Colonial Switzerland

Rethinking Colonialism from the Margins

Edited by
Patricia Purtschert and
Harald Fischer-Tiné

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Colonial Switzerland

Rethinking Colonialism from the Margins

Edited by

Patricia Purtschert and Harald Fischer-Tiné
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Summary: "A turn towards the 'colonial margins' can be observed lately within colonial and postcolonial studies. It has been argued that states without former colonies and their inhabitants shared colonial discourses and were intensely involved in colonial practices. This anthology looks at Switzerland, which constitutes a perfect case in point for a host of reasons: its strong economic involvement with imperial projects of other European countries, its transnationally entangled scientific community, its doctrine of neutrality, which, among other things, made the country attractive as operational base for anti-colonial activists, the significance of Swiss Christian missions as well of the secular development aid sector thereafter, and, last but not least, a palpable, though often denied racist discourse in contemporary public debates. This collection brings together the most exciting and challenging products of recent scholarship on colonial and postcolonial Switzerland and makes them available in English for the first time"—Provided by publisher.

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Contents

List of Illustrations

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Patricia Purtschert and Harald Fischer-Tiné
Zurich, November 2014

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Introduction

The End of Innocence: Debating Colonialism in Switzerland

Patricia Purtschert and Harald Fischer-Tiné

The New Heart of Darkness?

'From all available evidence no black man had ever set foot in this tiny Swiss village before I came.'[1] With these words, James Baldwin commences his essay *Stranger in the Village*, a concussive reflection on racism in the mid-20th century. The text draws on his experiences in the Swiss Alpine village of Leukerbad, where he had spent time in the early 1950s escaping from the hectic life in Paris to work on his first novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*.[2] In his text, first published in *Harper's Magazine* in 1953, Baldwin describes how he encounters blatant and manifest racism in this 'white wilderness' (160). The children in the alleys call him 'Neger!' ('Negro!') (161), the villagers constantly comment upon and touch his hair and skin (162). They do not believe that he is American, because 'black men come from Africa' (161); they treat him like an exotic curiosity and accuse him of stealing wood (168).[3] Baldwin contrasts the barefaced racism of this village with the reality in the United States, where white people could not claim that 'black men do not exist' (174). In what constitutes a vibrant and sagacious contribution to whiteness studies *avant la lettre*, Baldwin analyses how 'the idea of white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization [...] and therefore civilization's guardians and defenders' (172). He concludes that white identity formation relies on the constitutive exclusion of non-whites and therefore on the jealous policing of the borders of civilization. However, despite the cruelty of the segregationist system in the United States at the time, the American model contains a sparkle of hope and the germ of a different future for Baldwin. Even though white people refuse to share their sense of humanity with blacks, they cannot maintain a notion of blacks as strangers. The interracial drama in America, states Baldwin, 'has not only created a new black man, it has created a new white man, too' (175).

This insight is worked out against the foil of the Swiss Alpine village, where 'white men still have the luxury of looking on me as a stranger'

(175). At first sight, Leukerbad seems to serve only as a counter-image to the United States and thus as a mere tool for Baldwin's diagnosis of North American society. But there is more to his depiction of post-World War II Swiss village life than initially meets the eye. The African American novelist explains that, in this setting, the issue of race 'was a problem that remained comfortingly abstract: in effect, the black man, *as a man*, did not exist for Europe' (170). Why does he use the example of a Swiss village in order to provide this insight? For many European places, especially urban imperial metropoles such as London, Paris or Brussels, his diagnosis of an all-white European society would have been hardly applicable. In contrast, Leukerbad's population seemed to incorporate an ideal type of European colonial world-view: they behaved as if black people were unknown strangers and, indeed, non-human. At the same time, they seemed to have fully incorporated the sense of white supremacy that works as a collectively shared value in colonial Europe. Baldwin writes: 'These people cannot be, from the point of view of power, strangers anywhere in the world; they have made the modern world, in effect, even if they do not know it. The most illiterate among them is related, in a way that I am not, to Dante, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Aeschylus, Da Vinci, Rembrandt, and Racine' (165). One needs to fully appreciate the dimensions of these observations: James Baldwin is a young, talented, very erudite and sophisticated writer from cosmopolitan New York City, who is about to write a book that will establish him as one of the most famous American novelists of his time. However, in this Alpine village, he is forced to realize that every white man – and one would need to specify the somewhat different position of white women here – is authorized to relate to the accomplishments of modern culture in a way that he does not.

