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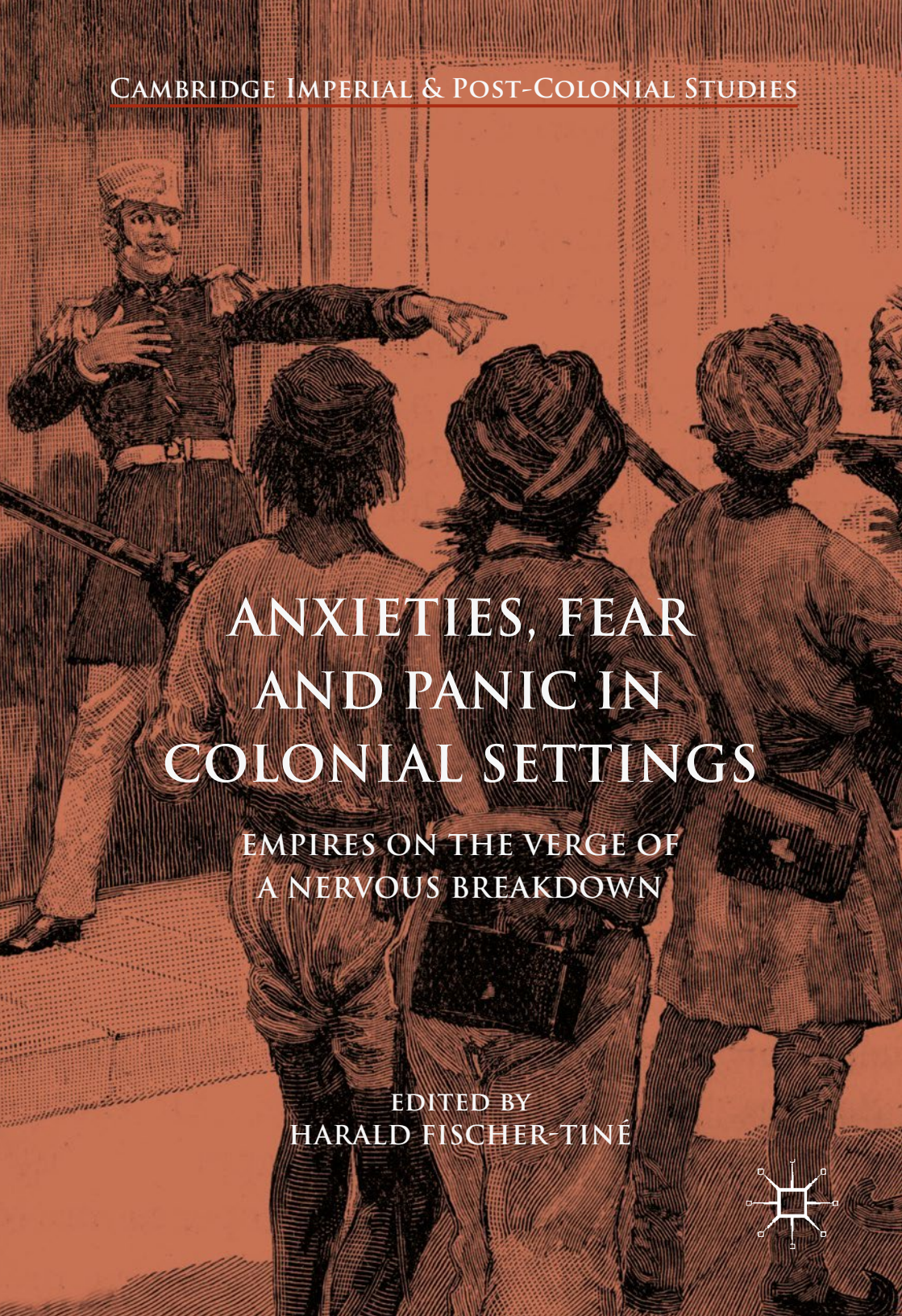

Anxieties, Fear and Panic in Colonial Settings

Empires on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown

Edited by
Harald Fischer-Tiné

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Harald Fischer-Tiné
Editor

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Empires on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Empires and Emotions

Harald Fischer-Tiné and Christine Whyte

The subtitle of this volume is not only a humorous nod to Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar; it also points to our main contention. This book argues that the history of colonial empires has been shaped to a considerable extent by negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and embarrassment, as well as by the regular occurrence of panics. This is perhaps most obvious if we zoom in on the group of the ruling colonial elites. Contrary to their well-known literary and visual self-representations, Europeans who were part of the imperial enterprise were not always cool, calm and collected while 'running the show' of empire.[1] Quite the reverse: one of the seemingly paradoxical effects of the asymmetries characteristic of the *situation coloniale,* which put a minuscule elite of culturally alien colonizers in a position to exercise power over an often numerically stronger 'native'

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population, was the fact that anxiety, fear and *angst* became part of their everyday experience. At least in this respect, it apparently did not make much of a difference whether they were high-ranking officials, merchants, missionaries, ordinary settlers or rank-and-file soldiers.

