



Colonialism / postcolonialism

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The giant composite field of colonialism and postcolonialism studies has had a transforming effect on modern anthropology. Anthropologists have been innovative users of its multidisciplinary perspectives, and key contributors to its challenging accounts of past and contemporary global life and experience. The call to prioritise colonial and postcolonial perspectives in the framing of anthropology's central research questions has greatly extended the field's range and scope, including its distinctive approaches to the issue of whether it is colonialism that should be seen as modernity's most important progenitor, and the source of its most toxic forms of subjugation and disempowerment. This entry notes the sophistication with which anthropology has both embraced and challenged the forms of cultural and social analysis through which the epistemic and material transformations of global empire and its afterlife have been documented and theorised. And it argues that studies of colonialism and postcolonialism still have a strong and productive future in a world now widely thought to require the multidimensional framings provided by today's high-profile theorists of globalisation and cosmopolitanism.

Introduction

The giant composite field of colonialism and postcolonialism studies has had a transforming effect on virtually every academic field in the humanities and social sciences. Anthropologists have been particularly innovative users of its multidisciplinary perspectives, and have responded with vigour and creativity when accused by practitioners of its deconstructive critiques of being 'handmaidens' of colonial power and heirs to the subjugating knowledge strategies that underpinned imperial rule (Asad 1973). There have been major changes in anthropology's aims and claims arising from theorists' insistence that the enduring forms of subjugation and 'epistemic violence' (Spivak 1985) engendered by modern empires must be recognised as distinctive pathologies of the contemporary world. The call to prioritise colonial and postcolonial perspectives in framing virtually all analytical accounts and research questions has greatly extended anthropology's range and scope. It has led to the use of tools from both within and beyond the discipline, including poststructuralist understandings of power and subjectivity, and the contingency and open-endedness of historical change. These perspectives have fed debate on a wide range of topics: anticolonial nationalism; religious conversion; capitalist market transformations; gender relations and domestic intimacies; urban experience and historicity; [citizenship](#) and migration, as well as [resistance](#) and hegemonic power effects.

Colonialism

Within and beyond anthropology, 'colonial' is now mainly used for the transformations wrought by high modern empire, i.e. for contexts of Western conquest and rule in the age of globally expansive commercial and industrial capitalism. Some 80 to 90 percent of the global landmass and a majority of the world's population had come under direct or indirect colonial rule by the processes initially set in train during the so-called early modern Age of Discovery, though greatly accelerated in their range and impact by the early twentieth century.¹⁴ It is equally important for the study of colonialism and postcolonialism to acknowledge the massive violence and displacement marking these phenomena. These include, for example, an estimated 1 million deaths in Algeria's 1954-62 liberation war, and as many as 500,000 deaths and 14 million people displaced in the catastrophic process known as the Partition of India.¹⁵

There is much dispute about the extent to which the colonised can be seen as active agents in these dislocations and displacements. But it is widely agreed that modern empire produced unprecedented change and novelty, including massive and profoundly destructive material transformations, and the constitution of a new kind of person: a colonial subject with a 'colonized mind', painfully if never fully subordinated by the coercions and 'othering' effects of the coloniser's power-knowledge. These processes have been documented in many settings, including the modern colonial metropolis and other sites of 'panoptic' [surveillance](#) and self-subjugation.¹⁶

Despite their ancient origins, the terms colonial and colonialism are not widely used for pre-modern and non-Western empires.¹⁷ The rule of Rome, the Ottomans and China's Qing (Manchus) are commonly defined as imperial, while the term colonial is commonly used for such cases as the rule of the British in India, the French in Algeria, and the Dutch in insular Southeast Asia. These, together with sub-Saharan Africa, the Pacific, [Latin America](#), and the [Islamic](#) Middle East, have been the main contexts for studies of colonial and postcolonial projects and practices, frequently in terms deeply critical of the strategies of historians, political sociologists, and anthropologists. The works thus targeted include classic [ethnographies](#) condemned for their purported failure to problematise Enlightenment epistemologies as the critical grounding of their work.¹⁸

