

LEARNING TO DIVIDE THE WORLD: EDUCATION AT EMPIRE'S END

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1 Where is Here?

- How do we help them understand why differences of color and culture, gender and nationality continue to have such profound consequences?
- Our schooling has not been so much the great redeemer of prejudices as the tireless chronicler of what divides us.
- We are taught to discriminate in both the most innocent and fateful ways so that we can appreciate the differences between civilized and primitive, West and East, first and third worlds.
- This book is about imperialism's influence on the educated view of the world that the West cultivated during the era of empire.
- We cannot readily sort through and discard the colonially tainted understandings we carry, without devoting attention to how our view of the world has been shaped by imperialism's educational projects, which included fostering a science and geography of race; renaming a good part of the world in homage to its adventurers' homesick sense of place; and imposing languages and literatures on the colonized in an effort to teach them why they were subservient to a born-to-rule civilization.
- The educational itinerary of the extended and profoundly successful field trip of imperialism is rendered in Said's own exuberant cataloging of orientalism's scholarly project: to dignify all knowledge collected during the colonial occupation with the title "contribution to modern learning" when the natives had neither been consulted nor treated as anything except as pretexts for a text whose usefulness was not to the natives; to feel oneself as a European in command, almost at will, of Oriental history, time, and geography; to institute new areas of specialization; to establish new disciplines; to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index and record everything in sight; to make of every observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom, or type; and above all to transmute living reality into the stuff of texts, to possess (or think one possesses) actuality mainly because nothing in the Orient seems to resist one's powers.
- In English classes, students read works that movingly depict personal struggles against discrimination, without gaining any sense of how English literature was used to teach people their distance from the center of civilization.
- To identify oneself as having been born in Canada while remaining parenthetically Chinese echoes a colonial history that determined whose home Canada was to be, even as imperialism engaged the Chinese of the diaspora in the business of empire; it speaks to the barriers that imperialism constructed between East and West out of a compound of race, ethnicity, and nationality, as well as gender in the West's' feminized conception of the Oriental as other.
- *Diaspora: the dispersion of the Jews after the Babylonian exile*
- It would seem that the play of race and ethnicity in identity is not necessarily everyone's affair, and this, too, signifies a gap in the students' education. All students need to understand the historical legacy of these self-identifications.
- Where is here? And what am I, that I am here?

- Imperialism produced an imaginary “imperial archive,” which amounted to a “fantasy of knowledge collected in the service of state and empire” that was thought capable of turning the world into a comprehensive order.
- Imperialism afforded lessons in how to divide the world. It taught people to read the exotic, primitive, and timeless identity of the other, whether in skin color, hair texture, or the inflection of taste and tongue. Its themes of conquering, civilizing, converting, collecting, and classifying inspired educational metaphors equally concerned with taking possession of the world – metaphors that we now have to give an account of, beginning with our own education.
- This critical return to what our education makes of us is one that feminist scholars have been pursuing for some time, following Virginia Woolf’s disquieting footsteps through the British Museum and Oxford University in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), all the while asking how it is that we make ourselves worthy of the West’s best arts and sciences.
- *Four Quartets* by Eliot: “We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”
- Educators owe those they teach some account – if always partial- of what we have taught students about the world.
- Montesquieu: If I knew something useful to myself and detrimental to my family, I would reject it from my mind. If I knew something useful to my family but not to my homeland, I would try to forget it. If I knew something useful to my homeland and detrimental to Europe, or else useful to Europe and detrimental to Mankind, I would consider it a crime.
- This book is about the accumulation of learning that proved eminently useful to Europe and often detrimental to the larger body of humanity.
- *Polemics: of or involving dispute; controversial; an argument or controversial discussion; a person inclined to argument*

2 *An Adventure in Learning*

- It was a five-century long adventure in learning that did not fail to help humankind in practical and philosophical ways, even as its dividing up of that humanity continues to haunt us to this day – which leaves for those who have formed their lives around this educational legacy to acknowledge the accomplishment while coming to terms with the troubling and persistent aspects of imperialism’s regard for the world.
- If this desire had amounted to nothing more than an unrelenting enthusiasm for learning, a healthy curiosity about the world and its wonders, then I would not be writing this book. But this will to know became an integral part of the economic and administrative apparatus of imperialism, and in the process it was far too often dedicated to defining and extending the privileges of the West.
- Foucault cites Bacon’s critique of resemblance: The human intellect, from its peculiar nature, easily supports a greater order and equality in things than it actually finds. Semblance was a false idol that could lead one to gloss over the distinguishing differences and defining essences of things. Descartes, for his part, declared that all knowledge “is obtained by the comparison of two or more things with each other.”
- The scientific table encouraged increasingly fine calculations of differences, row by row, column by column; and those who engaged in imperialism’s adventure in learning used tables, graphs, and diagrams aplenty to enumerate, order and identify a world of differences.
- What this mercantilism produced was universal theories of knowledge, which were later sold back to the colonies at a premium that would largely teach them their place at the periphery of learning.