Empire themed fiction is full of examples of such emotional states of exception. George Orwell's short story *Shooting an Elephant*,[2] for instance, has been rightly celebrated by post-colonial scholars because it debunks the imperial authority masquerade by telling the story of a British police officer in colonial Burma who comes to realize that, in spite of his constant attempts at performing authority, he has completely lost control to the local population.[3] There are also cases in point of embarrassment and outright panic. The first part of Joseph Conrad's novel *Lord Jim* (1900) provides a pertinent example.[4] The book's protagonist, the Englishman 'Jim', is first mate on the steamer *Patna*, which is full with hundreds of Muslim pilgrims on their way from a Southeast Asian port to the Arabian harbour of Jeddah. When the *Patna* is damaged in heavy weather, Jim (together with the captain and the rest of the European crew) panics and abandons it to save his own life, leaving the Muslim passengers to their fate. However, the *Patna* does not sink, the pilgrims are saved and Jim is brought before the admiralty court, where he is stripped of his navigation command certificate for dereliction of duty. What soon becomes evident, however, is that for most members of the community of European expatriates in the Malayan archipelago, the ultimate disgrace consists not in his breach of maritime law, but in the fact that a representative of an 'imperial race' has displayed his incompetence and cowardliness in front of colonial subjects. The embarrassment caused by this failure and the experience of utter social ostracism by his peers drives Jim to perform heroic deeds in the novel's second part in order to recover his lost imperial masculinity.

What makes these vignettes highly relevant for historians of imperialism (and emotions) is that they are not the products of mere literary imagination, but are based on real events. As is well known, George Orwell (that is, Eric Arthur Blair) was a police officer serving in Burma in the 1920s and his short story has an obvious autobiographical character. Joseph Conrad too famously crisscrossed the seas as ship captain for decades before he could live off his writings, and his *Lord Jim* is based on the scandalous case of the S.S. *Jeddah,* whose captain and crew deserted pilgrim passengers *en route* from Singapore to Mecca in 1880.[5] Many

more literary accounts could be cited.[6] They all give historians good reason to tackle the complex relationship between emotions, panics and colonial empires beyond the fictional and the anecdotal in greater depth than has been done so far. The time for such an enterprise seems to be just right.

The 'affective turn' in the social sciences has produced new analyses of the way in which emotions emerge, travel and are performed. Drawing on the observations of anthropologists that emotions are the result of socio-cultural practice and historical context rather than being hard-wired into our brains, new social theory has attempted to trace the relationships between emotion, power and politics.[7] At the same time, there have been attempts to bring the 'inner' or emotional life of empires to scholarly attention through a recent focus on the history of imperial sensitivities, families and friendships.[8] This volume draws on this new literature to explore a particular set of emotions and emotional states that affected the colonized, colonizers and metropolitan publics. As has already become clear, rather than focus on love and affection or on the intimate and private, we are concerned with the impact of the darker affects connected with colonialism. The emotions detailed in the 13 chapters of this anthology played out largely in the public sphere and they were fuelled by rumours, press reports or professional knowledge collection in the form of police or secret service intelligence, scientific surveys, archives, academic literature and so on. The book also brings together examples from a broad range of imperial settings. Though the majority of case studies relate to various colonies within the British Empire, chapters on Dutch and German colonialism also offer alternate contexts. In terms of the timeframe, the contributions cover a long period, stretching from the beginning of the imperial heyday in the 1860s to the crest of the great wave of decolonization in the early 1960s and thus capture the shifting circumstances in which the emotional experience of empire took shape.

As the geographical and temporal breadth of the contributions suggest, this book does not aim to develop a narrow definition of 'colonial panic'. Rather, by providing insights into how emotions like embarrassment, anxiety and fear guided political action and defined social or cultural attitudes, it provides a comparative and *longue durée* view on the numerous origins of imperial panics, examines the various strategies to respond to them and assesses their multi-faceted consequences for historical actors on both sides of the colonial equation.