Some critics regard binary models of coloniser-colonised [relations](#) as too narrow to capture the full dynamics of imperial and post-imperial modernity. What has been seen as the open-ended or 'rhizomatic' qualities of empire has generated rich ethnographic work on such people as the 'mobile cosmopolitans' whose far-flung trading and religious networks challenged the boundedness of all the imperial systems that sought to contain them (Ho 2004).¹⁹ But for theorists including Barlow (1997) and Chakrabarty (2012), colonialism is modernity's most important progenitor and the source of its most toxic forms and penetrations. These include its corrosive powers of individuation and commodification, and its routinization

of state violence through the practices of bureaucratised truth-seeking: ranging from the legalistic witch-hunts of Spanish-ruled Peru to the treaties and constitution-making of more recent colonial regimes (Benton 2002; Comaroff 2001; Silverblatt 2004).

Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism has become an equally pervasive term, especially in studies of the enduring after-effects of colonial rule and the oppressive 'necropolitics' of post-independence states and elites (Chakrabarty 1992; Mbembe 2001; Sarkar 1985). Poststructuralist identity and language theory have been key resources for this work, initially through the concept of colonial discourse: the use of signifying regimens that delegitimize the knowledge practices of the colonised and install as authoritative truths the conqueror's narratives of superior rationality and 'civilizing mission' (Chafer 1992). Foucault's early work on governmentality and the biopolitical sources of modern power were the initial grounding for these perspectives, together with Said's critique of the self-glorifying cultural essentialism engendered by European Orientalists (Said 1995). Those embracing these understandings of the colonisers' power used them to illuminate the psychic and cultural dislocations of colonial rule, exposing as instruments of subjugation and disempowerment the compilation of scholar-officials' dictionaries, maps and legal codes, their manipulation of foreign scripts and vernaculars, and their fabrication of subordinating 'languages of command' (Cohn 1996; Errington 2008; Raheja 1996).¹⁴

The deconstructive analysis of imperial texts and representational strategies has generated much debate about whether colonial encounters were invariably collisions of radically divergent epistemes (Marglin & Marglin 1990). Cohn's accounts of the *Census of India* and imperial *darbar* (ruler's audience) (1987, 1996) treated the representational strategies of British rule as disruptively alien, its regimes of enumeration and visuality a break with the far more fluid [relations](#) and identities of the pre-conquest period. The idea of novel reality production under colonial rule has been contested from many perspectives, including those identifying India's expansive Mughal dynasts and their successors as knowledge-gatherers in their own right, thus as creators of novel enumerating and classification strategies that anticipated and set the model for those of the British Raj (Peabody 2001).¹⁵

Some historians have challenged the value of all deconstructive critique, dismissing the study of knowledge politics and colonial subjectivities and calling instead for continued attempts to understand the processes underlying such key transformations as the immiseration of peasantries and the spread of intercommunal blood-letting in colonised societies (O'Hanlon & Washbrook 1992; cf. Prakash 1992, 1993). What has been called for by anthropologists is not so much a change of research questions, as a search for better tools with which to study colonialism's conceptual power and effects. For Kelly and Kaplan (2001), Bakhtin's concepts of dialogics and heteroglossia make visible a process of 'communicative traffic' between

colonisers and the colonised in British-ruled Fiji, hence 'co-production' rather than top-down imposition of authorising power-knowledge in the turbulent interactions which they explore.

