

Cambridge University Press

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

Edited by Kathleen Wilson

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A NEW IMPERIAL HISTORY

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

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

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

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

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For Nick and Hannah

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