- *Peripatetic: of the philosophy or followers of Aristotle, who walked about while he was teaching; walking or moving about; itinerant; a follower of Aristotle; one who walk from place to place*
- One early hope for restoring the natural order of things was to treat the New World as an extension of the known world. Thus, we come to the onset of the Foucauldian divide between semblance and difference as a way of knowing.
- This effort to name – and often to rename, in the face of local nomenclature – the whole of the living realm ranks among the more ambitious and presumptuous projects in science (and is not over yet).
- “Always take measurements, Miss Kingsley, and always take them from the adult male.”
- Naming a place is about staking and extending a verbal claim to it, which returns us to the theme “Where is here?” Here is what is named. The unnamed is nowhere. To name is the sovereign act.
- It is about the power to place-name against those who previously named it and have lived on it for centuries.
- The names along the east coast of Australia, from York Cape to Botany Bay, preserved the trace of Cook’s passage. That these traces preserve the imperial passage, even as they form the much-studied order of the world for schoolchildren, could stand as my theme.
- The world was assumed to be a tabula rasa that awaited inscription by the West and its soldiers, administrators, scientists, and educators, a new class of professionals who found their boyhood fantasies fulfilled by this vocation in just the way that Joseph Conrad relates Marlow’s childhood in *Heart of Darkness*: At the time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map, I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there.
- Wittgenstein’s aphoristic observation that the limits of one’s language are the limits of one’s world becomes transformed here into the political maxim that the limits of one’s world are one’s limits in naming it.
- *Aphorism: a short, concise statement of a principle; a maxim; adage*
- It was clear that the far and wild reaches of the earth, where such scientific and artistic enterprises were taking place, were surely no place for a well-bred woman.
- Women were not permitted to become full members of the Royal Geographical Society, despite their record of contributions to the geographical sciences and the advocacy of longtime society president Sir Roderick Murchison, until 1913.
- The key point here is how Hasting’s scholarly construction of the difference between Indian traditions of authority and English liberty managed to license the abusive and autocratic treatment of the East India Company’s Indian employees and families by the otherwise just English.
- The British were working out the basis of an empire of information that, like any system of governance, shaped the rules and the ruled.
- This earnest counting of people and their place in Indian society created statistical divisions among people that became a function of colonial governance.
- Out of this governing knowledge of Indian culture, with its Sanskrit texts, Aryan linguistics, and caste demographics, India was indelibly cast as a decayed and despotic society, and the empire as the remedy to these failings.
- *Aryan: Indo-European (Caucasian)*
- The spread of European science to African and Asian societies was about the forces of science taking advantage of and contributing to a global project of domination.
- The mastery of difference enabled students of imperialism, whether they traveled abroad or followed published accounts at home, to possess the world-as-knowledge.

- Ricci's use of learning as an instrument of conversion adds another dimension to the will to know, to the desire for domination.
- When Bacon argued in 1620 for creating a new science based on observation and experiment, he pointed to the discovery of printing, gunpowder, and magnetism as perfect demonstrations of "the force, virtue and consequences of discoveries. He claimed that the origin of these three discoveries, though recent, is obscure and inglorious. Each of these obscurities was, of course a glorious Chinese discovery. By the 16th century, many of these discoveries had been absorbed and their sources obscured.
- All the preparation for Peter de Maricourt, and hence of the later ideas of Gilbert about the earth as a magnet and of Kepler on a role of magnetism in astronomy, had been Chinese.
- This chapter has gone about that rethinking by describing the imperial quest as an expression of the will to know what was directed at the construction of identity and difference. Historian George Levine explains this imperial obsession as the product of a Cartesian mind-body dualism. This split separated the decidedly European mind from nature's body: To know nature, one must make it alien, perceive it as fundamentally other.
- One can imagine how the degree of detachment afforded by distance might lighten concerns about imperialism's subjugation of peoples and territories. They were objects of study, the knowledge of which benefited humankind.
- The West created an intellectual mercantilism that determined the worldly reservoir of facts and artifacts to fuel its theories and its powers to survey, name and bring the world to reason. If the West has tended to forget the origin of ideas outside itself, there has nonetheless been an inspiring flow of ideas through history and around the globe that call into question the boundaries by which science effectively divides humankind.
- The lightning rod case has been the medical information on hypothermia and other topics published by Nazi doctors who conducted their grisly experiments on concentration camp victims. At the very least, it seems educationally worthwhile to ask after imperialism's enormous and earnest production of knowledge, to inquire into the means by which celebrated forms of learning have been gathered and used, and to wonder what has been erased and written over in the making of the modern world.
- The responsibility of an advanced civilization was assumed to be to make the world fathomable and sensible for the benefit of all humankind.
- Consider how, during the heyday of imperialism, countless students from Asia and Africa found much to study and learn in Europe, studies which they happily pursued amid local prejudices without feeling compelled to exploit the local economy, convert the native children, or take charge of the government.
- If imperialism has been transformed in recent years into a new form of globalize economy no longer dominated by a handful of European powers, what then of the systematic educational apparatuses established by those powers over centuries? Have they been equally transformed?