Approaching Emotions in History

The idea that emotions are essential to the understanding of history is not a new one. Although this is not the place for a comprehensive review of the vast literature that already exists on the history of emotions, it might nonetheless be helpful to provide a rough sketch of the more prominent developments in the field. As early as 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche deplored an obvious lacuna in historical research by asking 'where can you find a history of love, of avarice, of envy, of conscience, of piety, of cruelty?'[9] Over the course of the twentieth century, such histories gradually began to appear. Johan Huizinga's pioneering examination of medieval emotional life was published in 1919,[10] followed by the work of Norbert Elias on the changing emotional norms of Western Europe and the proliferation of an ideal of self-restraint.[11] In France, the historical interest in emotion intersected with social history in the call of the *Annales* school, and Lucien Fèbvre in particular, to 'plunge into the darkness where psychology wrestles with history'.[12] In the 1960s, E.P. Thompson extended the limits of historical materialist inquiry by rethinking the relationship between social being and consciousness, through the mediation of 'experience'. With this insight into a particular limitation of Marxist theory, Thompson highlighted the central role emotion played in shaping political consciousness.[13] Before long, a new generation of social historians followed Thompson's example by focusing on the previously overlooked lives and experiences of other marginalized groups like women and racial minorities.

However, it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that a body of work readily identifiable as the 'history of emotions' emerged. This new current of research was closely related to the development of the history of the family and gender history, which had done much to overturn the traditional dichotomy between the public and private spheres. In 1985, the Stearns observed that much of the historical literature from the late 1970s and early 1980s claiming to deal with 'emotion' was actually still concerned with the question of changing emotional standards of the era, tackled previously by Elias. This work, the Stearns claim, established the idea of a 'new period in Western emotional history, corresponding to what we call modern'.[14] Thus, by this point, the history of emotions as a field not only reconstituted how certain fundamental categories were understood, but was also being invoked to formulate historical periodization. While the field has remained decidedly Eurocentric (and to some extent rooted in either medieval or contemporary history), its focus on both the

variety of emotional standards and expressions and the manner in which emotional experience was shaped by social expectation make it a fruitful field of enquiry for imperial historians.

Between the publication of the Stearns' groundbreaking article on 'emotionology' or the rules that govern emotional life and this volume, there have been considerable advances in the theorization of the history of emotions. In 2012, the *American Historical Review* invited some of the 'new emotional historians' to introduce and explain the field. This roundtable made clear that the field had undergone radical change since the first calls were made to take emotion seriously. Barbara Rosenwein's 'emotional communities' added depth and complexity to the flattening of emotional standards into one homogeneous norm. She argued that historical actors felt their way through multiple and overlapping emotional communities that shaped both their affect and behaviour.[15] William Reddy, on the other hand, drew on anthropological literature to develop the idea that language changed our emotions through the use of 'emotives'.[16] This mutually constitutive relationship between emotions and the language used to express them is subject to change not only through time as historians of emotion have already established, but also through socio-political and cultural context, as well as by particularities of place.

The influence of anthropology and social constructivism on the history of emotions means that non-Western examples from the contemporary context and anthropological literature are frequently cited to demonstrate the diversity of emotionologies across the globe.[17] Until recently, however,[18] this global reach did not extend far back into the past. The juxtapositions of contemporary non-Western society and European or North American societies of the past continue to reaffirm a colonial notion of 'progress' that defines the non-Western world as backward and anachronistic, even as the West represents the eventual *telos* of historical change. The key ideas and foundational texts of the history of emotions such as Elias' *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* emerged during the late colonial period (the mid-1930s to 1940s) in Western Europe, but, as yet, there has been little examination of this connection.

Despite the field's Eurocentrism, its focus on both the variety of emotional standards and expressions, and the manner in which emotional experience was shaped by social expectation make it a fruitful field of enquiry for imperial historians. The study of emotions in colonial settings thus offers an opportunity to bridge two gaps. On the one hand, it brings the insight of the constitutive power of emotions to imperial history and,

on the other hand, it may help to further de-centre and open up the history of emotions to non-European examples drawn from historical rather than anthropological case studies. A focus on emotions in non-Western settings has the potential to challenge the European periodization of emotional history and to allow a reassessment of the relationship between language, emotion and emotional regime. It is at least plausible to assume that in colonial societies, where the vernacular was side-lined by a colonial language in education, political life and the media, new relationships between multiple languages as well as multiple emotional communities would be formed.

