

von Verhaltens- und Äußerungsformen in der Werbung für Jugendmode (Maldener) oder der Kanonisierung deutscher experimenteller Rockmusik (Simmeth) und die Hinweise auf transnationale europäische Netzwerke (Ramos Arena, Schaefer), die erfolgreich – und auf Kosten von Massenwirksamkeit – die Deutungshoheit im Prozess der Kanonisierung und hochkulturellen Integration neuer kultureller Erzeugnisse beansprucht haben. Der Band zeigt schließlich überzeugend, wenn auch unvollständig, den Wert eines flexiblen Begriffs von Populärkultur und die Unverzichtbarkeit transnationaler Perspektiven für die Beschreibung und Analyse soziokulturellen und politischen Wandels unter der Bedingung zunehmender globaler Verflechtungen.

#### Anmerkungen

- 1 A. Simmeth, *Krautrock transnational. Die Neuerfindung der Popmusik in der BRD, 1968–1978*, Bielefeld 2016.
- 2 Vgl. nach wie vor D. Hebdige, *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*, London 1979.
- 3 N. Geer, *Sophistication. Zwischen Denkstil und Pose*, Göttingen 2012.
- 4 Vgl. dazu U. G. Poiger, *Rock'n'Roll. Female Sexuality, and the Cold War Battle over German Identities*, in: *The Journal of Modern History* 68 (1996), S. 577–616.
- 5 Vgl. M. G. Esch, „Wir haben keine Go-Go-Girls mehr“. Der Beat Club als Quelle und Akteur in der Kanonisierung des Rock, in: A. Maldener/C. Zimmermann (Hrsg.), *Let's historize it! Jugendmedien im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2018, S. 213–258.
- 6 U. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels. Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, Berkeley 2000.
- 7 A. Marwick, *The Sixties. Social and Cultural Transformation in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, 1958–1974*, Oxford 1999.
- 8 Maßgeblich ist hier vorläufig für die BRD S. Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft. Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren*, Frankfurt a.M. 2014, für

Frankreich J. Briggs, *Sounds French. Globalization, Cultural Communities and Pop Music in France, 1958–1980*, Oxford 2014.

- 9 J. Suri, *Power and Protest. Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente*, Cambridge, Mass. 2005.
- 10 W. J. Risch (ed.), *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc. Youth Cultures, Music, and the State in Russia and Eastern Europe*, London 2015; vgl. meine Rez. in: *H-Soz-Kult*, 23.03.2018, <[www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-24923](http://www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-24923)>.

**Duncan Bell: Reordering the World. Essays on Liberalism and Empire, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2016, 456 pp.**

Reviewed by  
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Empire has for long been a divisive topic. Perhaps no more so than today when, with the possible exception of China, empires are no more (although “Imperialism” most often “indirect” or “informal” lingers on). In the two decades or so a war has been waged in academic circles over the complicity of liberalism in the formation, development, and justification of the European empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most of this is condemnatory, most, too, is written in the high-minded tone of those who have somehow cleansed themselves of the sins of their fathers. Very little offer, or have any interest in offering, a balanced view of what “empire” and “liberalism” might be thought to mean; still less provide any sustained analysis of the intricacies of the

very real involvement of the one with the other. One that does, and in many ways the subtlest and the most original is the work of Duncan Bell.

The author's latest book brings together a selection of the essays he has written on the subject over the past decade, with a new, powerful, introductory chapter that sets out the present state of the debate over the possible significance of the complicity of liberalism with empire, and a "coda" which seeks to find a middle ground between "ignoring this tainted history or rejecting liberalism altogether". In between we have twelve chapters some of these are dedicated to particular themes, some to individual thinkers. The wryly entitled "Escape Velocity" explores the theorists of empire's perennial recourse to historical examples, and above all, the manner in which British imperialists – liberal and otherwise – viewed the ancient Roman world. Rome provided a compelling model for a multi-cultural polity supposedly dedicated to the progress and the improvement of all its citizen. But it was also the paradigmatic example not only of the virtuous rise, but also of the eventual, inevitably ignoble, decline and fall, a reminder of what, no matter how optimistic the new British imperialists might be that their empire had gone far beyond the Roman in both scope and achievements, awaited all empires. "The Idea of a Patriot Queen?" explores the role which the relationship between "constitutional patriotism" (a phrase borrowed from the German political theorist, Doris Steinberger) and the semi-sacred "imaginary" – a concept of which Bell offers a very telling analysis – of the Victorian monarchy, played in the transformation of what Bell calls a "com-