3 Imperial Show and Tell

- Here then, is the first educational vector: the educational dynamic begins with a witnessing and positioning of the other.
- The initial act of self-education is repaid through a second vector: educating the unknowing natives, raising them through education to the level of the human "so that they can learn to speak." This is done to make them worthy of servitude.
- Third: I believe that they would easily be made Christians, for they appeared to me to have no religion. (Columbus)

- Only on his return to Spain did he come upon the final vector of imperialism's education dynamic, the one that occupies this chapter. He found the Spanish drawn en masse to the spectacle of this newfound and alien side of their humanity. The native on display was to be both spectacle and object lesson for the European imagination.
- Their imperial display educated the eye to divide the world according to the patterns of empire.
- Rene Descartes claimed that perception is above all habits of understanding that shape vision: "I now know that our perception of bodies is due neither to the sense nor to the imagination, but solely to the understanding, and they are known to us not because we see them or touch them, but because we conceive them in thought.
- The West's way of putting the world on display, whether for museum-goer, spectator, or sightseer, was an education in how to hold the world in mind, with little thought given to the power required to mount such exhibits.
- The world picture does not change from an earlier medieval one into a modern one, but rather the fact that the world becomes a picture at all is what distinguishes the essence of the modern age.
- 1897 issues of Hellas: The grotesque idea was started of producing natives of Oriental countries as illustrations of papers; thus the Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford produced a real live Indian Pandit, and made him go through the ritual of Brahmanical prayer and worship before a hilarious assembly.
- The correction begins by making the relations of power and knowledge explicit in matters of display and characterization.
- Not even my own performance prepared me for the sadness I saw in her eyes or my own ensuing sense of shame. 1992 quote from Fusco as he observes a diminutive African American at the Minnesota State Fair who was billed as "Tiny Teesha, the Island Princess". (Fusco was a performance artist who tried to make explicit the voyeuristic relationship endemic to what they termed the "imperialist classification and the fetishizing of the exotic body." He and a friend "exhibited" themselves as the mock natives El Aztec High-Tech and Miss Discovery 1992 in a cage placed on display.)
- One result of pursuing this evolutionary narrative, Tony Bennett reports in his study of the museum, is that British, American, and Australian museums were soon looting Aboriginal sacred sites for materials to fill gaps in the chronology of the story they told.
- *Perdition: complete and irreparable loss, ruin; in theology the loss of the soul or of hope for salvation; damnation; hell*
- The natives, it appeared, could be effectively represented by a hollow painted casting, but their tools and clothing had to be authentic possessions of the museum.
- Shopping at a department store became a form of connoisseurship for the average man and woman. Curators set up displays of the museums' artifacts in the Bonwit Teller and Abraham & Straus department stores.
- *Reliquary: a small box, casket, etc. in which a relic or relics are kept and shown.*
- Painting isn't an aesthetic operation; it's a form of magic designed as mediation between the strange, hostile world and us, a way of seizing power by giving form to our terrors as well as our desire. (Picasso)
- The ethnographic artifact, torn from the culture of the African village, enters the Western imagination through the museum display, with little thought for the colonialism that has made it all possible.

- The ethnographic display in the museum domesticates “our terrors as well as our desires” for an empire over the primal.
- What has been wrenched from one community is placed within the museum’s quietude of order, grace, and instruction. The objects’ careful mounting neatly belies the imperial violence, symbolic and otherwise, that has afforded this ethnographic display. The museum’s lessons are always partial.
- *Valorization: a fixing of prices, usually by government action, as by buying up a commodity at the fixed price, etc.*
- Think of how the museum labels a work of art with the year of its completion, the name of the artist, the place of birth; the ethnographic artifact is typically identified by tribe, region or nation and is dated by century.
- The framed and hung artwork celebrates the artist’s transcending moment of sublime achievement, whereas the array of artifacts in the glass case signifies an aspect, whether spiritual or culinary, of a remote culture. Does the allure of these artifacts come from his educated sense of approaching a great divide across time and space?
- A countermove against the museum tradition includes the National Museum of the American Indian, which, since its opening in 1994 at the Smithsonian Institution in NY, has featured labels for some of its exhibits in three colors, with art historians, anthropologists, and Native Americans each providing commentary. It also leaves some objects undated to show their continuing life within an ongoing culture.
- To have Native Americans curating, advising, and repatriating artifacts may disturb without completely unsettling the museum’s placement of the Western visitor at the center of a universe. Rather than seeing their own perspective and knowledge unrelentingly celebrated or seeing the museum as a ledger of ownership, here Western visitors are just that, visitors to a familiar institution that is now in the hands of those whom it once simply put on display.
- Although the museum preserves, honors, and informs in ways I do not want to disparage or lose, we need to be able to imagine what the museum presumes, how that presumption informs our education, and how that presumption has been fed by the very specific material and historical relations that fall under the name “imperialism.”
- Royal Menagerie of London billed itself as the grandest National Depot of Animated Nature in the World. For a shilling, visitors to the Royal Menagerie were able to see “the African Lion – Nero”, and the Noble Lioness – Charlotte...The Royal Menagerie’s Ne(g)ro, accompanied by his noble Charlotte, suggested the fearsome emperor of the jungle lording over the natives before succumbing to the true colonial masters of the land.
- This desire to see animals adapt to different climates was another take on reordering the world.
- Acclimatization was about establishing a new order over the nature of the world. Certainly, the colonial powers devoted considerable scientific energies not only to preparing llamas for alpine pastures, but also to increasing the ability of white men to govern and profit in the tropics.
- We cannot separate without finally naming and classifying, and at that moment property is born.
- The legacy of imperialism is about forms of knowledge that preserve and complete the hegemony of the knower.
- Countries within the empire were exhibited, as quantifiable batches of produce rather than as cultures.
- The Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876 featured pavilions divided into what were, in effect, racial zones, and the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago split the world between the White City, as the pristine pinnacle of civilization, and the Midway Plaisance, as the baser home of such ethnological exhibits as “Darkest Africa” set amid the belly dancers and strip shows.