Like most existing studies of emotions in history, this volume focuses on a particular 'set' of inter-connected emotions. Panic, anxiety and shame are often characterized as 'irrational' or 'overblown', but historical study of their expression, particularly in colonial contexts, suggests that these episodes reveal a great deal about the workings of empire and how it was experienced. Richard Grove summarizes one of the underlying themes behind the anxieties and panics of empire as 'anxiety about the nature of western society and anxiety about the ability of man to destroy nature and change the climate of the earth. Implicit in both fears was a suspicion that man might destroy his integrity and himself as a species'.[19]

More recently, panic and anxiety in imperial contexts have been addressed by two edited volumes that deserve to be discussed in greater detail, as their contributions partially intersect with the subject of the present collection. The contributors to the 2013 volume *Helpless Imperialists* edited by Maurus Reinkowski and Gregor Thum explore the sense of imperial vulnerability. Their collection highlights the vertiginous feeling of 'peripety' experienced by colonial authorities upon realizing the wide gap between colonial ambition and their actual political and military reach. Most of the case studies in the collection at hand suggest that the feeling of vulnerability was justified. Not only did the various empires lack resources, they relied heavily on rhetorical flourish and symbolism or grand efforts to demonstrate their military capabilities to maintain a semblance of order. The editors of *Helpless Imperialists* emphasize the persistence of insecurity throughout the colonial period. As the colonizers became established and gathered information about the colonized, the colonized too became familiar with their new rulers and developed strategies to oppose them.[20] The argument that advances in colonial technologies of knowledge gathering by no means prevented the outbreak of panics among the colonizers has recently also been put forward by Kim Wagner in an insightful article

on the 'Mutiny motif'.[21] Wagner regards colonial anxieties as 'structural' or 'systemic' and hence largely unrelated to the actual information and knowledge available to the ruling minority.[22] This analysis places insecurity and vulnerability squarely within the imperial power, suggesting that demonstrations of military or material strength were often merely window displays. In contrast to the somewhat one-sided examples provided by Reinkowski and Thum, the present volume is built on the observation that feelings of anxiety and the experience of panic were by no means the monopoly of imperial elites, but rather were often shared across the colonial divide.

This theme of fear of 'infection' by panic from a colonized population distinguishes our contributing author Robert Peckham's recent volume *Empires of Panic*. Unlike *Helpless Imperialists*, Peckham argues in the introduction to his anthology that in colonial settings, panic was often considered to be an attribute or tendency of the colonized populations. Based on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, he defines panic 'as a psychological state of an emotionally charged group response—invariably construed as irrational—to some external menace, whether natural or manmade, actual or imagined'.[23] He explains its spread primarily through the metaphors of contagion or plague, and discusses how colonial administrators pathologized the so-called 'native' populations of colonized people as naturally violent, secretive, ignorant or hyper-emotional, lending themselves to a continual state of anxiety over potential loss of control.[24]

These 'contagious panics' are represented as parasites reliant on the very feature of empires that denoted their strength—the size and scope of their transnational networks. Because of this, both *Helpless Imperialists* and Robert Peckham's collection share a strong focus on the role of communication and transport technology to spread and fan the flames of incipient panic. They demonstrate that the gathering of information, from frontier zones in particular, often encouraged rather than dampened anxieties in the metropole. Technological advances such as the material development of the electric telegraph system sparked panic and crisis by bringing the concerns of the 'turbulent frontier' directly to the heart of empire.[25] 'A history of panic and disease, then', as Alison Bashford concludes in the epilogue of *Empires of Panic*, 'turns out to be a history of communication and technology.'[26]

In contradistinction to the emphasis in Peckham's valuable collection, the panics and anxieties examined in this volume are not totalizing transcontinental panics of colonizer or colonized spread by electronic

communication or steamboat. While the importance of this dimension is acknowledged in some chapters, contributions mostly focus on more localized examples that demonstrate the interplay between emotions like anxiety and shame on the one hand and the outbreak of panics on the other. In doing so, our authors perform what Robert Peckham suggests: 'the history of a collective panic should, perhaps, be studied in relation to the history of emotions, opening up the question of what emotions are, and how emotion relates to cognition'.[27] A serious engagement with the emotions that served as triggers for imperial and colonial panics seems all the more necessary now as—in spite of his acknowledgement of the importance of the history of emotions—Peckham's volume itself, with its emphasis on media and modes of communication, has little to offer in this regard. Moreover, while *Empires of Panic* grapples more or less exclusively with 'disease panics' in Asian and Australasian parts of the British Empire, the diverse and variegated case studies assembled in this collection allow the reader to consider the differences in emotional response and tenor in a broad array of imperial and colonial cross-cultural encounters. Further, this structure also lends itself to a networked conception of the workings of the empire, which emphasizes the intensity of knowledge circulation and the multiplicity of trajectories not only within but also between empires.

