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Unfinished Decolonisation and Globalisation

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Abstract

This article locates John Darwin's work on decolonisation within an Oxbridge tradition which portrays a British world system, of which formal empire was but one part, emerging to increasing global dominance from the early nineteenth century. In this mental universe, decolonisation was the mirror image of that expanding global power. According to this point of view, it was not the sloughing off of individual territories, but rather the shrinking away of the system and of the international norms that supported it, until only its ghost remained by the end of the 1960s. The article then asks, echoing the title of Darwin's *Unfinished Empire*, whether the decolonisation project is all but complete, or still ongoing. In addition, what is the responsibility of the imperial historian to engage with, inform, or indeed refrain from, contemporary debates that relate to some of these issues? The answer is twofold. On the one hand, the toolkit that the Oxbridge tradition and Darwin provide remains relevant, and also useful in thinking about contemporary issues such as China's move towards being a global power, the United States' declining hegemony, and some states and groups' desires to rearticulate their relationship with the global. On the other hand, the decline of world systems of power needs to be recognized as just one of several types of, and approaches to, analysing 'decolonisation'. One which cannot be allowed to ignore or marginalise the study of others, such as experience, first nations issues, the shaping of the postcolonial state, and empire legacies. The article concludes by placing the Oxbridge tradition into a broader typology of types and methodologies of decolonisation, and by asking what a new historiography of decolonisation might look like. It suggests that it would address the Oxbridge concern with the lifecycles of systems of power and their relationship to global changes, but also place them alongside, and in dialogue with, a much broader set of perspectives and analytical approaches.

Keywords: decolonisation, decolonization, end of empire, decolonial, British world system, John Darwin, imperialism, China, belt and road, globalisation, historiography of decolonisation.

The British empire, in its pan-Oceanic aspect, began as sixteenth century piracy (or privateering), peaked as a full 'system of world power' between the 1830s and 1930s, and ended as late 1960s satire. John Darwin, as chronicler par excellence of this system's life-story, has identified 1968 as the year of its near-death. As he puts it in his *Empire Project*, by the end of 1968 all that left was 'the ghost of the British world system. It remained only to acknowledge its passing'.¹

Few would dispute this dating. The years 1967 and 1968 were *anni horribiles* for British prestige and world role. In November 1967 the Pound was devalued from \$2.80 to \$2.40, and British forces withdrew from the tiny colony of Aden and the surrounding Federation of South Arabia, leaving the area wracked by conflict. These territories eventually morphed into the Soviet and Chinese supported 'People's Democratic Republic of Yemen': a Cold War defeat to cap off Britain's Suez humiliation of 1956.² The cardinal aim of British decolonisation, to hand over to an elite in firm charge and willing to tolerate remaining British interests and act as part of the Commonwealth, had failed dismally. In January 1968, a white paper on defence policy further announced that British forces would withdraw from East of Suez by 1971.³ On 28 April 1968, Enoch Powell, Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South West, then delivered the Birmingham speech in which he invoked Virgil seeing the Tiber 'foaming with much blood', in order to dramatise fears about immigration. However controversial his voicing of prejudices was, it read the death rites over the spirit of the 1948 British Nationality Act (already watered down in 1962): an act that had

given members of Commonwealth countries rights to citizenship after just a year's residence in the UK. ⁴

The hardware of empire was in retreat, the heartware of the replacement Commonwealth was being undermined by immigration issues at home; by South Africa's withdrawal (1960) and Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (November 1965) abroad; by technological failure (the collapse of the Blue Streak missile and TSR-2 aircraft projects in 1960 and 1965 being examples); and by the greater resources the Americans and Soviets had available for courting newly independent countries.⁵ Britain's high postwar hopes that its economic and technological leadership would glue together ex-colonies under informal British leadership – so supporting British world power from beyond the grave of formal empire - soon looked fanciful, if not delusional.

Then, to hardware and heartware problems were added failure of imperial confidence and cockiness. George MacDonald Fraser finally got a publisher to accept his first Flashman novel (*Flashman*, 1969). The bully of Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was reimagined as a coward and cad who nevertheless blundered his way to being a General and Knight, via campaigns across the nineteenth century British empire. *Flashman* was based on a literary conceit (that the author had discovered Flashman's memoirs wrapped in an oilskin in a Midlands auction room), by someone who had served in the 14th Army in Burma, as a subaltern in the Middle East, and who thought empire generally a good if messy affair. ⁶ It captured the sense of ridiculousness at the end of empire. Almost simultaneously, the 'Carry on' team lampooned empire with affection and ridicule in *Carry on ... Up the Khyber*, which reached British cinema screens in November 1968.

Darwin focusses on high politics, but low culture makes the point just as well, that for Britain all that remained was in Darwin's phrase 'the exorcism of the ghost'.⁷ At root, *Carry on Up the Khyber's* toilet humour and Darwin's grand systems analysis say the same thing.

Once the conditions for high Victorian dominance – an uncharacteristic low point in the strength of Eurasian empires, and a large economic lead from early industrialisation – were gone, empire increasingly became a pretence, a bluff, an absurdity. Hence Private Widdle of the 3rd Foot and Mouth (Devils in Skirts) being found to wear underwear – as opposed to going without even in harsh hills – exposes the British bluff and things all but fall apart in *Carry on*, just as in real life they had in Aden. It was a far cry from the heroic images offered to audiences in *Zulu* (1964) and *Khartoum* (1966). The age of empire had ceded to the age of parody, epitomised by the start in 1969 of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, whose 'Colonel' makes repeated, ultimately doomed, calls to dial back the silliness.

This article nevertheless suggests that such a picture of decolonisation is but one possible framing of many. It traces the origins of that framing in an Oxbridge tradition of imperial history, and in Darwin's development of that, before arguing that alternative constructions give the term, and the wider Oxbridge tradition of imperial analysis, broader value. After all, though in one reading Darwin and *Carry On* were right - the British empire as part of a global power system was all but dead by 1968 - in other readings decolonisation remained unfinished, abroad and at home. In other words, decolonisation as an umbrella term does encompass the weakening of Britain's world system of power, but as one of many different aspects and processes.

Even in terms of British world power, some elements still awaited decolonisation long after Britain's global power status had vanished. Britain, for instance, had retained part of the Indian Army after 1947 (a share of the Gurkhas) and attempted to reconstitute them as part of a Far Eastern strategic reserve based in Malaya.⁸ The Defence White papers of 1967 and 1968 did not end the desire to use this Indian Army rump worldwide. Gurkha headquarters moved to Hong Kong in 1971. As late as the 1980s the Gurkhas had four battalions in Hong Kong, one in Brunei (whose protectorate status ended only in 1984, and where the army continues to maintain an outpost), and one in Britain, with a role in the Falklands War in

between.⁹ Close defence relationships with the Gulf States continued despite Britain ending its protectorates in the latter in 1971, as did a modicum of capacity to project troops and aircraft worldwide by shipborne forces, including naval servicing facilities in Singapore. As late as 2008, the daughter of an ex-officer of the 6th Gurkha Rifles, Joanna Lumley, could pull public heartstrings to secure rights to settle in Britain for any Gurkha who had served at least four years in the British Army, whether or not that had been before or after their 1997 move to a UK base.¹⁰

More fundamentally, the notion of decolonisation as specifically about the dismantling of a system of world power (and beyond that, as a particular ‘era’ when western tutelage of others was an accepted norm) needs to be recognised for what it is: one of a series of processes that huddle under the umbrella term decolonisation; one particular heuristic and framing device, albeit a rather brilliant and useful one.

The rest of this article will first construct, and offer reflections on, the Oxbridge and Darwinesque framings of decolonisation. Section One sketches an Oxbridge tradition of empire analysis, and explores how a particular conception of decolonisation emerged from that. Section Two looks at how John Darwin’s works added to that tradition, and broadened it into global history, and begins to ask questions about alternative framings of decolonisation.¹¹ Section Three concludes by experimenting with a clearer typology of forms of decolonisation, as a way of clarifying some of the debates, and of allowing better dialogue between different approaches, with a view to allowing a more comprehensive and balanced historiography. In addition, the latter sections ask whether, and if so in what ways, the Oxbridge concepts and approaches (and empire history more generally) remain relevant in the twenty-first century. Can they, for instance, shed light on China’s world role and aspirations, the United States’ declining hegemony, or on the attempts by states to re-articulate their relationship with supranational bodies and frameworks?

Oxbridge and the British Empire

How did the notion that decolonisation (or at least British decolonisation) was about the adjustment of a system of world power in order to protect core interests arise? How did it establish its claim to be the main unifying field for the study of British decolonisation?

The answer begins with two historians who taught at both Oxford and Cambridge, namely:

Jack Gallagher (among whose DPhil students was John Darwin) and Ronald Robinson.¹²

Respectively starting their academic careers at Trinity and St John's in Cambridge, they lectured on Cambridge's new postwar 'Expansion of Europe' paper.¹³ John ('Jack')

Gallagher (1919-80), Birkenhead-born son of an Irish railwayman, rose to be Beit Professor of Imperial History at Oxford (1963-70), and Vere Harmsworth Professor of Naval and Imperial History at Cambridge (1971-80). Ronald Robinson (1920-99) flew bombers in the Second World War as an officer, and was Smuts Reader in the History of the British Commonwealth at Cambridge (1966-71), then Beit Professor at Oxford (1971-87).

