Trade.” For Ghosh, the study of material culture can be an effective way to understand power, for it is the mode by which “certain forms or people enter the historical record” providing them with a voice of sorts. In particular, the way in which Satavahana craftsmen and artisans of the ancient Deccani indigenized Roman terracotta pottery technology and adapted it for local audiences and markets speaks not only to the complexity of trans-regional trade in the “Classical” world, but also the agency of the ancient Indians who recognized the potential of applying Roman techniques to the manufacture of distinct local products. Ghosh’s exploration of the ancient cultural assimilation which resulted from Satavahana innovation of adapted Roman technologies and techniques demonstrates the interwoven and complex nature of World History; here we have a confluence of regional economies, archaeologies, and histories that sheds light on how encounters between ancient cultures produced goods unique to other civilizations.

This Forum will be of interest to students and teachers of World History at all levels of instruction. While some are narrower in scope and take the form of case studies, others adopt a survey-level approach in an effort to provide meaningful comparative analyses to

make centuries-long sweeps of imperial histories accessible. Most provide in-class activities and exercises to help instructors teach related topics. Represented in these pages are aspects of the histories of Rome, the Ottoman Empire, the Mughals, the Japanese Empire, the British Empire, and the American Empire, as well as studies of evolving neocolonial dynamics in countries long subject to the burdens of “formal” empire. Although we live with the ghosts of these empires, their legacies continue to unfold. It is my hope that the work in this issue will help scholars—current and future—study and reckon with this inheritance.