Coming to Terms with 'Panic'

Other than the insights provided by the history of emotions, 'moral panic' is another heuristic concept used by some of our authors. The phrase 'moral panic' was popularized, though not coined, by the sociologist Stanley Cohen in 1973.[28] It was first used in the *Quarterly Christian Spectator* in 1830 to contrast the need to remain actively faithful and moral so as to avoid the risk of lapsing into a torpor, or moral panic.[29] However, the next year, the term was used in its modern sense in the *Journal of Health Conducted by an Association of Physicians* to warn of the dangers of a public over-reaction to an outbreak of cholera.[30] From the early to mid-nineteenth century, panic tended to be associated with the 'primitive' as an example of raw emotion, which the superior Western civilization had nearly outgrown. Later, on the cusp of the twentieth century, Gustave Le Bon, the popular but irredeemably racist author of *La Psychologie de la Foule*, came to associate panic with modernity, intrinsically linking it to urbanization and technology.[31]

The concept of 'moral panic' specifically first came to scholarly attention in the 1960s with Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*, which argued that 'The medium is the message' and suggested that new technologies of media caused shifts in perceptions.[32] But it was Cohen's work on perceived deviance and social tension that both brought together these earlier insights and introduced 'moral panic' into common parlance. His analysis highlighted the role of self-proclaimed experts and the media in the simplistic and sensationalist depiction of so-called 'folk devils' (that is, deviant groups allegedly posing a threat to societal or cultural values), thereby stoking the flames of a general panic. By the 1990s, researchers across a range of disciplines were making use of the concept at the same time as the idea took hold in the public imagination.[33]

Much of this literature focused on the seeming obsession with, and amplification of, deviance in both political policy and the media, which often resulted in the episodes of panic.[34] Cultural theorists questioned the ways in which moral panics appeared to divert dissent and maintain the prevailing political order.[35] This British and North American-based body of literature has produced a wide variety of uses of the concept, and a corresponding lack of clarity over what, precisely, defines a 'moral panic'. While Cohen's model highlighted the process by which panics emerged through media representation, later models provided a checklist of attributes to identify the panic post factum.[36] Popular usage of the term in relation to a wide variety of scandals and crises has made it still more difficult to effectively deploy as an analytical framework.

Despite this diversity of understandings, though, the domestic fears of deviance and the panics arising from colonial experience appear to have a great deal in common. Goode and Ben-Yehuda's list of attributes of panic, especially the disproportionality, hostility and volatility that characterize such emotional states of exception, resonate with the concerns of 'new imperial history', as does their concern with gender, race and sexuality. This latter point is particularly momentous because, as Angela Woollacott has trenchantly observed, 'ideas of gender, always linked to "race" and class, were forged in the colonies as well as in the metropole and circulated throughout the empire'.[37] Revealing the underlying emotional life of these processes thus promises to contribute to a better understanding of the complex forging of these categories in both domains.

There are myriad examples of how the sometimes-coalescing categories of race, class and gender were invoked to explain the perceived vulnerability to loss of control, both emotional and psychological. In imperial

contexts, the close connection between ideals of masculinity and colonial power produced a tendency to accuse colonized populations of 'unmanly' and unseemly panic. Racial stereotyping led colonizers to stigmatize colonized populations as being perpetually close to violent outbursts, unpredictable behaviour and loss of moral restraints. Simultaneously, colonial officials and white settlers tried to contrast the putative 'native' hyper-emotionalism with their own alleged self-control and rationality. While 'white' imperial masculinity was thus often constructed against the negative foil of 'native effeminacy',[38] fears of 'black' or 'native' hyper-masculinity simultaneously (and somewhat paradoxically) engendered panics around perceived threats to white women that, in turn, imperilled the 'honour' and hegemony of white men. As the chapters by Gajendra Singh and Norman Etherington powerfully demonstrate, this subject became particularly fraught and liable to spark panic when sexual relations between the races could not be effectively controlled.