Both had undergraduate studies postponed by the war, and both had first-hand experience of empire during the conflict and on postwar travels; Gallagher as a sergeant tank driver in North Africa, Robinson as trainee pilot in Southern Rhodesia and research officer for the Colonial Office from 1947-49. They collaborated on two works which had a profound legacy for how the history of the British empire was thought about, and which left a toolkit of key assumptions and concepts for others. In reshaping how people thought about British Imperialism, 'Robinson and Gallagher' - directly and as supervisors of a generation of imperial historians - did much to frame the later study of decolonisation.¹⁴

Their first collaboration was on their 1953 article on 'The Imperialism of Free Trade'.¹⁵ This asked why Britain seemed to shift from mid-nineteenth century 'anti-imperialism' (in an era when free trade was apparently preferred to territorial control) to rapid

expansion later. Its answer was that at the official level there was a continuity of motives. Britain aimed throughout the century at *'integrating new areas into the world economy'* (my emphasis), and where this required control, 'British policy followed the principle of extending control informally if possible and formally if necessary'.¹⁶ What changed over the century was therefore not motivation, but context. As rivals became more powerful, active informal methods (so potent during the era of maximum Royal Navy supremacy) became less effective. That meant Britain had to move into new areas, or to turn old informal dominance into more concrete rule.

The article also insisted that Britain saw formal empire as part of a much bigger system of world power, combining political pressure, treaties, gunboat interventions, treaty ports, the influence of London finance in places such as Argentina, and of course formal colonies. Informal empire was as, if not more, important than mere territory. While the ideas of 'informal empire', a broader system of power, and continuity of policy with Britain preferring the cheapest form of influence available at any time all caught on, the idea that Britain was trying to integrate areas into the world economy has achieved less prominence. It did, however, echo in Cain and Hopkin's later notions of British 'gentlemanly capitalists' (an alignment of parliamentarians and financiers with overlapping interests) driving British imperial policy across the centuries, and more tendentiously in Niall Ferguson's notion of Anglobalisation, which sees British power as transferring 'killer apps' such as modern capitalism with its property relations and open competition, to much of the world.¹⁷ It is worth re-highlighting this notion of nineteenth century imperialism as desiring, at root, to integrate new areas into the world economy on British preferred lines, and to prevent newly integrated areas from flouting the rules or disrupting the emerging global system's trade and financial arteries.¹⁸ This different emphasis on the nature of imperial expansion can also imply a different conception of decolonisation.

‘The Imperialism of Free Trade’ also implied that Britain was acting as a policeman of globalisation (at least in so far as that served the interests of Britain’s expanding services and trade), and that economic globalisation was in significant measure achieved by imperial means.¹⁹

Robinson and Gallagher’s next major collaboration tackled the problem that most of the scramble for Africa happened in countries slightly peripheral to Europe’s main fields of trade and investment. In *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Victorian Imperialism* (1961), they attempted to extend the idea of the continuity of British policy to the occupation of Egypt (1882) and from that to the subsequent European scramble for Africa.²⁰ In so doing they tackled the paradox that British emigrants and trade and investment overwhelmingly went to the Americas, settler colonies and India, yet from 1882-98 Britain took possession of vast inland areas in Africa, and expanded its dominating influence into tropical territories such as Burma and the interior of present-day Malaysia. Why? To them, the ‘official mind’ was driven by the defensive desire to protect existing coastal bases that safeguarded influence and trade, and – above all – to protect the route to India. As the nineteenth century wore on the official mind was strategically and psychologically defensive, and increasingly pessimistic that informal methods or international cooperation would suffice to defend British interests. Their sleight of argument meant that *ultimately* most of the African scramble could be traced back to Britain’s desire to protect economic interests (via Egypt and India), even if the immediate issues it confronted were often anything but economic.

Paradoxically, while concentrating on the ‘official mind’ and its determination to defend Indian lines of communication, they made the timing of each expansion due more to crises in the periphery. The trigger for official decision making was usually a local crisis, itself caused by the ‘corrosive effect locally ... of half a century of informal expansion’.²¹ This expansion tended to upset local power balances, destroy slave-based trade and power

systems, and in Egypt undermined the authority of Britain and France's preferred local 'collaborator', the Khedive, as he struggled to cope with debt he had taken on to develop his country. Hence Britain occupied Egypt – a supposedly temporary measure, and initially intended to be a joint action with France – and that occupation then accelerated French activity in Africa (despite France sending troops to Tunisia earlier, from May 1881 onwards). Officials in turn found themselves taking formal territory to defend Egypt's interior and surrounds, and to consolidate western and eastern African coastal strongholds in the face of inland opposition and disorder, now in the context of the growing European competition in Africa that Egyptian occupation had fuelled.²²

Africa and the Victorians turned the idea that everything originated with Egypt into a slightly implausible catchall cause, with Darwin later offering a more multi-causal picture of expansion from littoral 'bridgeheads', now fortified by new European technologies (notably light artillery, steamships, and quinine) and trade, and often driven by officers, traders, and other men on the spot.²³ Quite unintentionally, the 1885 Berlin agreement that European claims had to be backed by 'effective occupation' drove a wide but thin staking of claims across hinterlands.²⁴ The original version by contrast had limited utility to explain, for instance, British punitive expeditions against West African territories that resisted free trade, or events in Asia. But it further strengthened the notion of an 'official mind', feeding multifarious assumptions about empire as a system of power and varied tactical considerations into a sort of unseen, subconscious, algorithm of empire, in the face of peripheral breakdowns themselves often originating in the deleterious effects of informal influence.

If empire is a broad system of power, in which the formal part is merely 'the tip of the iceberg', then decolonisation must be the weakening or transformation of that system. In this interpretation, the fact that such weakening allows greater local autonomy becomes almost incidental to the systemic concern.²⁵ Nevertheless, Robinson insisted that the imperial system

depended in large part on, indeed was constituted by, cooperation or ‘collaboration’ with key elites. In so far as that is true, decolonisation as systemic weakening may also be caused or shaped by the changing nature, attitudes, and amenability of those elites. Two further articles by Robinson pressed this point that empire (in its formal and informal guises) was heavily patterned by these collaborative bargains, whose viability was also essential to its health and longevity.²⁶

Later work by Gallagher on India pointed to another paradox, that the further the imperial state (in this case the Raj) interfered with its subjects for the purposes of raising finance, for development, and to secure new collaborators, the more its subjects had to organise on local, provincial, and then national levels in response. In India this fuelled the expansion of the Indian National Congress as a kind of ramshackle coalition, linking it to provincial and local power brokers in new ways in the interwar years. An under-developed colony might become a burden. A more active empire needed collaborators more, yet its very actions made them more difficult to find, and more expensive to court. Hence by 1939, Indianisation of the civil service was starting to gather real pace, and Indianisation of Indian Army officers was underway, while the Indian Army itself was now being modernised partly at British expense. Gallagher’s Indian work thus highlights a tension: that while ‘decolonisation’ of the British world power system could scarcely be said to have made much progress by 1939, decolonisation as the increasing ability of local elites and emerging nations to define themselves, and to demand more autonomy, was taking root in new and very substantive ways.²⁷ This was evident, even if, as Gallagher explained, nationalism might sometimes appear as little more than a fragile series of alliances and compromises which, as in Bengal up to 1939, could decline as well as rise.²⁸

Gallagher’s work on Bengal, combined with his 1974 Ford lectures (published posthumously in 1982 as *The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire*) made a more direct link between empire as a system (of formal and informal components, constituted in

both cases as changing collaborative arrangements) and decolonisation issues. Hence his Bengal work saw interwar policy in India as the attempted avoidance of British decolonisation, using the 1919 and 1935 constitutional reforms as an attempt to refocus Indians onto local and provincial politics. This created a further range of collaborators at provincial level, while leaving Britain in charge of core financial and military interests at the centre. Gallagher could see that local elites were being strengthened in this process, but nevertheless chose to focus on the British success, in this period, in avoiding any dismantling of the key interests that sustained its world system of power.²⁹

The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire thus confirmed that Gallagher saw Empire primarily as a dynamic 'British world system' of varying form and technique.³⁰ He also suggested that the explanation of when and why that system declined could not be found in a single cause, such as rising nationalism. Instead, it needed a multi-causal model to compound the troika of domestic (British), international, and colonial inputs. He claimed (in citation-free lecture notes) that it was a discontinuous process. For him, there were distinctive signs of slippage long before 1939, and parts were 'decaying fast' between the wars as they moved towards informal rule, before a last gasp revival and turn back from influence to empire during the Second World War. That came not only via the needs of war for tighter wartime control, but because an increasingly penurious Britain then sought to marshal African and tropical resources to provide postwar dollar earnings and raw materials.³¹ In this model, old colonial methods for keeping influence were obsolescing by the mid-twentieth century, in the face of growing domestic economy, international censure, and nationalist awakening that required Britain to seek ever more collaborators, and give them ever more concessions.

But this still begged the same question as Gallagher's Bengal article: how could Britain be seen as reviving its system at the same time as war unleashed new solvents and strengthened old ones? Is that to confuse broader collaborators' and peoples' willingness to

temporarily rally against greater external threat (first fascism, and then immediate postwar economic constraint) with more permanent restraint? It risks downplaying the same peoples' simultaneous, underlying movement towards being harder to secure as collaborators, at the cost of ever greater concessions. All of this was already implicit in Robinson's 'excentric' notion of imperialism as in large part a function of non-Western collaboration.³² Is there a paradoxical relationship between 'revival' and 'decline'? So, for instance, what historians later called the 'second colonial occupation' of colonial hinterlands by officials bent on post-1945 development was both a deepening of empire and yet a force for its accelerated disruption.

