

Between & Beyond

Transnational Networks & the British Empire

Ca. 18-20th centuries

Doctoral and Early Career Workshop

21-22 June 2018, University of Warwick, UK

Following Britain's vote to leave the European Union, reports emerged of officials seeing Brexit as an opportunity to rebuild the Commonwealth as "Empire 2.0". These came on the heels of a wave of nostalgia for empire, through a range of TV shows touching the theme, and were in a year's time followed by a controversial academic project to dredge the history of empires for resources for [Western-led] 'deployment'. Such notions that span the popular and the elite suggest the continued purchase of simplistic ideas that the United Kingdom's overseas domains articulated through London alone and marched lockstep in the pursuit of British interests. This is despite strong scholarship over the decades that has shown the interactions between Britain and her colonies and dominions were not a one-way street; that even as these relations were unequal, material and human practices in the colony and metropole were decisive in shaping ideas, individuals, institutions, and economies *mutually*.

It is therefore a fit moment to reiterate and re-explore the idea of the "transnational" within and without the British Empire, to focus on decentered and mult centered views of empire. Such an exercise can reiterate how trans-colonial traffic involved, yet circumvented, forms of metropolitan control and direction, and highlight connections between the colonies and dominions on the one hand, and extra-imperial entities on the other hand. By these means, we hope to reveal the non-imperial and extra-imperial presences within imperial and sub-imperial issues at work, and to ask questions about how these presences manifest themselves, what networks they manifest themselves through, and with what consequences for colonies and metropole.

This workshop intends to bring together research scholars of history and affiliated fields working on transnational networks fostered through the British Empire. We wish to focus on how certain forms of the 'empire', the 'colony', and the 'outside' mutually constituted each other. Such an approach, we believe, could illumine the dense transnational convergences that shape the political, the economic, the social, and the cultural in various locations simultaneously. The workshop seeks papers that engage both conceptually and historically with themes that broadly include, but are not limited to:

- Transnational linkages that focus on circulation of ideas, practices, things, goods, capital, technologies and people and the politics surrounding them – between colonies of the empire but also outside of it.
- The constitution of transnational discourses on religious, cultural, economic and political networks and the specificities of their reception/refraction in colonial, metropolitan and non/extra colonial contexts.
- Transnational circulation of material, cultural, literary and scientific practices within the empire and the ways in which they shaped local identities, disciplines, and institutional politics in various locations.
- The lives and afterlives of local/national entities – art, objects, literature – as they move into transnational space and how these movements interrupt earlier meanings and produce/reconstitute new ones.

Please send us an abstract of up to 400 words, along with a brief CV at warwicktransnational@gmail.com by 20 Feb 2018. We particularly welcome the participation of advanced doctoral students and early career scholars. The workshop would follow a format of paper presentations, interspersed with a roundtable on methodology and keynote lecture/s. There are a limited number of bursaries available. Preference will be given to participants from developing countries with little/no institutional funding. The event is free and open to all.

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