These reflections are significant because they pertinently describe the effects of modern racism from the point of view of black experience, similar to W. E. B. Du Bois' account of 'double consciousness'[4] or Frantz Fanon's image of 'black skin, white masks'.[5] Simultaneously, they also open a door to colonial Switzerland. Baldwin's essay contains an extremely perceptive and valuable account of Swiss colonial culture in the everyday context of the 1950s. His concept of colonial 'naiveté', that is, claiming to stand outside the colonial project while making full use of white supremacy, constitutes an insight that is confirmed time and again by the scholarship presented in this volume.

Baldwin's decision to put Switzerland, a country that was fairly marginal to the European colonial enterprise according to conventional wisdom, right at the centre of his analysis of European racism resonates with recent debates on Swiss politics. In past years, a series of popular votes on draconian new migration laws that were accompanied by openly racist campaigns sparked international attention. After the notorious campaign of the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) featuring a black sheep being

kicked out of Switzerland by white sheep, the British *Independent* provocatively asked in 2007 whether Switzerland was the new 'heart of darkness'.[6] The sheep campaign was but an opening gambit in a series of SVP-driven referenda supporting a xenophobic agenda, which culminated in the banning of minarets in Switzerland in 2009, the approval of an initiative for the 'expulsion of foreign criminals' in 2010 and the 'mass immigration initiative' passed in February 2014.[7] These constitutional changes are all intended to introduce or strengthen a 'second-class' status for non-Swiss citizens and thus undermine the foundation of a judicial system based on equality. The preceding campaigns have also become famous sources of inspiration for diverse right wing, anti-foreign and anti-immigrant forces all over Europe.[8] How can one make sense of Switzerland's seemingly spectacular transformation from representing an epitome of neutrality and democracy and a role model for multiculturalism to a hotbed of xenophobia and racism?

Before this question can be tackled, one might want to take a step back. However accurate the critical voices of the *Independent* and Baldwin are, both views are based on an image of Switzerland that is itself closely related to the claim to colonial innocence. Baldwin's account of Leukerbad replicates the stereotype of the remote mountain village with its naïve inhabitants. Like many other Alpine locations, Leukerbad was part of an international trade route that led across the Alps for centuries. Its thermal bathing culture dates back to the 15th century, and grew from the 18th century onwards to attract an urban and international clientele. With the construction of a road to the Rhone valley in the 19th century and a railway in 1915, Leukerbad was well connected to transport networks.[9] This strongly contradicts the image of a secluded village populated with inhabitants living close to nature and detached from a globalized world. However, after the formation of the national state in 1848, these common myths and symbols served to create an 'imagined community'[10] for a population that was neither unified by culture, language, class nor faith, and was instead shattered by a recent civil war.[11] The image of a pristine Alpine life was not least an attempt to integrate the Catholic-conservative cantons of central Switzerland, which lost the *Sonderbundskrieg* in 1847. And it was also an expression of the city-dweller's yearning for a natural life beyond the pitfalls of civilization. After all, Switzerland's arguably most successful literary export product, the Alpine girl 'Heidi', was created by Zurich-based Johanna Spyri, who led an urban life embedded in the context of bourgeois ranks of society. Much of Switzerland's folklore was, in fact, invented in its urban spaces.[12] Baldwin's impression that he was the first black person to set foot in a secluded Alpine village, too, is hardly accurate. In the course of the so-called 'Swiss leave tours' shortly after the end of World War II, for example, about 300,000 GIs from the USA, among them many African-Americans, spent their vacations in Swiss destinations.[13] However, even though one must assume that many inhabitants in Leukerbad had encountered black people before, Baldwin's

experience reveals the existence of a powerful colonial matrix that informed the ways in which white Swiss reacted to their non-white counterparts.