Why, despite the troika of solvents (domestic, international, and nationalist), does the role of colonial pressure merit very limited weight in empire dissolution, and that of nationalists seem almost grudgingly granted, as sometimes exerting sufficient final pressure to persuade Britain to let go of an already failing grip?³³ More pertinently, there is an issue of agency here. Are we to see colonial subjects, if not as absent at their own decolonisation, then at the most as bit players compared to the British 'official mind' and international changes? Despite Gallagher's demand that decolonisation be understood by tracing the operation of the troika on each other, the colonial leg of the stool remained the spindliest in this model.

Oxbridge, John Darwin, and the problem with 'decolonisation'

In 1968, the year *Carry On ... Up the Khyber* reached cinema screens, and close to when Gallagher took on a doctoral student by the name of John Darwin, the former wrote an article on the Middle East. This was then published posthumously, in 1981, as 'Nationalism and the Crisis of Empire, 1919-1922'.³⁴

Gallagher looked at how British influence in the Middle East peaked as late as 1917-19, with the Indian Army occupation of much of Mesopotamia, then the award of new

trusteeships in Transjordan and Iraq and the extension of influence in Persia, yet also made rapid adjustments in the face of multiple crises over 1919-22. He traced the way overlapping crises facing policymakers in Egypt, Ireland, India, and Persia in 1919-22 interacted, without getting much beyond posing the problem as it appeared to the 'official mind'. Just before, in 1967, the 50 year wait for British official records to be made public had been shortened to a 30 year wait. The interwar years were about to undergo rapid transition from being an archival dark age, to having documents for the entire period open to the public.³⁵

These are the circumstances in which John Darwin began working towards a doctoral thesis on the policy of the Lloyd George coalition in one of the areas of post-First World War crisis: the Middle East. Darwin's original research work thus had its roots at the close of the 1960s, had its doctorate awarded in 1976, and spawned the 1980 article 'Imperialism in Decline? Tendencies in British Imperial policy between the wars', and then the 1981 book, *Britain and the Middle East, 1919-21*.³⁶

Taken together these works utilise most of the toolkit of the Oxbridge tradition, while drawing slightly different conclusions to Gallagher on the interwar years. On the one hand, Darwin embraced the concept of a British system of power in which (as with 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' of 1953) Britain used a magpie's nest full of methods, and preferred informal influence to formal rule. He echoed the argument of that article and *Africa and the Victorians* that the inchoate 'official mind' nevertheless displayed a broad continuity of motive across time.

Thus 'Imperialism in Decline?' tells us that the interwar years were 'a no man's land in the history of British decolonisation. Conventional as it is to see the First World War as a great watershed in British imperial history ... it remains difficult to show conclusively that the disintegration of the imperial system had become inevitable before the Second World War'.³⁷ In this way, Darwin identified decolonisation mainly with one type of decay: that of

the British world system of power. That creates a powerful unifying field, and efficient sieve, focussing on how the official mind sought to preserve power, including by accepting tactical retreats for the benefit of the system's greater good.

At the same time, there is arguably a contrast between Gallagher's late works and Darwin's early ones. Gallagher had described decay in the interwar system as accelerated, and grappled with the way imperialism needed to intervene ever more, creating more need for collaborators and concessions to them, which in turn started to erode power: for instance in turning imperial deployment of the Indian Army from a free empire-building resource into a 'contract' fire brigade with obsolescing equipment. This meant the latter could be modernised or used abroad only at British expense, as at Shanghai in 1927, or in the direst straits (from 1938, with Britain paying most of the extra costs). Gallagher even writes that 'in military terms, ... India during the war exploited Britain'. Wartime 'revival' of empire came at British cost.³⁸ Gallagher could see the imperial system as resilient, and still able to re-gear in wartime emergency, even as collaborative changes were storing up fuel for potentially increasing trouble: a process we might also label decolonisation.³⁹

Darwin, meanwhile, reuses the conceptual approach of 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' to concentrate more on resilience than underlying changes. He posits others as having argued for a weakening imperial will or change of policy between the wars, with a move towards more trusteeship and self-determination, and towards putting down the taproots of decolonisation. Then he asserts against that a continuity of imperial policy, amidst an age when European imperial systems in general showed vigour (arguably growth even in the case of Italian expansion). In this era there was, he suggests, a continued British willingness to use force to achieve its ends, a continued belief that the imperial system could persist, and overall success in maintaining its strength, such that by 1939 few could doubt its continuing vitality.⁴⁰

Each apparent retreat is recast as serving the structural needs of the broader system, by returning to more flexible, less formal means. The Balfour declaration on full Dominion equality, in 1926, is seen as removing a surface itch without affecting the Dominions' needs for British trade, finance, emigrants, and naval protection: the bonds that cemented cooperation.⁴¹ The retreat from making Egypt a formal protectorate (1914) to formally independent (1922) is presented as a preserving imperial communications, external defence, foreign, and financial interests, while sloughing off the burden of direct management of Egyptian politics.⁴² Wafd nationalists and the monarchy could be diverted into fighting parochial battles, leaving loftier British interests secure. Britain removed any residual Egyptian control of the Sudan in 1924, kept decisive influence over the Egyptian army, and negotiated a perpetual treaty that kept its right to Suez bases in 1936, albeit with provision for renegotiation of the terms after 20 years.

In India, likewise, the argument is that Britain retained control of all that mattered to its system of power. It enlarged the pool of Indian collaborators, deflecting much political activity to the provinces. The key was to exchange post-1919 dyarchy (giving Indians powers only over some departments) for almost complete responsible government in the provinces effective from 1937. The 1935 Government of India Act would hopefully deflect Indians from all-India agitation, while postponing responsible government at the centre until the day Indian princely states could be added there, as conservative ballast against nationalist politicians. As with Egypt, defence and foreign affairs would remain British controlled even then. As with Egypt, there was hope of constraining a powerful nationalist body – here the Indian National Congress - by changing the political framework and allowing responsible government, while reserving core imperial interests. The result: 'streamlined efficiency'.⁴³

In short, if you saw 'decolonisation' as the forced or managed decline of the 'British imperial system', the interwar period became (in my words not Darwin's) 'not-decolonisation'. The preface to Darwin's next book, *Britain and Decolonisation* (1988),

therefore offered ‘an unsentimental interpretation of Britain’s retreat from empire and world power’, to be anchored around the effect of the Second World War in initiating changes that precipitated decolonisation. The Oxbridge tradition was gradually defining ‘decolonisation’ - or at least focussing its study - in ways that fitted its view of British imperialism: as the mirror image of the construction of a British system of world power, of which ‘the empire project’ was a subset, and which by strategic, commercial, demographic, and communication interdependencies kept in orbit a ‘chaotic pluralism’ of interests, agents, allies, and fellow travellers.⁴⁴

The changes deriving from the Second World War are sharply contrasted with those from the First, and seen as ‘generating a series of fundamental changes in world politics’ that were decisive. Far from a post-1918 disengagement of Russia and the US, there was post-1945 engagement, and rhetorical commitment from both to self-determination. Far from Britain emerging economically diminished but still strong, 25 per cent of its national wealth had been consumed, more than half its export trade temporarily diverted into war production, and international investments converted into vast debts to Sterling Area countries. Rather than being able to return to salutary neglect of colonies, it felt propelled into what has been labelled the ‘second colonial occupation’.⁴⁵ That is, increasing interference in the hope of further developing colonies, and their export of goods that Britain needed for consumption and for dollar earnings. Rather than emerging undefeated, Britain had been humiliated at Singapore in 1942 and temporarily shorn of colonies from Hong Kong to the border of India. It had in its hour of greatest darkness promised India dominion status for after the war, and had in 1943 given up treaty ports in China. Combined with the war’s effects on colonies – inflation, controls, ex-veterans in large numbers - such changes created ‘remarkably favourable conditions’ for postwar nationalists to demand concessions.⁴⁶

Darwin’s *Empire Project* thus sees the fate of the world-system in which the British Empire was embedded as ‘largely determined by geopolitical forces over which the British

themselves had little control'. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Britain, or more accurately its myriad, chaotic variety of expansionary settlers, businesses, and investors - had taken advantage of the opportunities provided as a gap opened up between the two ends of Eurasia: Europe and East Asia. As East Asia started to close that gap, the basis for British world power weakened, and it only survived the 'strategic catastrophe of 1938 to 1942' by actions that further undermined it: its promise of full Indian self-government, its increasing recruitment of colonial military and economic help, and intensified interference in daily lives in its colonies.⁴⁷

In these conditions, concatenations of international, domestic, and colonial pressures produced two unwelcome 'convulsive movements' of decolonisation: an Asian one of 1945-8 and an African one of 1960-64.⁴⁸ Even as these waves unfolded, Britain dreamed of keeping its system of power by reformulating it. It would cash in formal control early enough (even if it thought that some colonies' journey to full self-government might take decades), to pay dividends in increased informal influence.⁴⁹ That dream encouraged Britain to increase the rate of concessions whenever nationalists demonstrated substantive control of local opinion. But both Gallagher and Darwin argue that Britain was disappointed with the results, as its mid twentieth century economy and power left it 'under-engined' (to borrow a felicitous phrase of Gallagher's) to sustain its place as *primus inter pares* in an engorged Commonwealth. As Darwin puts it, 'slow, inexorable, glacier-like forces of economic and technological decline' meant Britain could not dominate the empire's postcolonial progeny, 'however shrewdly the British stage-managed the installation of successor elites'.⁵⁰

