

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81027-2 - A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840

Edited by Kathleen Wilson

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## A NEW IMPERIAL HISTORY

*Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840*

This pioneering collection of essays charts, for the first time, the emergent terrain of an exciting new field in British studies, the “new imperial history.” Leading scholars from history, literature, and cultural studies take on the problems of identity, modernity, and difference in eighteenth-century Britain and the empire. They examine, from interdisciplinary perspectives, the reciprocal influences of empire and culture, the movements of peoples, practices, and ideas effected by slavery, diaspora and British dominance, and ways in which subaltern, non-western, and non-elite people shaped British power and knowledge. Creating a colorful and original colonial landscape, the essays move through Britain, America, India, Africa, and the South Pacific in testament to the networks of people, commodities, and entangled pasts forged by Britain’s imperial adventures.

Highly readable and based on ground-breaking research, the analyses of the imperial dimensions of British culture and identities in global contexts will challenge the notion that empire was something that happened “out there” and demonstrate its far-reaching implications for British identity and everyday life in the eighteenth century, and perhaps even today. This cutting-edge collection displays the pleasures and potential enabled by thinking a new imperial history that investigates new kinds of evidence and subjects, and is not always written by imperial historians, or even by historians.

KATHLEEN WILSON is Professor of History at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. Her first book, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in Britain, 1715–1785* (Cambridge, 1995), won the Royal Historical Society’s Whitbread Prize and the Jon Ben Snow Prize from the North American Conference on British Studies. Her most recent book, *An Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century*, was published in 2003.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521810272](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521810272)

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First published 2004

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

A new imperial history: culture, identity, and modernity in Britain and the Empire,  
1660–1840 / edited by Kathleen Wilson.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 81027 2 – ISBN 0 521 00796 8 (pbk.)

1. Great Britain – Colonies – History – 18th century. 2. Great Britain – Colonies – History – 17th century. 3. Great Britain – Colonies – History – 19th century. 4. National characteristics, British – History. 5. Great Britain – Colonies – Civilization. 6. Great Britain – Civilization. 7. Imperialism – History. I. Wilson, Kathleen.

DA16.N49 2004 909'.0917241 – dc22 2003049545

ISBN 978-0-521-81027-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-00796-2 Paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2010

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*For Nick and Hannah*

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The editor would like to thank the following people for offering advice, ideas, and encouragement for this project: Nicholas Mirzoeff (massively), John Brewer, Antoinette Burton, Linda Colley, Harriet Guest, Young-Sun Hong, Lawrence Klein, Ned Landsman, Philippa Levine, Iona Man-Cheong, Gary Marker, Felicity Nussbaum, Mrinalini Sinha, Dror Wahrman, anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press, and all of the contributors. I was given the usual warnings from various well-intentioned colleagues about the travails of editing collections, but it has to be said in this case the warnings were needless: the contributors have been prompt, enthusiastic, and patient, and the editor alone responsible for any delay and recalcitrance. Special thanks go to Roy Ritchie at the Henry E. Huntington Library, for inviting me to organize a conference on the “new imperial history,” and to the conference participants for sharpening my ideas and allowing me to survey the path-breaking grounds of a new field; to Iain McCalman and the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University, for support and examples of cross-cultural scholarship at its most exciting; to Paul Armstrong, former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Gary Marker, former Chair of the History Department, at Stony Brook University (formerly the State University of New York at Stony Brook, back in the days when public education was esteemed) for research leave; and to William Davis at Cambridge University Press, for taking a risk. I am equally grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for funding that gave me the time off to pursue this and other projects. Warm thanks to Carol Fellingham Webb for careful copyediting, and to Jenise De Pinto and Alex Tolin-Schulz for help with the index. For health, happiness, and domestic felicity I am indebted, as always, to Nick and Hannah: *sans les quelles, je ne puis pas être*.