The treatment and attempted containment of colonized peoples, which was Cohen's over-riding interest, carries a striking resonance with the treatment and objectification of marginalized groups and social outcasts within a domestic European frame. Sebastian Conrad and Harald Fischer-Tiné, amongst many others, have observed the congruence of an 'internal' civilizing mission aimed at the plebeian elements of German and British society with an 'external' colonial civilizing effort directed at the native population in Africa or India.[39] As we have observed already, in both settings, the seemingly 'marginalized groups' tended to constitute the majority of the population, and their potential threat to the social and colonial political order advocated by the ruling elites increased the likelihood of anxiety and panic among the latter. Interestingly, in most of the case studies in the present volume, a solid basis for imperial anxiety or panic appears to have been absent. This begs the question of what, if these anxieties or panics were misplaced, is the point in studying the underlying events. As Luise White argues about her choice of topic in the book *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*: 'What better way to re-examine the way historians have thought about evidence, reliability, and truth than by studying the history of things that never happened?'[40] This volume puts together case studies that demonstrate how historical actors, rather than historians, thought about evidence, reliability and truth in the face of seeming crisis. They illustrate that even though the events so feared rarely came to pass, they still engendered huge amounts of 'real' documentation, communication and discussion, and thus help us get a better

understanding of the inner workings of empires and the complexities of colonial relations. A great deal of information was transmitted and gathered in what could be termed 'informal' networks, spreading gossip and rumour.[41] These rumours, as Norman Etherington observes, were then frequently refashioned by authorities into understandable coherent narratives. In attempts to create plausible explanations in the face of seeming disaster, chaos or violence, colonial authorities turned to medical theories, their own archives and existing prejudices about colonial peoples to frame and order flows of information. However, as Richard Hölzl's chapter in this volume demonstrates, there were also cases where the flow of information was interrupted on purpose and a certain type of knowledge was prevented from circulating freely.

These issues of communication, transmission and translation come up in imperial panics in two other ways: the frustration of trying to understand another society and environment felt by colonizing powers, which often manifested as panics and anxieties;[42] and the fault-lines of (mis)communication that permitted the spread of panic. The first 'translation' problem brings systems of knowledge production and recall under scrutiny. The 'particular and sometimes peculiar form' of the colonial archive lent itself to its use in empires in an attempt to apply the lessons of the past and other colonies to contemporary concerns.[43] This allowed not only the transmission of misapprehensions and errors across time and space but also encouraged colonial officials to seek solutions in what was perceived as a centralized authority.

The second problem of translation lay in the new opportunities offered by empire-building to create vast networks of communication. Aided both by technological advances in photography, communications and transport, as well as by an increasingly news-hungry populace in both colonies and the metropole, the imperial and colonial press served as a conduit for the publication and spread of panics and anxieties. However, there is a clear overlap between these two, as becomes clear in the chapters by Bernhard C. Schär, Harald Fischer-Tiné and Robert Peckham. As colonial archives became reliant, in part, on the press to gather information, the press simultaneously encouraged the intervention of the government by launching campaigns and drawing attention towards perceived crises. In this network, however, information travelled imperfectly. Assumptions, prejudices and commercial concerns slanted coverage and as these stories travelled, they lost their context, leaving them open to further misinterpretation.

The Contributions

In order to allow a multi-dimensional analysis of the different facets of colonial panic, the present volume is subdivided into four thematic parts. The first section provides an insight into the concrete medical aspects of imperial panic. In spite of the fact that the problem of the bodily experience of empire for Europeans, and more specifically issues of imperial health, has already been added to the portfolio of ('new') imperial historians some time ago, the literature on the corporeality of empire is still comparatively meagre.[44] The three contributions forming this part bring together cases of anxiety and panic over physical and mental well-being in diverse imperial settings. Dane Kennedy's opening piece places the diagnosis of 'tropical neurasthenia' into its imperial and historical context. As Kennedy observes, the late nineteenth century saw increasing anxiety over an apparent 'breakdown in moral discipline, a failure of governance of the self' exhibited by Europeans in colonial settings and the resistance of Africans to imperial rule. That anxiety about the mental and physical problems experienced by colonizers and colonized people resulted in the development of two different medico-moral theories about their causes. Both theories claimed that these disorders had the same root cause: 'the collision between imperial modernity and indigenous primitivism'. The diagnosis of neurasthenia started to lose purchase in medical circles in the early twentieth century and fell completely from favour after the Second World War. However, the pathologization of African resistance resulted in the behaviour of members of certain anti-imperial movements to be diagnosed and dismissed as a type of 'mania' rooted in mental illness rather than a genuine political agenda. This medical explanatory model, which neatly separated colonizers from colonized, illustrates not only the anxieties felt in the colonies but also the subsequent concerns unleashed in the metropole.