As with Gallagher's 1974 lectures, Darwin also emphasises the interlocking of colonial, international, and domestic factors. Not for him the stronger emphasis on one particular factor. Even Ronald Robinson's 'peripheral' argument that collaborators grew increasingly capable and able to assert greater demands, is seen as more consequence than cause of British weakness and international changes.⁵¹ Instead, decolonisation as British

decline is ascribed to how the crisis of empire in the Second World War fed into an interplay between domestic, colonial, and international factors, to gradually remove ‘the favourable circumstances’ that had made imperial power defensible before 1939. British will to world power persisted, but ‘the long fuse was lit [for the British] by their geostrategic defeats of 1939-42’. These inflicted ‘four indelible injuries on their system of empire from which it would never recover: ending the intense special relationship with the white Dominions; freeing India and so ‘the great auxiliary motor of British world power’; turning the world’s great creditor into a debtor nation; and drawing the USA, Soviet Union, and nationalist China onto the world stage as major actors.⁵² This ‘geostrategic disaster’ corroded the basis for power, changed the bidding terms for collaboration, and most immediately forced Britain to concede partition of a newly independent India and Pakistan in August 1947, Ceylonese independence in 1948, and, in the same year, Burmese independence and exit from the Commonwealth.⁵³

Oddly, this approach to decolonisation might imply that however much the global situation had turned against Britain, the loss of its South Asian colonies was only tangentially decolonisation in the bigger sense. For Britain adjusted, rather than accepting that its global world system was in terminal decline. It believed these tweaks could leave it as strong, if not stronger, as a global power. It extracted a nano-scale new Indian Army (under half the Gurkha Regiments, or 8 battalions), constructing around that the embryo for a British-Gurkha strategic reserve in Malaya.⁵⁴

Darwin’s approach, however, could distract from the impressive originality, breadth, and depth of Britain’s postwar imperial and great power ambitions and actions, particularly as reflected in chiefs of staff and prime ministerial files of the time. Far from scaling back ambitions, a postwar chiefs of staff fantasy did the job that the post-World War One ‘fantasy empire’ of Curzon had, convincing the British they needed the Middle East as a key area for British world power, and new bases, new colonies, and new federations. The military

believed they had not the strength to sustain any future global struggle on old terms and as a sole main industrial base: the fall of Singapore had illustrated that. So they dreamt they could encourage the White Dominions and India each to become a 'Main Support Area' for its surrounding theatre in any future global war, providing not just troops but the necessary industrial and logistic resources, even if that meant allowing them more prominent roles in regional planning. Even after Indian independence, they continued until 1950 in vain hopes of drawing India into wider organisations and defence planning, settling in the end for its participation in the Commonwealth, and in the 'Colombo Plan' of 1950. The latter disappointingly only coordinated aid and technical assistance in South and Southeast Asia, rather than delivering the Indian defence entanglements that Britain craved.⁵⁵

British hopes for a regional partnership with post-independence India continued to be frustrated. But the Cold War struggle that emerged by 1948 fortified Britain's belief that its role on the global stage remained vital despite that loss. After NATO was founded and the Korean War fought, the British believed that the strength and reach offered by the combination of military power and empire were essential bulwarks against communist expansion, and also offered the best hope of retaining access to, and influence over, American planning. Hence the unprecedented decisions to keep and then extend peacetime National Service, with the last of 2 million men ending service in 1963, and almost 20,000 on active service abroad as late as 1956.⁵⁶ Most of those hopes were to die, but in each case the death was slow enough to seem reversible up to the early 1960s. Even the Suez fiasco of 1956 did not entirely rid the United States of the desire for the UK to manage colonial disengagement very carefully, and to see the UK as an ally in multiple regions.⁵⁷

In addition, Britain planned not just a 'second colonial reoccupation' in 1942-46, a replacement of salutary neglect with an army of officials to tax and develop colonial resources, but radical colonial restructuring. Colonial trusteeships, and fractured 'plural societies', where Britain operated as an 'iron framework' over varied communities, needed

replacing by an approach centred on the nurturing of new 'nations', and bigger and stronger states. Colonies must increasingly strengthen rather than sap the overall system in peace and wartime. They needed to be led towards more active partnership, not just as a sop to international opinion but to buttress Britain. Hence new nations were to be encouraged, new federations and colonies planned. The preferred answer to the Muslim League's demands in India would have been a federal structure. Multiple tiny protectorates on the Malayan peninsula became a 'Malayan Union colony' in 1946 and, when that proved unpalatable to Malays, a 'Federation of Malaya' in 1948, and of Malaysia in 1963. The Brooke rajas were bought out to make Sarawak a colony in 1946, and the North Borneo Company to make that a colony too. Britain hoped to nurture a broader federation there, possibly ultimately a Dominion of Southeast Asia, while other imperial schemes were tried in South Arabia (in 1963, after some other federations had already broken up), the Caribbean, Nigeria, and Central Africa.⁵⁸ Even if the federal dreams mostly came crashing down (or in Nigeria clung on despite later Biafran separatism of 1967-70), and even if the British were deluded about the longer term durability of their world position, it seemed more real and necessary than ever into the 1950s, notwithstanding the loss of the Indian 'engine' of empire.

Meanwhile, to recap, there is a paradox here. Focussing on decolonisation as the ending of a British system of world power leaves us struggling to encompass much of what an overarching story of decolonisation might need to include: for instance the struggles for independence in the Americas from 1763; the gaining of independence of Britain's South Asian colonies seen from their perspective; or indeed any individual territories' struggle for independence (or the comparative study of such struggles); or 'subaltern' aims and experiences.⁵⁹ Furthermore, focus on the macro-systemic level can make the great Asian independence wave/divestment of 1942-48 seem almost like a late afterthought and by-product of war, rather than war being to some extent the final catalyst on top of an underlying growth of will and capacity to envisage and demand self-government. It makes that great

wave of Asian decolonisation seem almost not decolonisation at all, since the wider motive and system sails blithely past it. Finally, it downplays what Benedict Anderson calls the growth of nations as ‘imagined political’ communities (able to conjure up imagined decolonisations) along with the growing concessions Gallagher identifies as needed over time to sustain empire, and to ensure it modernised.⁶⁰

Darwin goes further, arguing that decolonisation is not just the process of ending a system of empire, but also a distinctive historical era. In his historiographical essay for Volume V of the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, he identifies ‘Four definitions of decolonization’; as ‘the legal-constitutional ... transfer of power’, rejected as too limited; ‘the pursuit of a modified imperialism by other means’, regardless of constitutional niceties; Frantz Fanon’s ‘complete extrusion of all foreign influence’, a focus on the extremities of Fanon’s position that is immediately rejected; and ‘the breakdown of ... the ‘global colonial order’’.⁶¹

In fact Fanon is just one of a raft of authors who grapple with the question of how to avoid the colonising culture, including as carried by its language and forms of governance, continuing to dominate. Despite some, such as Kenyan Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo, seeking the answer in a return to writing in indigenous languages (for him Gikuyu and Kiswahili) that can also divide postcolonial countries, this is not entirely naïve.⁶² Singapore and Malaysian politicians and authors have grappled for decades with the question of how to bind different languages and cultures around some hub-identity that gives coherence. Malaysia choosing Malay cultural and linguistic dominance with Chinese and Indian admixtures as subordinate, Singapore shifting from making Malay the core to having English plus ‘mother tongue’ education obligatory for children’s education. Singapore initially experimented with a ‘rojak’ identity (a blending of styles of dress, food, art, and language), before settling on that later idea of English-language binding for business and cosmopolitanism, with added and distinct ‘mother tongue’ language and culture.⁶³ The point is that the pre and post-independence’

struggle to pursue ‘decolonisation’ by defining a ‘nation’ and its limits, to continue building something new and distinct from mere colonial inheritance or global everyman, and to domesticate and extrude select parts of the colonial inheritance, is just as much a part of the decolonisation process as the musings of the imperial mind on systems of power.

Fanon, meanwhile, is most useful for his grappling with the idea that decolonisation needs to be of the mind as well as of the place – he was after all a French-trained psychologist – and that new identities had to be forged, with due regard to the dangers that posed. His thinking was rooted in his early experience of feeling French, while being classified by many French as lesser. Though we might disagree over how far Fanon, amidst the Algerian War, overrated violence in creating the colonial subject’s sense of separateness and independence, one of the central dilemmas of any decolonising state was how to realise a new identity, as a nation, a state, and citizenship. Fanon is not, in some respects, so far from Benedict Anderson’s work, in that what he is talking about is the forging of new imagined citizens and nations, which require imagined decolonisations.

Far from being easily dismissed, Fanon’s name reminds us that for many decolonisation was a process to do with reclaiming different sorts of autonomy (political, economic, cultural, psychic) vis-à-vis colonial overlordship. It also reminds us that this implied replacing part of what was excluded with new forms in much wider realms than mere politics. Decolonisation can be as much about defining what would replace colonial control, as about its mere replacement. In film terms, this suggests we can reshoot the story of decolonisation from very different points of view: including that of the imperial power, that of the colonised, and of colonised arguing amongst themselves. Or that some of our decolonisation overviews might shift point of view regularly between official minds and subaltern minds, hearts, emotions and even literary and fictional explorations. Given our theme of ‘Decolonisation and Globalisation’, however, it is Darwin’s last definition, of an era of decolonisation, which must detain us a little longer.