- The exposition's cloaking of racial prejudices in the robes of science, progress, and liberty, which all Americans were not permitted to enjoy, did not pass without public comments.
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who midway into the 18th century was challenging European thinking: It is said that we have learned men who travel to inform themselves. This is an error. The learned travel for profit like the others..by order of the court. They are dispatched, subsidized, and paid to observe such and such an object which is very surely not a moral object. If in some country there happen to be men who are curious and travel at their own expense, it is never to study men but rather to instruct them. It is not science they need but ostentation. How would they shake off the yoke of opinion in their travels? They only undertake them for the sake of opinion.
- But if one wants to study men, is it necessary to roam the entire earth? Is it necessary to go to Japan to observe Europeans?
- The press began to champion travel writing late in the development of imperialism, at a time when it saw the prospect of reawakening the public's appetite for heroic exploration with the conquest of the two poles and the interior of Africa.
- A large part of the tourist infrastructure... has been built with forced labor... Everyone knows how a lot of villages around Pagan were forced to move because they wanted to make the place look clean and proper for the tourists.
- The educational qualities of Western imperialism began with the amateur naturalist gathering specimens and artifacts while recording the lay of the land, and it culminated in the professional showmanship of the world's fair.
- The themes of discovery, conquest, possession, and dominion are about ways of knowing the world, of bringing it to order, of surveying, mapping and classifying it in an endless theorizing of identity and difference. An educated public was formed around this natural history of the world. It was a nation-building and race-defining exercise through public instruction, the pedagogical thrust of which an 1852 article stated: No better test can be applied to determine the degree of refinement, intelligence and education of a people than the avidity displayed by them for places of instructive amusement, where not only are shows to be seen, but ideas acquired, and whence visitors retire, not only more happy than they entered, but more knowing.
- We have to work with this knowledge of the world – for this knowledge is all that many of us have of the world – by understanding the cost at which it was achieved and the ends to which it was exhibited.
- To catch sight of our education working on us in this way is to begin to change it, disabling some of the ready assumptions that form our idea of the world. If we cannot go back, perhaps we can go forward.

4 The Educational Mission

- By the close of the eighteenth century, after three centuries of imperial conquest, the German thinker Johann Gottfried von Herder thought it well to advise Europeans that “the barbarian rules by force, the cultivated conqueror teaches.”
- Colonized students tend to learn more than the teacher seeks to teach. Education can take down the master's house.
- Claiming that education would raise the colonized along a historical scale toward a level of civilized maturity is simply to imply that the current society was in an infantile state.
- In what was to become a common moral appeal, Las Casas reversed the sense of who the savage is, placing the priest-educator in a position to redeem both European and native.

- Arguably the most “effective” educational instrument used by the church on colonial populations was the residential school. In conscripting children to attend the colonial residential school, the Jesuits led them to turn their backs on learning the ways of their parents’ lives.
- **This desire to unconsciously instill standards and values in the young is not so far removed from what many hope for schooling today, which is why it is worthwhile to consider the original situation of colonial schooling and its legacy. At stake is the very idea of education**
- Macauley argued that keeping a hundred millions of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves was folly.
- Macauley unequivocally declared “a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole of native literature of India and Arabia.” This is but one of a series of dismissals he offers in the minute as he denounces the “false history, false astronomy and false medicine” that otherwise constituted Indian education.
- This aim of colonial education was to transform natives into colonial intermediaries, turning schools into civil-service training institutions intended to support the administration of the empire. The schools formed an integral part of the governing apparatus, creating a class of half-proud, half-ashamed bureaucrats to serve in the shadowy space between the colonized and the native, schooled in tattered textbooks devoted to scenes and lessons from the unapproachable motherland, lessons that were thought to make obvious Britain’s right to rule and the colonizer’s duty to serve.
- The twin educational themes of paternalism and restricted opportunities were sustained well into this century. Macaulay’s original concern for providing native populations with the full scope of an English education “in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect” was to be overshadowed by far more pragmatic demands.
- The Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies reiterated in 1925 that the Controlling Power is responsible as trustee for the moral advancement of the native population.
- The colonial education provided to Egyptian women, which was largely devoted to Bible reading and needlework, had not been intended to foster such public participation among its students.
- They were part of a movement among women that saw education as a primary concern in redressing the flagrant imbalances of power that were based on a cultivated misconception of women.
- The Western women who took up teaching in the colonies were participating in the making of the empire without necessarily accepting the pre-set lessons in how certain classes of people could never fully belong to the order of the arts and sciences they were asked to study.
- Western schools were used to develop indigenous elites which served as intermediaries between metropolis merchants and plantation labor; they were used to incorporate indigenous peoples into the production of goods necessary for the metropolis markets; they were used to help social structures to fit in with European concepts of work and interpersonal relations; and, within advanced capitalist economies such as the US, schools were used to fit white workers and, later, disenfranchised minorities into economic and social roles defined by the dominant capitalist class.
- Western schooling now forms part of a postcolonial heritage with locally inspired changes in the colonial curriculum and language coming only very slowly and amid much debate. It reemerges with the current American move to make English the nation’s official language as part of an assault on bilingual education programs intended to give recently arrived students greater opportunities. The center is made to hold.
- The international standards in mathematics education form another chapter in a intellectual mercantilism through which Europe reprocessed ideas from abroad, including in this case algebraic and other computational techniques using Indian numerals, the Indo-Chinese zero, and the Chinese

decimal place value. In analyzing mathematics' often overlooked multicultural roots, G. G. Joseph concludes that "it is not generally recognized that practically all topics taught in school mathematics today are directly derived from the work of mathematicians originating outside of Western Europe before the 12th century.

