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The Invisible Empire

White Discourse, Tolerance and Belonging

Georgie Wemyss, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

'Invisible Empire is a much needed antidote to the poverty of the mainstream political imagination concerning issues of racism in this country. Through a sensitivity to the political and cultural landscapes of East London, Georgina Wemyss dissects the intolerant tolerance of white liberals as well as the inability of British society to break from its imperial past and offer genuine belonging to its black and brown citizens.'

– Les Back, Goldsmiths University of London, UK

'This book provides a wonderfully readable analysis of the politics of multiculturalism within the framework of a particular place. The author's sustained critique of "the invisible empire" shaping the East End as a contrived tale of merchants and the spread of civilisation manages to bring to light layer upon layer of remarkable historical information along the way, right up to the present. Her methodical and innovative approach also shows those of us committed to breaking the default setting of white liberalism how to engage simultaneously with the local, the trans-local and the national. Here she demonstrates how, at each scale, public understanding of the "complex citizenship" of postcolonial settlers is diminished by careless ignorance and racism derived from decades of misinformation and hubris about Britain's past.'

– Vron Ware, The Open University, UK

How have dominant white and liberal discourses maintained their hegemony in a post-colonial world? Georgie Wemyss offers a significant and original contribution to critical race theory through this anthropological account of the cultural hegemony of the West. She demonstrates how concepts of tolerance have been substantially reproduced through time in order to accommodate the challenges of history.

Contents: Introduction; PART I: Introduction to Chapters 1 and 2; Terra nullius to the shrouding of Milligan: White histories on the Isle of Dogs; Competing colonial anniversaries in 'postcolonial' Blackwall: White memories, White belonging. PART II: Introduction to Chapters 3 and 4; Subjects of the invisible empire: 'outside extremists', 'White East Enders', 'passive Bengalis'; 'The East End' marketing strategy and the consolidation of the White East End. PART III: Introduction to Chapters 5 and 6; Tolerance, the invisible empire and the hierarchy of belonging; 'Lascars', colonial genealogies and exclusionary categories. Conclusion: exposing the invisible empire: towards commonality and metropolitan belonging; Bibliography; Index.

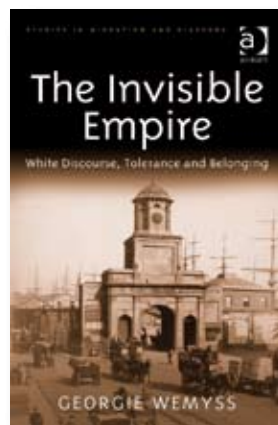
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