In Volume V of the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, Darwin also defines decolonisation as ‘the collapse since 1945 of the global infrastructure which sustained British and other European imperialisms’.⁶⁴ According to this argument European colonialism only truly ‘globalised’, creating a ‘global colonial order’ around 1880-1960. This was a matter not just of the division of the world, but of ideas. It was supported by: ‘a conception of international order which explicitly repudiated self-government for ‘backward’ societies and tacitly recognised forcible intervention in them, or the assertion of authority over them, in pursuit of the national interest of ‘civilized’ powers’. It was accompanied by a division of labour with the European powers (and the USA and Japan) retaining advanced industrial and service functions, and dominated areas concentrating more on commodities. The ‘open economy’ oiled this process by facilitating flows of capital and labour, while reducing the capacity of subordinated economic areas to protect new industries, or control immigration.⁶⁵

So Darwin stresses two definitions; firstly as the British ‘pursuit of a modified imperialism by other means’; secondly, as the ‘overthrow of this structure of institutions and ideas between 1945 and the mid-1960s’, to be replaced by a ‘post-colonial order’ in cultural as well as political terms.⁶⁶

This latter emphasis is echoed by recent work on the creation of that anticolonial order, and in a general move towards supporting human rights and self-determination. This culminated with newly independent countries (17 African countries joining the United Nations in 1960 alone) pushing through the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 1514 (XV), the ‘Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples’ in 1960. That declared subjugation to alien domination a denial of human rights and called for its rapid ending. Though only recommendatory, it ramped up international pressure, and presaged the UN Special Committee for Decolonisation, soon known as ‘The Committee of 24’, formed in 1961. Britain joined the latter, thinking it better to try to ameliorate criticism in its enquires and reports than to ignore it, and that letting the

Soviet Union appear more supportive of colonial progress was unwise.⁶⁷ Historians have also asked how far decolonisation was not just a symptom of this change, but ‘a globalising force’ that drove this international normative change, making the idea of ‘racial’ hierarchy (even of a temporary developmental kind) anathema.⁶⁸

There was also a move, over the 1950s-60s, towards press and pressure groups being more effective at bringing colonial human rights issues to light, with Greece referring Britain to the European Commission of Human Rights over Cyprus in 1956. It was becoming more difficult to use methods such as detention without trial, let alone large scale resettlement of civilians, without incurring significant international criticism, though we should not exaggerate the extent of this. Portugal’s empire blithely continued into the 1970s, and in the same decade it was domestic pressure more than international that forced Britain to temper and screen its detention and interrogation tactics in Northern Ireland, with Britain practicing a sort of evasive cooperation with bodies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.⁶⁹

The attempt to portray international norms as having been largely decolonised by the 1960s is therefore wrong in important respects: attitudes and tolerances had only partly shifted. As with feminism, where a second 1970s wave decided the first wave of legislative equality had merely touched the surface, so with decolonisation, the first era of normative change was only partial. It was driven by the concerns of the formal colonies which had gained independence in the 1940s-60s, and had no desire to see decolonisation extended to any constituent peoples or parts of their new states. The wave of decolonisation that created them mainly touched on formal colonies. It left issues of decolonisation still to be tackled, in so far as far as first peoples and non-white subjects of settler colonies (and, as Hopkins notes, of the United States too) were concerned.⁷⁰

The UNGA only agreed on how to deal with issues relating to indigenous peoples after it was clear that doing so would not significantly affect the states concerned. On 13 September 2007, after two decades of debate, the UN issued the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Articles 3 and 4 stated that ‘indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development’. They also had ‘the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions’.

Many additional claims and questions remain, about Palestinians, Uighurs, Tibetans, and other peoples, whose status is variously justified by strategic necessity, claims that historical overlordship justify contemporary rule, and even that development and higher order politics justify rule by, and mass emigration from, a core of radically different cultural and ethnic composition.⁷¹

In short, mid twentieth century dismantling of the ideological and institutional apparatus of colonialism was partially effective only, and an added irritant to imperial systems rather than a necessarily fatal intervention. In particular, the addition of many new states with ‘plural societies’ and markedly contrasting regions shackled into old colonial borders possibly intensified the United Nation’s tendency to see territorial integrity of existing member states as inviolable. Which in turn may have made the addressing of ‘internal colonialism’ (over first peoples, distinct ethnic groups, and forcibly transferred populations with restricted rights) as, if not more, difficult than ever. One sort of decolonisation may have retarded another.⁷²

These and other newer foci on what needed to be decolonised, such as the ‘postcolonial’ historical turn (as opposed to more rarefied postcolonial theory) that looks at literary, linguistic, and cultural patterns that empire had ingrained, rose to prominence in the

1980s and 90s. By the end of this period, there was a turn towards the global aspects of imperial history. Decolonisation was becoming less interesting to a tradition focussed on British perspectives and the overall system, as the British system's demise had been explained on the macro level, and newly independent states encouraged nationalist history, while regional studies also grew in strength.

Just as it was becoming unclear what the future of empire studies was, Darwin's attention turned global. *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire since 1405* (2007) decentred Europe to allow for the comparative strength of Eurasian empires up until around 1750, and the persistent core strength of Asian states thereafter (China, Persia, Turkey, and then Japan). The latter group, Darwin argued, prevented Europe from ever completing its collective 'global empire'. This also allowed a focus on old and new 'why' questions. Why did the Europeans steal ahead of Eurasian empires from 1750 in a 'divergence' and 'Eurasian revolution', ushering in an era of 'semi-globalization'? Why did the resultant lead eventually weaken? The latter being linked to the long European civil war and world crises of 1914-1945, occurring just as Asian states were self-strengthening. The subsequent atrophy of European empires then leaves the United States, after the Soviet collapse, as 'the only world empire'.

More precisely, the United States remained the only 'world system of power', since it ended some territories' colonial status, even as it built military bases worldwide. It granted independence to the Philippines (1946), and made Hawai'i a full state, leaving only the faintest vestiges of empire-like formal control. By contrast, as Darwin notes, by 2003 it had over 700 overseas military bases and 234 military golf courses in 130 countries. That points to another logical future direction for decolonisation, the study of the 'decline' or inflection of the American system of power in the face of Eurasian energisation and – since *After Tamerlane* – China's post-2013 'Belt and Road' project and expanding naval and missile reach.⁷³

What makes this latter story particularly fascinating is the way China is both like, and also very unlike, the nineteenth century Britain of Robinson and Gallagher's imagining. Britain as of the 1830s, and China as of the 2010s, had both experienced four decades of rapid industrialisation, both led in certain types of development, and both had consolidated mainland empires/peripheries (India and arguably the Celtic outreaches too for Britain, the West and Northwest for China). But Britain had achieved an industrial lead, and was headed for domination of the world merchant marine and services. China is unlikely to catch United States economic output for another couple of decades and, though Asia accounts for half the world's shipbuilding, as of January 2018 only about 11 per cent of the registered merchant ships were Chinese-owned.⁷⁴ Its capacity for naval projection currently remains limited compared to the US. As of 2018 it boasted two aircraft carriers, each with a fraction of the aircraft capacity of the US's biggest vessels.

It is true that some of China's vast post-2013 'Belt and Road' investments (a maritime new 'Silk' belt and an inland 'road', oil and gas pipelines, and a vast range of cultural and educational initiatives) may be risky, and end in China swapping debt for equity (already the case for Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, leased to a Chinese company for 99 years).⁷⁵ But even if a debt-related crisis did undermine a government (as European finance did Egypt in the 1870s), would China have the desire, or capacity, for 'gunboat' style interventions, or (as with the Chinese Maritime Customs that Britain dominated and took debt repayments from in the nineteenth century) for direct controls to secure repayment? Quite aside from its relatively limited global power projection, there is the likelihood intervention would undermine its quest to seek ever higher positions in global value chains more generally, and attract opposition. China, meanwhile, adopts a position as champion of global free trade, and provider of foreign direct investment and new global infrastructure that will carry globalisation forward, with little trace of the military overtones of Britain's nineteenth century 'imperialism of free trade'. Its preferred historical figure in this respect being

Admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho), whose fifteenth-century fleets it chooses to present as forces for mutually beneficial trade and gift exchange.⁷⁶

Above all else, China possesses a model for state-led, forced-pace industrialisation and urbanisation, with companies able to produce integrated urban-industrial zones on vast scales, more than half the world's high speed railtrack mileage, and Huawei amongst the world's leading telecommunications suppliers. It also boasts huge amounts of potentially excess production capital and reserves.⁷⁷ This gives it the confidence it can be the best moderniser for many Global South and under-developed areas, whether that be building Kenya's new version of the 'lunatic line' inland from Mombasa into the interior of Africa, or inland ports to transfer containers across rail gauges at places such as Khorgas/Korgas on the Kazakhstan border. Its aspiration of improving an inland 'Road' across central Eurasia is creating better transcontinental rail and road links (such as the 2-week Yiwu to Madrid rail route), and may provide China a commanding position in some global value chains that become anchored there. But Bruno Maçães argues that in this respect central Eurasia may remain a linking zone between different civilisations. The Asian and Western European poles of Eurasia becoming increasingly connected, but equally confident in their different versions of civilisation and development.⁷⁸ After all, central Eurasia's countries have a heavily Islamic inflection, and an almost Swiss or Dutch-style need to keep multiple large neighbours including Russia in balance. Eurasia also cannot really be likened to an inland 'sea' since land transport remains considerably more expensive than maritime.