This theme of the differential approaches taken to seemingly abhorrent behaviours amongst colonizers and colonized in response to anxieties and panic is taken up again by David Arnold in his chapter on poisoning panics in British India. Rumours of possible harmful adulterants spread through both the European population, who feared the treachery of their Indian servants, and Indian communities, who identified the colonial state as its 'folk devil'. Again, the fear of some kind of 'degeneration' spurred underlying anxieties that the assumed natural proclivity of Indians to poisoning would be picked up by Europeans. This panic represented, according to

Arnold, a fear of 'internal subversion and internalized attack' amongst both colonized and colonizers. Knowledge of these scares served to further reinforce pre-existing racial assumptions about the barbarity of Indian society and the civilizing effects of imperialism. The panic in the 1830s over Thugs, or murderous peripatetic bandits organized into gangs, was recalled to reaffirm these assumptions. This specific variety of the imperial 'politics of difference'[45] resulted in two different approaches pursued in relation to poison in the colony and the metropole. Legal regulation was implemented in response to poisoning crimes in the Britain, but in India the emphasis was on gathering knowledge about poisons to insulate Europeans from attacks.

The third chapter in this section, Will Jackson's analysis of decolonization and instances of mental breakdown in 1950s' Kenya, shows how the performance of emotion remained integral to the expression of colonial ideology right up to the end of empire. From case histories of 'nervous breakdowns' that occurred among Europeans against the backdrop of the Mau-Mau War (1952–60), Jackson draws out how people's mental states interacted with the wider history of imperialism in the twentieth century. By focusing on individual stories reconstructed from memoirs and psychiatric case files, we can see how actual experiences varied according to the status and position of the person concerned. Perhaps surprisingly, explicit racial anxieties and the concrete fears of Mau-Mau violence did play a role in the narratives of Europeans who were treated for mental illnesses in 1950s' Kenya, but were by no means dominant. What emerges as a more important theme is the vague fear of loss and deprivation, and an underlying dread that the days of the Empire were numbered. Taken together, these three pieces provide powerful examples of how fears about individual well-being were intimately bound to the overarching imperial order.

The second part explores various kinds of discursive responses to imperial panics. It explores how anxieties about sexual transgression, politically motivated violence or betrayal by the colonial subjects shaped the representations of the colonized as well as the self-perceptions of imperial elites. Harald Fischer-Tiné picks up on David Arnold's observation about the enduring reuse of clichés about Hindus as simultaneously cowardly and violent, and shows how these prejudices were used as part of a new rhetoric about colonial 'terrorism'. He uses the panic over the assassination of a high-ranking colonial official in London in 1909 to illustrate his point. In this context, the actual perpetrators of anti-imperial violence were dismissed as brainwashed, mentally unstable or feeble. Fischer-Tiné

shows how this panic, and the subsequent need to find a 'puppet master' of the deluded activists led to the demonization of the political work of the Indian anti-colonial activist Shyamji Krishnavarma, who was one of the most important spokesmen of the Indian national movement in Europe in the early 1900s. In the wake of the panic over the London outrage of 1909, Krishnavarma, a sober rationalist with liberal leanings, was reduced by the British and international press to a two-dimensional religious fanatic and demonic wire-puller, allegedly manipulating weaker minds into merciless killing.

Kama Maclean's chapter on the 'art of panicking quietly' complements the picture inasmuch as it looks at the same phenomenon—Indian anti-colonial 'terrorism' and its effects—but shifts the focus from the imperial metropole to the subcontinent itself. Violent 'outrages' targeting British officials were fairly common in British India since the early 1900s. Focusing on the height of the Indian revolutionary terrorism of the 1920s and 1930s, Maclean shows how the British elites in India were cultivating an ostentatious attitude of stoicism and the proverbial 'stiff upper lip'. They hoped that such a display of strength would help prevent 'imperial nervous breakdowns' by containing the anxieties that resulted from the press reports of terrorist attacks against Europeans that were becoming ubiquitous during the 1920s and 1930s. However, as Maclean argues, this management strategy not only concealed but also reproduced panic, because what appeared to be a failure to register the threat of terrorism was also deemed a failure of governance at a time when constitutional reforms were being debated in India and in Britain.

As the next contribution demonstrates, the First World War catalysed pre-existing anxieties in a variety of ways and provoked comprehensive responses to the perceived threats. Fears of 'racial degeneration' and the destabilizing influence of cross-cultural contact are the main themes of Gajendra Singh's chapter on relationships between Indian soldiers and European women in France during the First World War. This chapter introduces the topic of 'hierarchies of masculinity' as part of the imperial performance of emotion. Inter-racial sexual relationships challenged these hierarchies during the war and were often consciously cultivated by Indian soldiers precisely for this reason. Singh's case study details the various ways in which the sexual transgression of racial boundaries produced paranoia, panic and fear in the British colonial administration as well as among the French public. By briefly examining the reactions of parents and relatives back in India of Punjabi *sipahis* who entertained relationships

with European women, Singh finally brings out sharply the shared character of these anxieties. He shows how the Indian soldiers involved mirrored the colonial panic and began to become anxious about what these cross-cultural relationships might mean for their own familial and religious belonging.