Despite these challenges, the concerns of the early landmark studies still interest scholars debating the sources and effects of imperial power.^[1] So too does the radical feminist critique of Spivak (e.g. Spivak 1996), often united with Derrida's treatment of writing as the inscription of difference as both source and manifestation of the will to power, with an emphasis on the inherent violence of such inscriptions, and the 'deferrals' of meaning inherent in their constitutive texts and narratives. A related reference point has been Lacanian psychology's understanding of desiring selfhood and the decentred nature of subjectivity (Bhabha 2004; Khanna 2004). The treatment of colonial rule as agonising 'psychodrama' produced in the 'play of power within colonial discourse' (Bhabha 1996: 92) has drawn further inspiration from Fanon's accounts of the crippling identity effects of empire, entangling colonisers and the colonised in a mesh of mutual desires and delusions.^[2]

Transforming events and resistance

Colonialism became a major scholarly concern in the late 1970s, while postcolonialism came to prominence in the 1980s. Both singly and together, their embrace signalled an attack on perspectives deemed outmoded and inadequate for an understanding of the global world order. A particular target for such challenges has been the concept of imperialism, formerly the dominant idiom in Marxist and related 'world systems' accounts of the global expansion of capitalist modernity (Frank 1978; Wallerstein 1974). In the study of imperialism, scholars' key concerns were with motivations and actions initiated from colonisers' metropolises: the economic logic of empires; how they were structured and expanded. Their treatment of what would now be characterised as 'experience' within the colonised world related largely to structural transformations in the material sphere. The most notable of these were massive social and environmental changes wrought by novel land control systems, including coercive cash-cropping schemes and the widespread destruction of forests and grasslands, and the forcible creation of new production and labour systems to meet the commodifying needs of Western capitalist economies.^[3]

With anthropologists' turn to globally framed historical perspectives in the 1980s, the implications of empire and world systems theory were addressed by some of the discipline's leading innovators. Taussig's (1980) study of the economics of empire in Bolivia focused on Amerindian tin [miners'](#) narratives of the Devil as presiding agent of the commoditization of their [labour](#) under Spanish rule. And in Sahlins's celebrated account of the [death](#) of the English explorer-navigator James Cook at the hands of Hawaiians in 1779, the killing was a transformative event, interpretable through the concept of 'mythopraxis': in the islanders' perceptions, an occurrence taking place in mythic rather than linear time (1985; see Weiner 2006). Sahlins claimed that this was not an account of a fixed Hawaiian cultural framing counterpoised to

an equally static Western 'trade and empire' worldview. Instead, mythopraxis allowed for a notion of dialectical conjuncture between two dynamic historicities, thus a forging of something new in the context of this early moment of imperial 'fatal impact' (Moorehead 2000).^[2]

1. Relating the economic and the cultural

Though much contested, such studies created provocative links between anthropologists' concerns with the economic and the cultural, as in Comaroff's treatment (1985) of the southern African Zion Church faith as symbolic bricolage: an expression of 'cultural resistance' to the forced integration of adherents into the alienating structures of capitalist commodity production. In other studies too, [resistance](#) to colonial power is discerned not so much in confrontation or counter-hegemonic 'hidden transcripts' (Scott 1990), but in poetics, i.e. the expressiveness and play of the creative mind, as in the imagining of alternative spiritual realities in millenarian '[cargo cults](#)'.^[3] Related works on colonial contexts have discerned historicity in the form of invention or co-fabrication in what had previously been seen as timeless [ethnographic](#) givens, including '[tribe](#)' in Africa and caste and ethno-religious community in India. This raised the contentious question of whether even grossly disadvantaged subjects were active agents in the making of their new epistemic and material realities, rather than mere recipients of whatever the coloniser constructed and imposed (Bayly 1999; Godelier 1975; Spear 2003; Wolf 1982).

Debate about how to relate the economic and the cultural in colonial contexts has been further nourished by anthropologists' studies of the creation of new economies through the mass recruitment of enslaved or indentured labour. In another of Kelly's works dealing with plantation-based sugar production in Fiji (1992), concepts once thought of as universals in economic anthropology are found to be the subjects of highly divergent moral narratives about trade, value, and production. These were not just a matter of disparities in the thinking of whites as opposed to non-whites, or even opposition in the thinking of the island's massive influx of Indian indentured labourers as compared to native Fijians. What is striking in his account is that it was the two key groups of Indian incomers - field workers and trader-shopkeepers - who were sharply divided in their ideas about the morality of trade, value, and labour. Moreover, Kelly finds a way to account for this which productively rethinks and elasticises both the Marxist legacy as deployed in colonial political economy studies, and the theories of culture which have been embraced as their alternative.^[4]