At the same time, China as a nuclear power with increasing anti-ship missile sophistication, and development of bases in disputed areas of the South China Sea and beyond, has already made any open military challenge in its own oceanic backyard extremely problematical. Which means the US and allies may be denied normal great power methods. Hence, in areas such as the Spratley and Paracel islands, it may be that the US power system

and proximate states have to work out means of sub-conflict, low-risk countermeasures, such as building their own artificial reefs and islands.

After Tamerlane already hinted at this turn towards considering broad Eurasian scales. With the encouragement of Darwin and others, Oxford undergraduate teaching more generally also took a more global turn around this point. It continued to offer a special documents-based paper on late colonial India, and a 'Further Paper' on 'Imperialism and Nationalism' that covered the period from late nineteenth century expansion to decolonisation, with regional options within it. But its 'Europe and the Wider World' paper morphed into 'Empire and Global History', its 'Imperial and Commonwealth' research seminar into a 'Global and Imperial History' seminar, and in 2011 a Centre for Global History was established.⁷⁹

This global turn could easily accommodate the new emphasis on, for instance, intra-colony and global networks and flows, or on nodes such as empire port cities.⁸⁰ In some ways, this move also harked back to the emphasis in Robinson and Gallagher's 1953 article, in so far as that had seen British expansion as 'the sufficient function' of integrating new areas into the world economy. Except their attention had arguably been mostly on the areas peripheral to globalisation, whereas the 'globalisation' framework means areas more core to the transformation have become fashionable again. In that context New Zealander James Belich was appointed Beit Professor of Imperial and Commonwealth History at Oxford in 2011.

A number of historians had for some years been working on the idea of a 'British' or 'Anglo' world, centred on British settler colonies. Belich's 2009 book, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* expanded that notion, and made it the engine of long nineteenth century globalisation. Where Robinson and Gallagher had seen late nineteenth century 'new imperial' expansion in terms mainly of

peripheral areas, for Belich it was about the explosive development of settler colonies. The key was expansion of Britain and its 'Anglo-World' of settlers moving into 'newlands', seen as including the Western frontier of the United States. London and New York were the dual financial and service engines for this. Thus powered, overseas English-speaking populations soared from 12 million to 200 million between 1780 and 1930, creating 'a transnational, transcontinental system' characterised by intensifying integration, and 'outsourcing' of some supplies and functions from industrialised cores. This was a world whose pulses of settlement boom, bust, and 'voluntary recolonization' (the reintegration of settler areas into their 'oldland' economies via 'export rescue'), supercharged broader globalisation. Mackie's notion of the 'Settler Revolution' and its booms (some of which are also made to explain the overcoming of long dogged indigenous adaptation and resistance) as a major engine of modern globalisation provides a corrective to Robinson and Gallagher's greater focus on non-settler areas.⁸¹

Darwin terms the period above one of 'semi-globalisation', since Eurasian heartlands successfully resisted total economic and cultural integration. For him final, modern globalisation had to wait until after the 'disruption' of European civil war, the ending of the Cold War, and the subsequent supercharging by the internet in the late twentieth century.

Regardless of how these processes are labelled, if 'globalisation' was in significant part driven by imperial and settler expansion, this poses additional questions about decolonisation. Surely decolonisation might also encompass the reversing of some of the excesses, and by-products, of those same imperial-globalisation processes? First nation battles and perspectives (as Hopkins has noted for the USA) need to be included. Old Dominion history also needs to be considered more, both for its long history of decolonisation, as increasing autonomy vis-a vis a Britain whose system it nevertheless wished to remain linked to, and for later moves to broaden economies and culture away from narrower Anglo channels.

In addition, if imperial expansion was in part a process of directing new areas into the world economy then there is a case for seeing decolonisation as a re-articulation of areas' relationships to the global. So, for instance, China was inducted into globalisation by forced treaties, a treaty port system, and alien control of the Chinese Maritime Customs system. Its re-articulations included self-strengthening reforms, the dismantling of foreign controls, and a period of controlled communist development, before the post-1978 experiment radically changed course.

More generally, in undergoing decolonisation a colony removed an intermediary in its global relations –the colonising power – and made decisions about how it would engage more directly with global economic and political systems. Those decisions might include which of competing models, such as communist or liberal, to adopt in politics and economics. Seen this way, battles over decolonisation were often multi-cornered contests in which, say, the Muslim League's story in India, or competitions between local communists and socialists and other politicians up to and including insurgency, were at least as important as imperialism's 'official mind' in shaping outcomes. That implies writing histories that do not focus on the ending of metropolitan control per se, still less on the ending of empire macro-systems, but rather on battles to decolonise in a positive as well as a negative sense. Such multi-cornered stories may also be uncomfortable to any legacy regime that favours simplistic or moralistic 'nationalist' history. This mind-set implies understanding that for the colony, the story was as much about imagining the new nation-state and its changed relationships to the global level, as it was about negative 'anti-colonialism'.

Defining Decolonisations

'The difficulty of attributing the fall [of the British empire] to British decline is that it leads us into paradox. Colonial emancipation is not necessarily a sign of metropolitan weakness.

Virtual independence was extended to Canadian, Australasian, and South African nationalists before 1914, when Britain was at her strongest.⁸² So wrote Robinson and Louis in a 1994 article, thus highlighting the tension this article has been exploring: that decolonisation encompasses overlapping but qualitatively distinct processes and perspectives.

Decolonisation as movement towards autonomy from alien or overseas rule can be happening even when Darwinesque weakening of the wider system is absent.

Despite that recognition, the modern Oxbridge approach has, thus far, focussed mostly on two main strands of ‘decolonisation’: first, the adjustment and attenuation of a British world system of power, of which ‘the project of an empire’ was just one component; secondly, the relationship of the British story to a wider era of decolonisation which made racial hierarchy and colonialism, rather like smoking in the modern era, things to be eradicated. Latterly, this has expanded to the study of the rise and fall of empire systems and interconnections at a global scale.⁸³

The core definitions find echo elsewhere. Jansen and Osterhammel’s 2017 book, *Decolonization*, broadens the focus slightly, so decolonisation becomes ‘the simultaneous dissolution of several intercontinental empires and the creation of nation-states throughout the global South ... 1945-75’, plus ‘the ... delegitimization of any kind of political rule that is experienced as a relationship of subjugation to a power elite considered by a broad majority of the population as alien occupants’. Seen this way, decolonization was also ‘a specific world historical moment’. But they do recognise that there is something more, namely ‘a many-faceted process’ playing out in different areas and countries, ‘at different levels’, and ‘a long history of decolonization’ encompassing the growth of anticolonialism.⁸⁴

That latter admission meshes with the observations in the previous section, that if imperialism is many different things, then so too is decolonisation. We have already seen how the toolkit developed from Robinson and Gallagher’s 1953 article onwards allows varied views of

imperialism, and so of decolonisation, as its mirror image. In so far as nineteenth century imperialism was a function of the integration of the world into a Western-led process of globalisation, for instance, decolonisation can be seen as the re-articulation of relationships to the global. In so far as colonialism involved alien domination, decolonisation as its mirror can be conceived as a long process of gaining the infrastructure, skills, and imaginary tools that can form a nationalist umbrella force, and perhaps a 'nation' and a proto-state, able and willing to demand self-government. Frey, Pruesssen, and Tan have made a similar point, that : '... decolonization in Southeast Asia is best regarded as a process that began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', and was often twinned with or aided by attempts to consolidate late imperial power.⁸⁵

In so far as nineteenth-century imperialism was hand in glove with a globalisation that continued to dispossess first peoples across the globe, decolonisation can also be conceived as attempts (scarcely even begun by 1968) to address the legacies. In so far as empire interpenetrated metropolitan cultures, decolonisation also implies the current 'decolonial' turn, with its interrogation of physical, curricular, literary, and other imperial traces in multiple metropolises, and the 're-creation' of Europe through immigration and changing attitudes as examined in Buettner's *Europe After Empire*.⁸⁶ As Bill Schwarz has argued, we do not have to believe that empire 'constituted' Britain as a whole or in any monolithic way, to find value in tracing its impact and legacies in Britain and in former colonies. In Said's words, this does not assume a Western plot, but rather the 'distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic social, historical and philological texts', as a potent if contested force.⁸⁷ Imperial shaping of forms of knowledge, through the census, maps, histories, definitions even, is worked on by scholars of varying disciplinary bent, including those relying on empirical, primary documents-based history. The work of Ballantyne, Cohn, Dirks, and others on networks and on knowledge attest this. Indeed,

Ballantyne makes the case for globalisation itself having emerged historically as networked ‘imperial globalisation’, which embedded and circulated ‘worldviews’ and assumptions.⁸⁸

Each of the different possible definitions of decolonisation has its uses and limitations, and overall they might be considered as overlapping circles on a Venn diagram. Hence, as critics have noted, Darwin’s grand schemes are excellent at sketching big patterns, and at showing how a British official mind could unleash and loosely direct the chaotically varied agents of its empire (missionaries, traders, officers, land speculators, and more), but less good at capturing things such as how violence shaped experience and the emerging postcolonial states. This is due to the sorts of questions asked and frameworks applied.⁸⁹ If the guiding question is how violence affected the British system or was managed by it, revisionist work on its scale and ferocity in India and partition, in Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, and Oman, can genuinely be marginal to the main story. Yet, seen as part of the story of decolonisation - as a struggle to achieve autonomy and identity in opposition to the colonial state, and to shape a new state and society - this violence may sometimes move centre-stage. ‘British’ decolonisation can be the story of the central power system, but equally it can be the story of that system’s dialectical role in the formation of new autonomies.