- In every one of the countries of Asia, the leadership of the movement which ultimately displaced European supremacy belonged to those who had been trained under the West in the aegis of imperialism.
- In Indonesia, Indo-china, Burma and Ceylon, it is the men and women educated in the West...that provided the leadership.
- Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things, Emile opens. Everything degenerates in the hands of man. Learning is a matter of doing for Rousseau, and having the child actually do things in the world is necessary to prepare him for the proper exercise of reason and liberty in later life. Rousseau credits these radical and influential lessons to what he has learned of the aboriginal peoples. He more generally calls on the constantly ironic example of the "savage" to contrast with the barbaric damage inflicted by society on children in the name of civilization.
- There are aspects of the current curriculum that seem to carry forward that imperial history, which was largely determined to learn about the other - the one who is so markedly not the one engaged in the study - through subordination and surveillance, conversion and training.

Part II – Monstrous Lessons

5 – History and the Rise of the West

- What fascinates me is the degree to which Hegel's suppositions about history and the West's hold on history have become part of what we regard as a commonsense historical understanding. For example, on hearing today of China's efforts to "modernize", we imagine a people finally about to enter the flow of modern history by Westernizing its economy and education system, if not its political system.
- With Hegel's theory of relativity, a large part of the globe does not participate in the progress of time experienced by the West, creating a differentiating time-space continuum that further ensures the lasting division of the world in the Western imagination.
- Hegel: Africa has 'No movement or development to exhibit.
- The individuals were to be beholden to the state: It constitutes their existence, their being, Hegel writes. "Each unit is the Son of his Nation."
- The desperately modern culture of Europe, relying on Sovereign Reason rather than faith, was constantly generating accounts of itself and its actions.
- Nothing great that has ever been done by Englishmen was done so unintentionally, so accidentally as the conquest of India. (Seely)
- *Eugenics: the science that deals with the improvement of races and breeds, especially the human race, through the control of hereditary factors*
- A number of public societies also sought to stir up loyalties for the empire through the schools using the themes of eugenics and motherhood, which according to John MacKenzie, eventually created a space in the schools for the teaching of home economics.
- The book advised students that West Indians are lazy, vicious, and incapable of any serious improvement, or, in a phrase, "quite happy and quite useless," whereas in India "our rule has been infinitely to the good for all the three hundred millions of the different races who inhabit that richly populated land. *A School History of England* by Oxford historian C.R.L. Fletcher (still in print)

- The general concept that the achievement of the West forms the core of the educated imagination prevails, as well as the idea that “a history of the human community” is about the rise of the West.
- Life in Demosthenes’ Athens, in Confucius’ China, and in Mohammed’s Arabia was violent, risky and uncertain; hopes struggled with fears; greatness teetered perilously on the brim of disaster. We belong in this high company and should count ourselves fortunate to live in one of the great ages of the world.
- *Inchoate: just begun; in the early stages; rudimentary*
- If imperialism is portrayed as initiating a global society, which bears a certain truth while conveying little of the hardship unequally distributed in the process, the demise of imperialism is presented as a threat to world peace.
- It is not so much a false history of the world as one that reflects a particular sense of time, history, and modernity that can be profitably called into question in trying to understand imperialism’s educational legacy.
- The key question at this point is whether these other cultures are thought to have entered the modern age or just to have come into contact with it as it went bounding by in its own historical time.
- The text does point to how the term “modern era” applied to this period of history, reflects very much a Eurocentric bias, as it implies that progress and the export of European civilization were connected.
- There needs to be this vigilance about what has been lost and what has been brought forward as “history.” In the rise of the West, the achievement of superiority has been accomplished not only by the sword and cross, but also by a philosophy of history that has used time and place as conceptual tools for dividing the world according to the interests of imperialism.

6 Geographies of Difference

- It has fallen to the arts and sciences, geography not least among them, to find that distinguishing boundary, to establish that consciousness that set West from East.
- We have then, on the one hand, to think of how firmly Europe is set apart from Asia in our minds, and, on the other, to consider how hard pressed we might be, after all those school days spent coloring maps and working with atlases, to mark on a map the precise line that geographically divides Europe from Asia.
- Real fears were expressed about the deterioration of character that might be suffered by colonists in the tropics; thus, one finds John Scott Keltie advising in 1897 that European children “must be sent home to England, otherwise they will degenerate physically and morally.
- Students were taught to look out onto “our empire and its neighbors,” as the title of a Canadian textbook referred to it, an empire in which “no other nation controls such a curious jumble of people.
- Questions in text: Is European exploitation being welcomed by the “backward” races of the East? Should the people of India be more grateful to Britain for what she has done to raise their standard of living?
- Year after year, we studied the great British and French explorers, tracing their journeys with different colored dotted lines across ocean and continent, in ship and on snowshoe as they trod across what they took to be lands that were theirs for the civilizing.
- People outside their assigned landscape evoke a sense of dislocation, with the lingering connection with their “land of origin” signified by racial qualities.
- The *raison d’être* of geography is that the earth’s environment and the peoples that inhabit it vary from place to place.