Despite the sophistication of such ethnographically grounded political economy perspectives, many scholars reject them, even when insisting that they too see the world historically, i.e. marked and shaped by the predatory power of colonisers and their collaborators.^[5] The legacy of Marxism in the study of empire has been widely dismissed for its perceived evolutionism: identifying the effects of Western rule as bloody and disruptive for colonised societies, yet still a prelude to progress and emancipation in their

transformative structural effects.¹⁴⁶

2. Typologies of colonialism

But what has become a very deep scholarly dividing line is the point at which anthropologists have turned their skills of ethnographic specificity to the forging of typologies, distinguishing, as many historians have done, between the effects of different varieties of imperial rule and power. A revealing case is the contrast drawn by Wolfe (2006) between two radically different forms or modes of colonial rule. The first of these was administrative/extractive colonialism, as in British India. Wolfe sees this as based on a framing logic that was dehumanising but not genocidal. It included the idea of the 'native' as a dangerous but desirable asset, making profit for empire through cash-cropping and other [precarious](#) forms of land use. Despite its many immiserating effects on indigenous peoples, this for Wolfe was still very different from colonialism in its other conceptual mode: mass-migration or settler colonialism. The critical premise in this case was that of '*terra nullius*' (unclaimed terrain). It defined Aboriginal people as lacking the capacity to understand land as an asset with use-value, which determined for British colonisers who was and was not to be placed within the pale of productive humankind. The result was unabashedly exterminatory: portraying indigenous Australians as a nullity to be expunged, whether by direct violence or eugenicist child-seizure aimed at the 'breeding out' of non-white 'racial stock'.¹⁴⁷

But rather than hailing this as an exercise in right-minded deconstructive critique, there are critics who see the thinking behind any typologising of colonialism's variants as in itself colonial, a defining of difference which replicates the coloniser's defining and thus silencing of the colonised subject, through the structural violence of 'naming power' (Krautwurst 2003). Studies framed like Wolfe's have thus been condemned as a back-door whitewashing of empire, at odds with the mission of postcolonial criticism to expose and destabilise Eurocentric master narratives and 'discourses of domination' through 'radical re-thinking and re-formulation of the forms of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and Western domination' (Prakash 1992: 8).¹⁴⁸

3. The value of ethnography

Yet there are influential works in which the turning of an ethnographer's eye to the specificities of context have been applauded for providing in-depth accounts of colonial and postcolonial settings, rather than broad-brush accounts of the colonial and postcolonial as generic states or qualities. Notable examples include treatments of colonial or formerly colonised sites as spaces of distinctive constructions of reality, through the operations of myth, narrative, and other processes of imagination and embodied practice (Ariel de Vidas 2002; Gow 2001; Graham 1998; Stoller 1995). Such works have greatly enriched the ways in which culture itself is understood within and beyond anthropology, revealing the great breadth of its

manifestations as experience and reference point in different political and social contexts, for example:

- as an indeterminate meeting ground between alien worldviews and meaning systems;
- as the construction of essences and boundaries defining subjects' [ethnic](#) or [moral](#) otherness;
- and as a tool of resistance and assertive nationhood (Gupta & Ferguson 1992).

There has also been work on colonial cultural processes in which the concerns of classic land and labour studies have been productively reframed. Authors noting empire's role as solvent of established forms of sovereignty and community and destroyer of livelihoods and environments such as those of pastoralists and hunter/gatherers have enriched these concerns through interest in colonialism's dislocations of identity and selfhood. Key reference points in these explorations of fractured subjectivities and psychic trauma have been such concepts as mimesis, hybridity, and creolization to capture the blendings and assimilations as well as the traumatising disjunctures of the colonial encounter.