plex mosaic of political regions, social institutions and juridical forms" into "a unified and homogenous political space". "Imagined Spaces" and "The Project for a New Anglo-Century", examine the different, often conflicting, aspects of an ideology which would have welded together the "Anglo-Saxon" settler communities of South-Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand into a "Greater Britain (the subject of Bell's previous book) – a world-wide community of English-speakers which, in some of the more far-reaching fantasies would one day one include the United States. Part III is dedicated to the most significant British liberal theorists of empire. Some are well-known: John Stuart Mill, J. R. Seeley, Herbert Spencer J. A. Hobson and L. T. Hobhouse; others, at least in this context, the federalist E.A. Freeman, for instance, the historian J.A. Froude, and the Hegelian T.H. Green, far less so.

The most powerful sections of the book are concerned with Bell's ultimately devastating, if cautious, demolition of the argument that liberalism was, always and everywhere, an ideology in the service the British imperialists' ambitions to subjugate, and ultimately transform, the "uncivilized" peoples of the world. Liberalism, in Bell's words, has become "the metacategory of Western political discourse", and it now "haunts Western political thought and practice" as no other political theory does or, possibly ever has done. That seems unquestionable. What exactly liberalism is, however, is far from obvious. Bell's searching, subtle and highly erudite analysis in Chapter 3 of the various kinds, and varieties of liberalism leaves the reader to wonder, as it has clearly left him, whether

“liberalism” really is still a useful “category of political analysis”.

Useful or not, however, it is now clearly inescapable and Bell offers two highly persuasive criticisms of much of the literature on liberalism, and the ways it has been cast as the intellectual hand- maiden of empire. The first focuses on what he calls “The Tyranny of Canon”. The link which a number of contemporary historians have established between liberalism as a political philosophy and the ideologies and practices of modern imperialism, has been made possible only by narrowing the definition of liberalism to the beliefs supposedly held by a very small number of thinkers (most prominently Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Henry Maine), and often to an even smaller sample of their works. But this canon has been largely constructed – and constructed in the twentieth century - to prove the claim that modern imperialism, and above all the idea of the “civilizing mission” in all its various variations, was in effect the ideological offspring of the liberal imagination. In doing so, it ignores the fact that the vast majority – if not all - self-professed “liberals” were highly ambiguous about empire. Many who have been excluded from the canon -most notably Auguste Comte and his innumerable followers – were wholly opposed to it. (The history of liberalism’s complicity with empire in France, Germany, Spain or Italy looks, of course, very different.)

Bell’s second criticism is that the very notion of a “liberal imperialism”, “implies commonalities and coherence, where the political thought of the nineteenth century was marked by dissonance and diversity”. At the very least, “liberalism” is, and has been throughout its entire history

– whether you think that that begins in the seventeenth or in the nineteenth century - in a constant state of re-invention. Liberals such as Mill, although they undoubtedly believed that empire could provide benefits not only to the empire builders but also to their subject peoples at certain moments in history, were also highly critical of it at others.

We may not be able, or willing, to deny the involvement of liberalism with the European conception and pursuit of empire, nor the multiply injustices that, over time, those empires have inflicted on their subjects peoples; but as Bell concludes liberalism “contained resources to both justify empire (of various kinds) and to launch stinging criticisms of it”. To fail “to creatively engage with liberalism, joining the conflict between its tessellated factions”, in particular now that liberalism, however understood, “virtually monopolizes political theory and practice in Angloworld [sic]” – and not only there - amounts to an abrogation of an intellectual duty.

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Zum Auftakt des Buches, das die Vorträge einer Tagung zum Thema an der Central European University wiedergibt, betont der Rektor der CEU, Michael Ignatieff,