- In this scheme, the concept of culture is used to characterize a people's response to their environment, with this category taking its place alongside race and nation in the global mapping of identity.
- No less than race and nation, culture is, as Christopher Herbert identifies it in his history of the idea, "a product and instrument of the modern imagination."
- The National Geographic magazine's dramatic photo-realist take on the world was initially to assert America's vision of its newly ascendant place in the world.
- The sexual regard for native women was rendered inoffensive by playing on the assumption that they were "a breed apart" from white women.
- The one portrayed is neither expected nor invited to participate in the knowing afforded the viewer.
- Susan Sontag speaks of how "to photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having a knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed.
- The struggle to find a nonpaternalistic or objectified regard for the third world, whether in textbooks, news media, development agencies, or tourist promotion, speaks to the legacy of imperialism which once made it so easy to teach the whole of the world to students. It speaks to an exclusion of voices and representations from a place that is seen as the world beyond the West.
- The focus on family and community in itself represents for me a positive step away from placing the focus on national and cultural divisions, although these categories are certainly present.
- There is little in the students' geography lessons that looks forward to a community among knower and known, little that looks back to how aspects of this difference, such as discrepancies in resources, are not geographical in nature, as implied, but the product of a global system of economic inequality initially established by imperialism. In trying to make sense of the material and cultural differences they are confronted with in this and other textbooks, students might well slip into a form of social Darwinism that blames or pities those represented in their apparent failure to evolve. Thus, there needs to be a way to interrupt in class the neocolonial gaze that otherwise defines the picturing of the other. There also needs to be a way of recognizing that students in the class who possess roots in one of these seemingly unconnected communities around our world are living both within and outside the world depicted for, and the world assumed of, the student.
- What more will it take, we might then ask, to break the colonizing hold on the study of the other, especially when that other is, in some sense, oneself?
- Just how to pose the question could turn a class' attention from documenting differences to comparing how a community has sought to represent itself and how it has been represented by others.
- If there is a geographic determinism of the world, it lies in how we have learned to imagine distance and difference.
- There is no true geography of this world underlying the historical overlays. We have to understand how such global maps are nothing less and nothing more than "our world."

5 Science and the Origin of Race

- The Romans and Greeks had identified monstrous races in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa, setting them apart from the true Africans, who were depicted in classical art and literature as praiseworthy for their beauty, wisdom and fierceness, and for their religious beliefs.
- Natives were distinguished from Europeans in these illustrations not by physical characteristics but by their nakedness (which only further exposed the similarities), adorned with perhaps a feather headdress and, more likely holding a human limb, indicating cannibalism.
- By the tenth edition of his *Systema Naturae*, published in 1758, the number of races had grown to six, still including the monstrous (such as dwarfs and giants) in a mix of humans and primates.
- Herder stated “All mankind are only one, but his viewpoint was the exception.
- With the ending of slavery in the British Empire, through the Emancipation Act of 1833, the scientific study of race began in earnest, shedding what had earlier appeared to be a humanistic and egalitarian disposition, in favor of dissecting human racial differences.
- One might then wonder if the science of race managed to reduce, in effect, the moral cost of imperial expansion and exploitation in the same way that Daniel Headrick (1981) has argued that 19th century technologies - from quinine to breechloader rifle -made global domination irresistibly affordable for imperial powers.
- When we use science to investigate subjects like race and sex, which are suffused with cultural meanings and embedded in power relationships, we need to be wary of scientific descriptions and interpretations that support, or even enhance, the prevailing political realities.
- Stephan describes not only the ascriptions of character (primitive, childlike) but also the elaborate anatomical measurements (brain weight, jaw protrusion) that were devoted to “linking lower races and women” in the anthropological, biological, and medical literature of the 1860s and 1870s. Science served imperialism well through its scholarly and learned counsel on how to divide humankind in a fashion that corresponded well with European interests in global domination.
- America offered the example of scientifically recommended sterilization programs, which had been legislated in sixteen states, the earliest in Indiana, dating back to 1907.
- If that seems too obvious, it is worth pointing out that as late as the 1930s, the single species position was still being challenged by the respected British anthropologist Reginald Gates.
- From this protected scientific perspective, “Most anthropologist agree” that humankind is divided among “Mongoloid,” “Negroid”, and Caucasoid. Therefore, a nation is not to be mistaken for a race, nor do Catholics, Protestants, or Muslims form a race, and people who are culturally Turkish or Chinese or the like are not thereby describable as races.
- Jensen is guilty of two of the oldest cultural prejudices of Western thought: the ladder of progress as a model for organizing life, and the reification of some abstract quality (such as IQ) as a criterion for ranking.
- Coon’s work offers readily accessible lesson material for introducing students to science’s involvement in the racism that grew out of imperialism and formed part of the popular educational materials only a generation or two removed from their own schooling.
- Categories are always more useful than real. The results from another survey a decade ago indicate that race lives on, in biology at least, in a thin majority of textbooks, and professors are relatively unshaken in their belief in the scientific validity of the concept. In physical anthropology, only a fifth of textbooks accept race as a fair division of humankind, although fully half of the faculty members surveyed in this field hold the category viable.
- Categories are not only constructs of the mind, but also projections of disciplinary convenience.