Thus another study by Taussig focusing on the extreme violence of colonial rule in the Amazonian Putumayo (1987) makes the region's ruthlessly labour-hungry mode of rubber production central to his account. But Taussig's claim is that the cruelty displayed towards the Amerindian plantation workers was not a tool used with the cold rationality of means-and-ends 'trade and empire' logic to solve a central problem of colonial political economy: how to control a workforce indifferent to [money](#), clock-time, and the market. What he finds instead is a 'culture of terror' trapping coloniser and colonised in a state of mutual psychic dysfunction. Colonialism's corrosive self/other identity effects are thus a pathology, to be understood in terms drawn from Benjamin and the Frankfurt School theorists Adorno and Horkheimer on the processes of mimesis in the perceiving [mind](#): that is, the compulsive force of one's destabilising identifications with those to whom we are 'other'. The colonisers' horrific acts are therefore to be seen as a projection of their own fears and aggressions. In the alienation and insecurity of colonial existence, the coloniser's disordered mind strives nightmarishly through its mimetic image-making faculties to vest the colonised with an imagined subhuman otherness, in the unattainable hope of expunging or deflecting the savage urges they find within themselves.^[18]

Psychic dysfunctionality has been a major reference point in many works identifying the ambiguities of desire and sexuality in colonial settings as central to the 'tensions of empire' (Cooper & Stoler 1997).^[19] Stoler united disparate strands of Foucault's work concerned with issues of gender, [race](#), and sexuality to explore the destabilising biopolitical intimacies of interracial households and affective attachments in colonial Southeast Asian contexts (1995; 2002). Much use has also been made of the political psychologist Ashis Nandy's notion of hypermasculinity as a critical dysfunction of the coloniser's condition. Here the male coloniser is to be seen as perpetually unsure of his power, hence compulsively driven to inflate the expressions of his [maleness](#) through the fetishising of manly prowess and comradeship in pursuits such as

hunting and team sport (Nandy 1989).

A striking exploration of dysfunctional hypermasculinity in the [relations](#) of colonisers and their subjects is provided in Banerjee's account of the sexualised humiliations perpetrated by British officers against prisoners from one of India's most remarkable anti-colonial nationalist groups: the Red Shirts, composed of Muslim Pathans (Pukhthuns) based in what is now the North West Frontier of Pakistan (2000). What Banerjee sees as the source of this abuse is that the Red Shirts were from a group classed by the British as a 'martial race' who had become keen adherents of Gandhi's doctrine of pacifist non-violent [resistance](#).^[21] This meant that they were no longer willing to play the game of manly conflict expected of them in the form of the raids and counter-raids which had nourished the white soldiers' fragile male selfhood. This, Banerjee argues, is what generated the sense of psychic challenge to which they responded with eerily Abu Ghraib-like acts of violence.

Psycho-sexual dysfunction is also a central theme in Luhrmann's account of fieldwork with western India's distinctive Parsi community (1996). Under British rule this small urban group was disproportionately influential as a commercial and [professional](#) elite, much praised for their modernity: prosperous and Western-educated, both their men and women highly visible in the arenas and pursuits of the colonial public sphere.^[22] But in postcolonial India, she found them to have become strikingly akin to what Nandy found for the colonial period: a community enmeshed in the painful psychic life of 'intimate enemies'. In their case, strikingly, this involved entangled relations with other Indians rather than the colonising 'other'. Luhrmann found her informants much afflicted with anxieties about their place in a society where they had lost their former 'collaborator' niche, with these tensions playing out in the form of abiding fears about male Parsis' masculine potency and procreative abilities.

4. Resistance

What then of the possibility of resistance in conditions of colonial subjugation and rule? The works of the historians and culture theorists whose initial inspiration was Gramsci's neo-Marxist concept of the subaltern (from *subalterno*: the subordinated) identified the workings of an anti-hegemonic 'subaltern consciousness' in such events as India's pre-Independence forest uprisings and peasant millenarian movements. Contributors saw these as expressions of a non-elite insurgent value system, wrongly treated as mindless disorder or criminality, both by Marxist historians and triumphalist 'bourgeois nationalist' narratives of the Indian freedom struggle (Guha 1999; see Chaturvedi 2000). Key contributors to this subaltern studies project saw only Gandhi as an exception to their view of organised nationalist movements and leaders as purveyors of 'derivative discourse', i.e. premised on alien concepts of the bourgeois liberal individual, and producing elitist and perniciously gendered scriptings of nationhood (Chatterjee 1986, 2012). Subsequent contributors lost interest in the study of rebellions and popular violence and merged