In short, which of many possible definitions of decolonisation we chose, and which questions we foreground, shape our output. Our choice is not a necessary one, but rather dictated by interest, emotion, and practical aim.⁹⁰

This makes upfront clarity of definition, and sensitivity to the particularism of each chosen approach, important. Abernethy’s *Global Dominance* illustrates the benefits of such conceptual clarity when concentrating on causation. He defines two main phases of contraction (1775-1824 and 1940-80), seeking explanations with ‘sufficient comprehensiveness’ to cover both. This suggests two necessary ‘conditions’ (local elite will, and capacity, to become politically autonomous), with major wars then being ‘contributing or conducive conditions’ (catalysts), by raising colonial elite expectations while paradoxically

raising confidence for metropolitan elites who emerge victorious. Once one or more key colonial elites won independence this started transitional ‘demonstration’ and ‘observation’ effects and interactions that acted as accelerators, turning incidents into eras.⁹¹ That said, Abernethy’s focus on causation (why did it happen?), also downplays other questions such as ‘why this way?’, and so the role of what we might call ‘shaping’ factors.

Greater clarity in our definitions and typology is therefore necessary for its own sake, but also to allow more informed dialogue and cross-fertilisation between different approaches, and the sort of analytical clarity that allows us to compare particular forms of ‘decolonisation’ across different territories and empires. It is not that subaltern approaches matter more than previously allowed for, or that examining the ebb and flow of grand systems of power matters less. The definition and questions chosen set the ‘frames of reference’, acting as a heuristic device or mode, a sieve to filter out only the types of stories and evidence most relevant to each particular simplification.⁹²

As I argued in 2003 for the case of Southeast Asia, ‘a surplus of terms can also suggest a lack of conceptual clarity and a host of unintegrated perspectives. If “imperialism” is no word for scholars, “decolonization” is a harlot of a word. It pleases so many needs that we can never be sure of its real meaning’.⁹³ Once we acknowledge the semantic fog, what decolonisation terms might we assemble? Might a starter typology look something like what follows?

A. *Disimperialism: the dismantling of systems of world power*, and/or of the empire

systems that may sit within wider power formations. This features a metropolitan point of view, and subordinates particular territories’ attempts to gain autonomy to the analysis of systems.⁹⁴ It is less than decolonisation as a whole, and more. Less because it marginalises the struggle to build the basis for, and then win and develop, autonomy from imperialism, and because ‘decolonisation’ can be happening even when an overall system

retains both willpower and vitality. More, because empires usually sit within systems of power that embrace far more than mere colonies and dependencies.

- B. ***Global eras of decolonisation***: a distinctive era, or eras, when international normative opinion and weight moves against imperialism (across a range of its modes and forms). Arguably 1763-1820s and 1945-70 might fit, though as noted above such moves may be partial, and partially effective.
- C. ***The transfer of power***: The formal transfer of constitutional sovereignty, or more helpfully, of the constitutional, legal, and treaty powers needed to restore effective sovereignty and control over the social, political, economic, and even cultural realm, whether achieved willingly or under duress.
- D. ***Decolonisation: the long-term process of reducing and ultimately removing alien or overseas control***, from taproots, through experience, to broader 'liberation' through the assertion of cultural and psychic independence, potentially including in areas such as culture, language, and identity. It can have negative 'anti-colonial', and positive identity and structure-forming aspects. There can be multiple levels or points of view for such a process, from external, through local elite, to subaltern and microhistories. The question 'why did it happen?'; may sometimes be less interesting here than - how was it experienced?; or how did it shape the post-independence inheritance?⁹⁵
- E. ***Re-articulation of the local to the global***. Decolonisation by its nature involves changing the relationship of the 'colony' to the 'global'. For formal colonies this means the negative removal of the colonial power as an intermediary. It also requires positive decisions about the new relationships, such as Cold War decisions about stance or non-

alignment or neutrality, and about approaches to and limitation of interactions with the globalised market.⁹⁶ Federation, splintering or breakup, and Brexit planning (or indeed alternatives that might address concerns behind it), are cognate to this process.

F. ***De-colon-isation and/or Indigenisation.*** Most settler states have not seen a return of sovereignty to their first peoples, many of which were marginalised or demographically swamped. But de ‘colon’ (as in ‘settler’ or settler structure) action, as addressing legacies, inequities and allowing some return of control over culturally important issues, has gathered pace after the classic era of decolonisation of 1945-75. Settler studies and its decolonisation needs only a situation of present or past settler relations, which could be divorced from a broader empire system.⁹⁷ Notably, Veracini’s *The Settler Colonial Present*, and since 2011 the journal *Settler Colonial Studies*, support the notion of the settler structure as persistent and still requiring forms of decolonisation, and embracing not just history but areas such as education, social work, and mental health.⁹⁸ Transnational connections between indigenous peoples looking to ‘decolonise’ by reclaiming rights in land, education, culture, and control of patrimonial objects and human remains, have boomed over the last two decades. Indigenous studies and activism can offer an expansive – and at times contested - view of the degree to which ‘decolonisation’ is unfinished.⁹⁹ This is veering towards praxis, putting theory and learning to practical use in the present rather than seeing it as the stand-alone study of a gone and sealed past. That inevitably raises difficult questions for historians. Does that make this a ‘non-historical’ field, or a multidisciplinary one where historians need to be more engaged?

G. ***Decolonial and postcolonial-isation?*** Dealing with what are perceived by some groups as problematic or negative imperial legacies, whether in the ex-colonial territory or the post-

metropolis. While acknowledging the attendant danger of such issues being exaggerated or manipulated, if not manufactured as a form of artificial and politically motivated permanent revolution. Multiple disciplines work in this area. There have been concerns that some of these approaches may be insufficiently rooted in analysis of historical evidence, or lack due attention to the representativeness of evidence used. But that could suggest a need for more not less intervention in these areas by historians. This area also overlaps the 'New Imperial Histories', while not needing to imply that empire dominated the metropolitan culture in any simple way.¹⁰⁰ At its limits, it might embrace post-2010 moves to re-examine curricula, and the move adopt the principles of involvement or 'co-curation' by people of varied territorial and ethnic origin (used, for instance, for Birmingham Museum and Gallery's 2018 Exhibition 'The Past is Now').¹⁰¹ With scarcely any Black History Professors in the UK as late as 2018, 'uncomfortable' questions remain.¹⁰²

Each definition shifts the focus onto different aspects of the historical process. Definition D makes us look less at the imperial centre, and more at multi-cornered fights over what positive identities could replace imperialism, including wars of decolonisation and extreme violence in Indochina, Algeria, Kenya. Just under 10 per cent of around 100 territories formed after 1940 experienced significant armed conflict with the metropole, another 15 per cent (most in the British empire) substantial domestic conflict.¹⁰³ Under G we might include New Imperial History's interest in empire in the metropole, some postcolonial concerns, and Mamdani's argument that British reliance on indirect rule in Africa entrenched 'native' authorities and 'tribes', leaving ethnic rivalries and feeding authoritarian tendencies.¹⁰⁴ E potentially brings decolonisation closer to current concerns about how nation, state and their individuality, sovereignty and imagined authenticities are (re)-articulated with globalisation.

What, in this light, is the responsibility of the imperial historian to engage with, inform, or indeed refrain from, contemporary debates that relate to some of these issues? What, in this light, would a survey history of decolonisation, or if that is impossibly large a new historiography of decolonisation, look like? It would certainly use Oxbridge concepts and tools, and give prominent place to macro-approaches for understanding eras, and the decline, revival, and fall of systems of power. But it might give greater space to a broader set of analytical approaches, points of view, discourses, and experiences, and at least place them alongside each other if not force some dialogue between the different approaches. To return to fiction, there is otherwise the danger that ‘History leaves so much out .. [including] the most important thing of all: the detail of what being alive is like’ amidst ‘decolonisation’ in all its forms, including its taproots, unfolding, experience, the impact of how it unfolded on the ground, and the grappling with remnants and traces of empire, settlerism, and colonialism.¹⁰⁵

¹ Darwin, *Empire Project*, 655.

² Louis, *The Ends of British Imperialism*, 27, Smith, *Britain’s Decline, Revival and Fall in the Gulf*.

³ Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation in Southeast Asia*, 272-89.

⁴ Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain*. Schwarz, *Memories of Empire*. Buettner, *Europe After Empire*, 254-60.

⁵ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 646-48.

⁶ Fraser, *Quartered Safe Out Here: A Recollection of the War in Burma*, and *Flashman*.

⁷ Darwin, *Empire Project*, 655.

⁸ Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation*, 108-13.

⁹ “The British Army in Brunei”, <https://www.army.mod.uk/deployments/brunei/>: British Forces Brunei includes a Gurkha Battalion on rotation as an acclimatised unit for FE deployments, helicopters, and the Jungle Warfare Division for jungle training.

¹⁰ James Kirkup, “Joanna Lumley irritates Ministers”, *Telegraph online*, 9 March 2010, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/7407716/Joanna-Lumley-irritates-minister-over-Gurkhas.html>. Paul Vellely, *The Independent online*, 2 August 2011, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/what-went-wrong-for-joanna-and-the-gurkhas-2330107.html>.

¹¹ Hopkins, “Globalisation and Decolonisation”, 729-45, had already suggested two main eras and three additional foci, namely: the old Dominions (post-1945), China, and US decolonisation overseas (Philippines, Hawai’i, Puerto Rico, and Cuba as informal dependency) and internal (Native American and civil rights from 1957 onwards).

¹² Darwin, *Unfinished Empire*, 12.