- Avoidance has long been the schools' response to controversy, and the result is that young minds are often forced to deal with heavily contested ideas exclusively on an extracurricular basis.
- Science teaching masks the real political and economic priorities of science, hides its appropriation of non-Western scientific traditions; and often attributes people's subordination or suffering to nature – be it biological or geographic facts – rather than to the way science and nature itself have been subordinated to political priorities.
- *Anti-miscegenation: against marriage or interbreeding between members of different races; esp., in the US between whites and Negroes*
- In the 1950s UNESCO called for a moratorium on the use of the term race. This happened, in effect, among the majority of high school biology texts of the 1980s. I remain convinced, however, that this is as much a disservice to students who are learning about science today as was the earlier, often confused and prejudicial treatment of race provided to a previous generation of science students.
- Students need to treat race as a way of working through the nature of the discipline and its social implications. All that is named and classified represents a tireless effort to render difference sensible, to work with an unsettled and shapeless world that can be brought to order through language, the civilizing force.
- Race, like class and nation was a concept first developed to help interpret new social relations.
- My hope is that these lessons are seen within the historical framework best described as imperialism. I think it is helpful to understand that scientific racism was not simply a freak event, a mutant science carried out only by so-called scientist. It had and continues to have too many of the markings of real science, from research grants to statistical tables. Thus, there remains a need to introduce students to the fragile nature of truth, to the moral dimensions of this inquiry, and to the responsibilities we have as practitioners and students of science. This is to propose an education concerned with the historical dimensions of universal truths.
- Polysemous:
- The obscured yet present legacy of race science, if it were made part of the curriculum would have the potential of serving both those students who understand race as a part of who they are and must be, and those who have learned to think of race as someone else's problem.

8 Language, Nation, World

- With the expansion of the British Empire, English was made an instrument of domination and silencing; it was used to regulate and police access to authority and knowledge among colonized peoples.
- The public's fear of minority groups far exceeded its love of humankind and its concern for justice.
- We know far more about how to help the world learn English than we do about how to help native speakers of English learn about the world.
- Native speakers alone are presumed to have a right to contribute to the growth of the language, to open metaphorical spaces, create new diction, and unearth new meanings through their work on the page.
- *Solecisms: a violation of the conventional usage, grammar, etc. of a language (e.g. I seen him); a breach of etiquette or propriety.*
- This lack of linguistic tolerance, bred into the bone of education, appears to have little to do with levels of communication among native and nonnative speakers, as nonnative speakers have proved in at least one comparative study to be the most effective users of English on a global scale.

- Culture-as-sign articulates the in-between moment when the rule of language as semiotic system – linguistic difference, the arbitrariness of the sign – turns into a struggle for the historical and ethical right to signify. The rule of language as a signifying system- the possibility of speaking at all- becomes the misrule of discourse; the right for only some to speak diachronically and differentially and for “others – women, migrants, Third world peoples, Jews, Palestinians, for instance – to speak only symptomatically or marginally.
- The English language is itself the product of invading Teutonic peoples, as the amalgam of its imported Anglo-Saxon absorbed the further weight of Latin, Norse and French invasions, all the while chasing the native Celtic languages into the hinterlands of what would later become, at least in name, the United Kingdom.
- English is a transnational national language, not strictly native to any place in particular.
- Whereas the French and Italians had scholarly academies to govern their languages, the liberty-loving English had come to rely on their dictionary editors to rule the word.
- With this embrace of English there needs to be an understanding of the “mode of its assimilation into our social fabric” and how “it is used in the process of class formation and social privilege, here and now.
- Let us advocate that lessons on languages of greater global currency include the historical forces that have created the unequal exchange value of this global linguistic economy.
- We have to watch whether the promotion of English as a world language carries within it the cultural, racial, and national legacy that I am associating with imperialism, and we have to insist that this legacy be explicitly addressed as part of a valuable and missing lesson from an education in language that is intent on not reproducing the colonial frame of mind.
- English also becomes a lingua franca to the point that any literate educated person on the face of the globe is in a very real sense deprived if he does not know English. Poverty, famine, and disease are instantly recognized as the cruelest and least excusable forms of deprivation. Linguistic deprivation is a less easily noticed condition, but one nevertheless of great significance.
- English is not taught as a second language but as the only medium of intelligible communication.
- Although English proudly stands as the language of democracy in England and America, it was a culturally destructive vehicle of imperialism abroad.

9 Literature and the Educated Imagination

- At the outset of *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison declares that “the readers of virtually all of American fiction have been positioned as white”. This positioning acts as a form of deracination that encourages white readers to see their situation as “universal,” just as educators tend to hold that the school curriculum is color-blind.
- 1853, Horace Wilson was able to advise the British Parliament that as “we initiate the Indians into our literature, particularly at an early age, and get them to adopt feelings and sentiments from our standard writers, we make an impression upon them, and affect any considerable alteration in their feelings and notions. Literature teaching was thought instrumental in shaping character. As it reflected the genius of a people, it not only would serve as a model of civilized being to others, but also would work upon students in the colonial schools as a “mask of conquest.”
- An education in literature was about rising above both the savagery and the hollowness within.
- *Palimpsest: a parchment, tablet, etc. that has been written upon several times, with previous, erased texts still partly visible; written upon more than once.*
- South Seas islands are “uninhabited,” of course, in relation to a European presence, with the nomadic occupation of indigenous populations erased or denied.