their concerns with those of emerging theorists of colonial discourse and governmentality. Yet the possibility of resistance to the coloniser's power was still a tantalising presence in some of this work. Bhabha's celebrated reading of a key text of colonial discourse, the scholar-official T.B. Macaulay's notorious 1835 *Minute on education*, raised the provocative possibility that even the most apparently one-sided exercises in authoritative power-knowledge may open up spaces for 'sly subversion' of the coloniser's truth regimes. Thus despite the *Minute's* unblushing dismissal of India's entire cultural heritage, Bhabha's claim was that the class of 'almost white but not-quite' Western-educated Indians - imagined by Macaulay as compliant props of colonial rule - were actually skilled parodists, using the arts of mimetic burlesque to destabilise the colonisers' sense of confidence and superiority.¹⁴⁴

Colonialism and postcolonialism today

So do studies of colonialism and postcolonialism have a future in a world now widely said to require the multidimensional framings provided by today's high-profile theorists of globalization and cosmopolitanism? One sign of the rich potential still offered by the colonialism/postcolonialism field's tools and perspectives is its elasticity, as in the ways its insights have been merged and synthesised with those of other [history-conscious](#) areas of research and debate. This includes the work of scholars of socialism and [postsocialism](#) who have addressed the transformations and problematic vernacularizations of modernity in their own complex research contexts by reflecting productively on the ways in which key themes from the study of colonialism and postcolonialism can be engaged and expanded on (Bayly 2007; Kandiyoti 2002; Ssorin-Chaikov 2003).

Furthermore, as Ania Loomba has shown, many variants of contemporary globalization studies have absorbed rather than overridden the key elements of colonial and postcolonial studies (2005). Their use has provided a powerful means of avoiding the end-of-history triumphalism and ahistorical thinness with which many commentators have defined, celebrated or demonised the conditions of globalised cultural and economic life in today's world of flexible citizenship and fractured sovereignties. Consciousness of empire and a continuing engagement with the rich and varied literature on its impacts and afterlife thus has the potential to nuance and ground the many ways in which scholars now seek to grasp all that is local, translocal and global in the world today.

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[1] Chiriyankandath (2007: 36). This includes the lands occupied or controlled by European colonial powers and also by Japan – a great competing modern expansionist imperial power. Britain alone ruled a quarter of the world's population by 1914. It has been estimated that in 1880 the wealth of the industrialised colonising West was twice that of the colonised regions of the world and by 1913 the West was three times richer than its colonies and dependencies (Hobsbawm 1987).

[2] Plus the upheavals in Indochina, Kenya, Palestine, Burma, Rhodesia and other key sites of bloody twentieth-century decolonisation. Equally significant in the balance sheet of empire: the genocidal impact of colonial conquest and mass European migration to both the New World and Australia; the impact and enduring legacy of the Atlantic slave trade; the massive population transfers reconstituting the populations of Fiji and other Pacific societies. On the massive environmental transformations produced in colonial contexts, see Beinart (2008), Grove (1997), and Sivaramakrishnan (1999).

[3] The sites in which these processes have been documented include hospitals and mental asylums (Arnold 2000; Dwyer 2001; Mills 2000); schools, plantations, and prisons; and museums and other public exhibition spaces (Çelik 1997; Cohn 1996; Cooper 2005; Cooper and Stoler 1997; Glover 2007; Landau & Kaspin 2002; Mitchell 1991; Rabinow 1989; Silverblatt 2006; Zinoman 2001).