¹³ Robinson and Seal, “Obituary: Professor John Gallagher”; Porter, “Professor Ronald Robinson, 1920-1999”.

¹⁴ Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 25, 28-30.

¹⁵ Gallagher and Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade”, 1-15.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 3 and 13.

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- ¹⁷ Ferguson, *Empire*, xix-xxv; and *Civilization: The Six Killer Apps of Western Power*, these being competition, science, property, modern medicine, consumerism and work ethic. Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*.
- ¹⁸ Interventions of this type included Turkey, Egypt, China, and the Malay state of Johore.
- ¹⁹ Hopkins, *American Empire*, 27, 693.
- ²⁰ Gallagher and Robinson with Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Victorian Imperialism*.
- ²¹ Gallagher and Robinson, *Africa and the Victorians*, 18, 52, 88 (quotation).
- ²² *Ibid*, 462-72.
- ²³ Darwin, 'Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion'. Gjernsø, 'The Scramble for East Africa: British Motives Reconsidered, 1884-95'.
- ²⁴ Darwin, *After Tamerlane*, 308-17.
- ²⁵ Gallagher, *The decline, revival and fall of the British empire*, 75.
- ²⁶ Robinson, "Non-European foundations of European" and "The excentric idea of Imperialism".
- ²⁷ Seal. "Congress in Decline". Gallagher, "Nationalisms and the crisis of empire".
- ²⁸ Gallagher, 'Congress in Decline', 589-645.
- ²⁹ Gallagher and Seal, 'Britain and India between the Wars', 387-414.
- ³⁰ Gallagher, *The decline, revival and fall of the British empire*, 74.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, 73-153.
- ³² Ronald Robinson, "Non-European foundations of European Imperialism".
- ³³ Gallagher, *Decline, Revival and Fall*, 149.
- ³⁴ Tomlinson, Review of *The Decline, Revival and Fall*, in *Modern Asian Studies*. Gallagher, "Nationalism and the Crisis of Empire, 1919-1922".
- ³⁵ The 1958 Public Records Act specified 50 years, the 1967 amending act 30. 2010 saw a move towards 20.
- ³⁶ Darwin, "Imperialism in Decline?", 657-79.
- ³⁷ Darwin, "Imperialism in Decline?", 657.
- ³⁸ Gallagher, *Decline, Revival, and Fall*, 100-103, 135-9.
- ³⁹ *Ibid*, 109.
- ⁴⁰ Darwin, "Imperialism in Decline?", 657-8.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid*, 662-68.
- ⁴² *Ibid*, 668-73.
- ⁴³ *Ibid*, 673-78.
- ⁴⁴ Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation*, vii-viii. Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 1-13.
- ⁴⁵ Gallagher, *Decline, Revival and Fall*, 145-8.
- ⁴⁶ Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation*, 55-68, 330-34.
- ⁴⁷ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 14, 649-55.
- ⁴⁸ Others added supposed moments when British policy shifted, in response for instance to Suez. Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism*. Murphy, *Party Politics and Decolonization*.
- ⁴⁹ The National Archives (Kew, London, hereafter TNA): Cab129 C(54)307, 11 Nov. 1954, Note by Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Appendix, Official Committee Report on Commonwealth Membership, for leaders (eg., Gold Coast, Nigeria, Malaya and the 'CAF') taking 10-20 years, intermediate (eg., Kenya and Sierra Leone) uncertain, and many (mainly small territories but including Cyprus and Gambia) possibly never going beyond full internal self-government to independence and Commonwealth membership.
- ⁵⁰ Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation*, 327-28. Gallagher, *Decline, Revival and Fall*, 90, for "Curzon's fantasy empire", and 152-3. Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*.
- ⁵¹ Darwin, "Decolonization and the End of Empire", 545-48.
- ⁵² Darwin, *Unfinished Empire*, 339-42.
- ⁵³ *Ibid*, 384.
- ⁵⁴ Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation*, 107-13.
- ⁵⁵ TNA: Prem8/743 and Prem8/943; Do35/6064. Remme, *Britain and Regional Cooperation in South-East Asia*. TNA: Cab129 C(54)307, 11 Nov. 1954, , Note by Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Appendix, Official Committee Report on Commonwealth Membership.
- ⁵⁶ Vinen, *National Service*, xvi-xvii, xxvi, 309, 318.
- ⁵⁷ Louis and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Decolonization", pp. 500-502.
- ⁵⁸ TNA: Cab129 C(54)307, 11 Nov. 1954, , Note by Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Appendix, Official Committee Report on Commonwealth Membership.
- ⁵⁹ Darwin, "Decolonization and the End of Empire", 541-43.

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- ⁶⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.
- ⁶¹ Darwin, "Decolonization and the End of Empire", 542-43.
- ⁶² Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*. Mukoma wa Ngugi, "What Decolonizing the Mind means today".
- ⁶³ Barr Skrbish, Zlatko. *Constructing Singapore*, 90-107.
- ⁶⁴ Darwin, "Decolonization and the End of Empire", 542-43. Dane Kennedy complains that the volume's authors were mostly "from a common Oxbridge-trained cohort that still looked to Gallagher and Robinson". Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 39-56, 137.
- ⁶⁵ Darwin, "Decolonization and the End of Empire", 542-43.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 544.
- ⁶⁷ Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence*, 226-28. Wm Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism*, 29-31, and with R. Robinson "The Imperialism of Decolonization".
- ⁶⁸ Thomas and Thompson, "Empire and Globalisation: from 'High Imperialism' to Decolonisation", 142-70.
- ⁶⁹ Drohan *Brutality in an Age of Human Rights*, 47-80.
- ⁷⁰ Hopkins, *American Empire*, 647-9, 663-67.
- ⁷¹ Hopkins, "Globalization and Decolonization", for Native American and civil rights in the USA.
- ⁷² Joseph Masad, "Against Self-Determination".
- ⁷³ Darwin, *After Tamerlane*, 160-217 (divergence), 483 (US power), 496, 502-5. Niall Ferguson, *Colossus*.
- ⁷⁴ <http://stats.unctad.org/handbook/MaritimeTransport/MerchantFleet.html>.
- ⁷⁵ "How China got Sri Lanka to cough up a port", *New York Times*, 25 June 2018: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/25/world/asia/china-sri-lanka-port.html>.
- ⁷⁶ Zheng He is seen, by contrast, as establishing naval dominance, and intervening in regional politics including by installing friendly rulers, in Tansen Sen, "The Impact of Zheng He's expeditions on Indian Ocean interactions".
- ⁷⁷ See for instance Country Garden of China's Forest City project in Malaysia: <http://forestcityjohor.com/forest-city-granted-duty-free-zone-status/>.
- ⁷⁸ Maçães, *The Dawn of Eurasia*, and "China's Belt and Road: Destination Europe".
- ⁷⁹ Darwin, "Empire History at Oxford".
- ⁸⁰ Ballantyne, "The Changing Shape of the Modern British Empire".
- ⁸¹ Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 548-60. Bright and Dilley, "Historiographical Review: After the British World", 547-68.
- ⁸² Louis and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Decolonization", 451-502, quotation at 452.
- ⁸³ *Ibid*, 451-2.
- ⁸⁴ Jansen and Osterhammel, *Decolonization*, 1-5.
- ⁸⁵ Frey, Pruesssen and Tan, ed, *The Transformation of Southeast Asia*, viii.
- ⁸⁶ Buettner, *After Empire*, approaches this by parallel, more than comparative, tracing of decolonisation and its transformations for five European countries.
- ⁸⁷ Schwarz, "An Unsentimental Education", 125-44. Said, *Orientalism*, 12, and *Culture and Imperialism*, 262-81.
- ⁸⁸ Howe, *The New Imperial Histories Reader*.
- ⁸⁹ Antoinette Burton, "Introduction", 971-6. Duncan Bell, "Desolation Goes Before us", 987-93. Darwin "Reply", 993-97. All part of a *Roundtable* special edition reviewing Darwin's *The Empire Project*.
- ⁹⁰ Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 137.
- ⁹¹ Abernethy, *Global Dominance*, 25-28, 40-43, 357-9.
- ⁹² Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 87-100.
- ⁹³ Hack, "Theories and Approaches to British Decolonization in Southeast Asia".
- ⁹⁴ Louis, "The Dissolution of the British Empire", prefers "dissolution" of empire to decolonisation.
- ⁹⁵ Ballantyne, "The Changing Shape", 446 for subaltern views of partition and its afterlife, including Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition*.
- ⁹⁶ Hyam, "The Dynamics of British Imperial Policy", 45.
- ⁹⁷ Lorenzo. "'Settler Colonialism'": 313-33, and *The Settler Colonial Present*.
- ⁹⁸ Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*.
- ⁹⁹ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor", offer the simple but useful shorthand that 'Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life'. See also <https://www.naisa.org/> for

[the global scope of the 2019 Native American and Indigenous Studies Association conference, which had close to 2,000 attendees.](#)

¹⁰⁰ Howe, *The New Imperial History Reader*.

¹⁰¹ Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery exhibition ‘‘The Past is Now’’, 2017 employed 6 co-curators. Frieman, ‘‘The Past is Now’’.

¹⁰² Drayton, ‘‘Where Does the World Historian Write from?’’, 671-85.

¹⁰³ Abernethy, *Global Dominance*, 147-61

¹⁰⁴ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject in Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*.

¹⁰⁵ Malcolm Dean, ‘‘An Insight Job’’, *Guardian*, 1 September 1973, 11. Quoting J.G. Farrell, Anglo-Irish author of a 1970s trilogy of novels covering the decline of empire.

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