



Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire

David Cannadine

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With the return of Hong Kong to the Chinese government in 1997, the empire that had lasted three hundred years and "upon which the sun never set" finally lost its hold on the world and slipped into history. But the question of how we understand the British Empire--its origins, nature, purpose, and effect on the world it ruled--is far from settled. In this incisive work, David Cannadine looks at the British Empire from a new perspective--through the eyes of those who created and ruled it--and offers fresh insight into the driving forces behind the Empire. Arguing against the views of Edward Said and others, Cannadine suggests that the British were motivated not only by race, but also by class. The British wanted to domesticate the exotic world of their colonies and to reorder the societies they ruled according to an idealized image of their own class hierarchies.

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