[4] In Roman Britain, *coloniae* were land grants made to demobilised veterans to stabilise imperial authority in difficult frontier regions; the English East India Company tried to do the same with its locally recruited *sepoy* soldiers. (Alavi 1993)

[5] Although classics such as Evans-Pritchard's Nuer and Azande studies are still being productively engaged in important debates, e.g. about the nature of the secular in 'late modernity' (Engelke 2015).

[6] Hardt and Negri's (2000) concept of 'rhizomic' (or rhizomatic) empire as an account of the world's endlessly radiating and amorphous flows of power has been widely debated; see Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1995), Boehmer (2006), and Reyna (2002).

[7] Critiques of the Orientalist paradigm include Carrier (1992) and Coronil (1996).

[8] Studies exploring colonial science as a co-productive enterprise of mutual interaction and appropriation include Jasanoff (2004) and Sivasundaram (2005); compare Prakash (1999). On the extent to which translation and interaction are ever possible in colonial contexts, see Rafael (1993); Lockhart (1994).

[9] For example, Cohn (1996), Cooper and Stoler (1997), Inden (1986), Mani (1989), Mignolo (1993), Mitchell (1991), Parry (1987), Prakash (1990), Raheja (1996), and Williams and Chrisman (1993).

[10] 'The central despair of the Black psyche, the fact that Black men and women are constrained to live in a world *deliberately* constructed to reduce and sicken them, and that as a consequence there is no such thing as normal Black people in the colonial world. They are all pathological cases, *the main difference being between those who can see through the white mask and those who wear the mask as if it were real.*' (Smith 1973: 26; see also Fanon 1967)

[11] For Lenin, imperialism was the invasive and unstoppable force of capitalism. Its use as a basis for the analysis of actual global empires was a subsequent development in Marxist thought, initially inspired by the work of Rosa Luxembourg.

[12] See Sahlins (1985), Obeyesekere's attack (1992) and Sahlins's riposte (1995). See also Fabian (1983) and Mintz (1985). Sahlins also explored the transformative effects of Hawaiians' subsequent 'consumption craze' for foreign goods in the context of the islands' entry into worldwide trading networks as exporters of high-value local sandalwood (1985; see also Friedman 1994). There is in addition a rich literature using colonial 'first contact' case studies for reflections on the meaning and nature of 'events' and history as experienced in diverse cultural contexts: for example, Fausto (2002) and Strathern (1992).

[13] For example, in imagining Jesus as black or female (Hermann 1992; Kaplan 1995; Lindstrom 1993). Compare Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) and Silverblatt (2006). In African spirit possession too, there is the possibility that the conjuring of supernatural beings who appear to practitioners as parodic white men is a play on colonisers' fears, or an enduring memory and appropriation of their aura and power (Stoller 1995).

[14] The commoditisation of labour in Fiji is thus not an experience bringing pain and alienation to those it objectifies, as in classic Marxism, nor is it a source of class struggle. The path of virtue is wage labour in a spirit of virtuous service for the ex-indentured labourers, and an ethic of sober, unacquisitive money-making for the Indian trader-shopkeepers (Kelly 1992).

[15] This is a contested term in colonial studies (see Mamdani 2001).

[16] Key works of postcolonial theory, notably Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000), have been both praised and dismissed (Kaiwar 2014) as attempted renewals of Marxism.

[17] On race theory in India, see Moore, Kosek & Pandian (2003).

[18] See critical discussion in Dirlik (1994).

[19] More recent accounts of the mimetic in colonial contexts include Eaton (2013).

[20] See also Burton (2005), McClintock (1995), and Spivak (1996).

[21] For anthropological explorations of Gandhi's distinctiveness as political activist and anticolonial moralist prescribing highly innovative understandings of emancipated selfhood (*swaraj*: self-rule) for both coloniser and colonised, see e.g. Fox (1989), Alter (2000), and Mazzarella (2010).

[22] Among highly critical deconstructive accounts of the notions of modernised male and female selfhood in the arenas of 'home and the world' of the colonial public sphere is Devji (1991).

[23] '... a single shelf of a good European library [is] worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia ... [Through anglicized education, we ...] must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' (Macaulay 1862).