- The Chinese hopefuls whose ship foundered off Queens in NY a few years ago ended up in jail awaiting deportation from their Manhattan island dream. The former colonizer cannot readily imagine being colonized.
- Equally present is the presumed responsibility of the educated to experience a world of different cultures, learning along the way “everything you could possibly need to know about that society. This sense of global mastery, of being in a position to know the other, and the related release from primitive superstitions, which permits one informed and superior choices, are part of what recommends the educated imagination as still bearing something of a colonial construct.
- To be human is to be civilized and literature is an incidental aspect of that essential civilizing spirit.
- If we shut the vision of literature completely out of our minds, or insist on its being limited in various ways, something goes dead inside of us, perhaps the one thing that is really important to keep alive.
- Literature gives us an experience that stretches us vertically to the heights and depths of what the human mind can conceive, to what corresponds to the conception of heaven and hell in religion.
- We study literature to improve our imagination, our vocabulary, to get away from reality and escape to another world or another time.
- Growth through literature does capture literature’s bridge to a better world, leading the way in finding what is not yet part of ourselves.
- If we are to get beyond this way of imagining literature, we need to begin with how our own imaginations were educated, and how this gives literature much of its place in the world.
- What is it that we still understand through difference and distance? How is it that “here” still bears the legacy of concepts that took their form during the age of empire?
- My educational hope is that, once these literary assumptions about primitive islands and white readers are raised as at least a part of literature’s story, the divisions remaining from those colonial days will not be able to work in quite the same way.

10 Out of the Past

- What experience and history teach, Hegel writes in *The Philosophy of History* is this – that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it. For my part, I have been arguing that most everything people know about the world at large has come down to them from the past, and in that sense they are nothing if not students of history.
- The historical distinctions that the imperial powers used to establish colonies, divide races and distinguish cultures are transformed into universals of nature. These universals then become what people and governments do indeed learn from history.
- The past is not forgotten, but it is used to invest the present with meaning. The human perception of difference per se is natural enough. We cannot live but by making distinctions. But the significance invested in any given difference forms an order of work, history, and discourse that then passes as only natural. The specific differences that we learn to attend to with acuity – such as those grouped under the heading “race” – and the extremely consequential burden of meaning that we learn to assign to those differences are the result of a historical process that each of us is educated within. To change the significance of those differences will take an educational effort at least equal to the one required to put those meanings in place to begin with. My modest proposal is to supplement our education with a consideration of imperialism’s influence on the teaching of history, geography, science, language and literature in the hope that it will change the way this legacy works on us.
- Prelapsarian:

- We do not yet have an education prepared to deal with what has gone into the making of the boundaries between East and West, between races and cultures, that we still live within.
- I continue to count on the educational system to make us free, even as I question its entrenched complicity with imperialism. What are the prospects of turning education against a legacy that has contributed so much to our understanding of the educated imagination?
- This is much the spirit of multicultural, antiracist, and feminist initiatives that, in seeking to identify the obviously Eurocentric and patriarchal elements in the curriculum, are now part of what gets talked about in schools and universities. In support of that disruptive talk, I have focused on specific aspects of academic disciplines that gave modern form to such ideas as the rise of the West, aspects which need to be critically examined within Western Education.
- The educational approach to history that I am advocating here is best described as “pragmatic.” This book’s focus is on the past’s continuing presence.
- Contemporary defenders of a largely national cultural literacy in the US are banking on to “unite” a fractured America.
- This book is intended to demonstrate how much of what we mean by race, culture, and nation was shaped by imperialism and how much of its legacy was the work of scholars and schools.
- *Autodidacticism*
- There remains the ironic sense that the sophisticated learned from the naïve, a role reversal that it is assumed, was not fully appreciated by natives who served the colonists as temporary dressed-up “teachers.”
- The starting point is to get a feel for how we think and see the world within the scope of this intellectual legacy. This reflection could lead, as I imagine the process, to the selection or development of specific supplements, for each of the subject areas that encourage student and teacher to step back and examine how the subject has come to frame the world.
- Educational legacy of Imperialism
 - In the portrayal of the other
 - In the treatment of distance from the West
 - In the placement of the non-Western outside history
 - In the suggestion of evolutionary differences along moral, cultural, and/or psychological lines
 - In the construction of racial difference
 - In the equation of culture and/or nationality with race
- Ethnocentrism is only natural. Why not do it with pride rather than apology? Well, I would respond, this is where we are, and still I would ask that some allowance be made for the scale and proximity of this particular regime of ethnocentrism, that is, for the global educational consequences of imperialism’s legacy within and beyond the West.
- How are we to overcome the foreignness that we have so often made of the other, if not by first finding it in ourselves, as we have made ourselves over through education and as we were all foreign (ignorant, poorly spoken, barbaric).
- Lesson on this legacy will bring us back, it is true, to an educational project that was originally intended to profit and delight some at the expense of others, but it needn’t continue that way.