In the third part, the focus shifts from discursive responses to the tangible practical and institutional counter-measures against perceived threats, sometimes amplified by fears of embarrassment on the international political stage, that were implemented by imperial and colonial governments. Such measures included the establishment of new systems of surveillance and discipline, and even incidents of outright military aggression.

Norman Etherington's comparative chapter on the panic over the Morant Bay rebellion of freed ex-slaves in Jamaica in the 1860s as well as a series of rape cases and alleged conspiracies of Ethiopian preachers in the South African colony of Natal (in the 1870s and 1900s) respectively makes some important points. For one, it validates that various kinds of imperial fears could easily collapse into one another. Thus, for instance, his first example demonstrates how anxieties about real or imagined sexual transgressions of black men in South Africa were closely linked to worries about the legitimacy of land ownership. Crucially, all three case studies serve to illustrate one of the main findings of this volume, in that they detail how rumours were refashioned into seemingly coherent narratives as colonial authorities sought to delve backwards into their own archive in the face of current panics.

Next, Daniel Brückenhaus' chapter shows that possible collaboration between Asian anti-imperialist groups in Europe and the German government during the First World War appeared to be an even more dangerous threat to British and French surveillance agencies than the sexual exploits of South Asian soldiers stationed on the Western front. It traces how these self-proclaimed liberal governments of the *entente cordiale* (that is, Britain and France) developed distinctly illiberal politics and alliances with respect to the transnational policing of diasporic anti-colonial activists. As in Fischer-Tiné's contribution, here too the colonial authorities denied agency to the anti-colonialists and assumed that they could only be hapless puppets of an overarching German administration. In hindsight, it seems ironic that it was precisely these persecutory policies that forced the activists to seek refuge in Germany and Switzerland, thereby creating and intensifying the very kind of anti-colonial networks that the policies sought to prevent.

The two remaining chapters in this part deal with different facets of colonial rule in the Dutch East Indies. Vincent Houben provides a comprehensive inventory of the various fears and anxieties that haunted Dutch officials and settlers in Java and Sumatra in the first four decades of the twentieth century. He dwells on the destabilizing effect of the experience of native valour and bravery in colonial battles, examines the impact of acts of 'native violence' on the plantations of Indonesia on colonial representations of social order, and analyses the panic generated by the first instances of violent nationalist resistance in the inter-war years. His *tour d'horizon* ends with a discussion of the shock produced by the 'yellow peril', that is, the expanding Japanese Empire since the 1930s. When combined, Houben's vignettes highlight the ever-present anxiety felt by Dutch officials and settler communities, reinforced by literature of the time as the settlers tried to cope with a rapidly changing environment. As Houben's survey chapter illustrates through numerous examples, episodes of physical violence, the violent rhetoric of Indonesian nationalism and the external threat created through the rise of Japan to the position of a potent military power tended to produce intense instances of panic, which exposed the fragility of the Dutch imperial project.

Bernhard C. Schär's piece zooms in on Dutch imperialism around 1900 when the imperial government in the East Indies refrained from enlarging its colonial possessions, but rather rounded off its empire by annexing islands that it considered rightly its own. Schär's analysis of Dutch imperial support for Swiss scientists on the outer island of Celebes offers a new approach to the question of the inner logics of this phase of Dutch imperial expansion by arguing that one of the lesser-known motives of the policy of rounding off consisted of the fear of embarrassment *vis-à-vis* foreign countries. The chapter adopts a Bourdieuean view on the role of emotions for collective action. For one, the Dutch fear of embarrassment is seen, on a structural level, as a particular disposition of the Dutch imperial habitus, given the rather weak position of this relatively small country *vis-à-vis* imperial giants such as Britain, France or Germany. On the level of concrete historical actors, fear of embarrassment is simultaneously seen as a resource that various historical groups could exploit in the pursuit of competing agendas within the Dutch Empire. The motive of national disgrace and discomfiture was thus invoked by journalists, scientists, missionaries, colonial officials and local rulers for completely different reasons. Together they produced a series of emotional and political crises that forced the Dutch imperial state to increase military involvement in the peripheries of its empire, eventually leading to a new wave of annexations.