The recent astonishment of the international press about Switzerland's transformation into the 'new heart of darkness' refers to another idealized picture of this country, namely its portrayal as a peaceful small state that manages to stay aloof from regional and global conflicts in the name of neutrality and a strong humanitarian tradition. Such images of Switzerland are owed to self-conceptions as well as to outside ascriptions, not least from the side of the (former) colonial metropoles. This is surprising, considering that Swiss history has offered many opportunities to throw these views into question, notably its refugee policy and financial transactions during World War II, the Schwarzenbach initiative in 1970 against the so-called *Überfremdung* (superalienation), the intense trading relations between Swiss entrepreneurs and the Apartheid regime in South Africa that was supported by the Swiss government, or the role that Switzerland, as a global financial centre, played with respect to money laundering as well as hoarding of the private fortunes of dictators like Sani Abacha, Ferdinand Marcos or Sese Seko, to name just a few.[14] Critical accounts of Swiss history make apparent how concepts like neutrality stand in strong contrast to its foreign policy, and are often used to cover up and legitimize its economically oriented politics.[15] The cultivation of the idea of Switzerland as an exceptional case, a 'Sonderfall',[16] which is presently further fuelled by its status outside the European Union, effectively covers up the fact that the country is highly interconnected with and interdependent on a global network of states, multinational companies and transnational institutions. Furthermore, one needs to come to terms with the vast presence of colonial images and racist modes of thinking that are entangled with everyday Swiss culture in manifold ways. In his extensive study of popular sources published in Switzerland between 1880 and 1939, Patrick Minder suggests speaking of Switzerland's 'colonial imaginary'.[17] The fact that colonial cultures were highly influential in Switzerland while the country did not have to undergo a period of decolonization leads to a peculiar contemporary constellation. It is marked by the scarcity of critical knowledge of colonialism as well as of acts of resistance against the persistence of colonial practices in postcolonial times.

These introductory reflections further show the need to recognize differences in terms of both actors and spaces associated with Switzerland when making statements about Swiss entanglements with colonialism. Several differentiations need to be made. First, Switzerland is highly heterogeneous in terms of culture, class, language, faith and region. When colonial complicities are discussed, federalism and the specific roles of the elites, ruling (patrician) families or influential trading houses make it necessary to distinguish between different actors. Second, there is a strong international interconnectedness of Swiss capital, a striking mobility of scientists, merchants, political activists and artists and a vivid circulation of knowledge, images

and modes of thought across national boundaries. In many instances, conceptualizing a 'colonialism of the Swiss kind' in transnational terms becomes inevitable, as does working out the diverse layers of affiliation of its actors. Third, a colonial perspective on Switzerland lays bare the ambiguities and complexities of many cases, which must be articulated: for example, the tensions between humanitarian practices, paternalist habits and colonial discourses or between the support of anti-colonial liberation movements and the simultaneous economic investments in these colonial projects.

This volume takes up some of the questions that arise when Switzerland is taken as a country shaped by colonialism in a variety of ways. It aims at exploring long-neglected questions and broadening a recently opened field of research. Most of the research assembled in this volume represents a pioneering foray into largely unchartered historiographical territory and cannot lay claim to providing ultimate verdicts. And yet the contributions in their entirety make apparent how Swiss economy, science, culture and politics were and still are deeply enmeshed with various colonial projects and their postcolonial repercussions. They also remind us – as postcolonial feminism has been emphasizing for decades – of the need to explore the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and other categories in order to understand the myriad ways in which power works in (post)colonial societies.[18] By stressing Swiss colonial entanglements, we do not want to deny the existence of significant differences between countries with and without formal ties to colonialism. Nonetheless, we believe it is high time that the popular and over-simplified view of Switzerland as altogether innocent with regard to colonial pursuits be complicated.

The Study of Colonial and Postcolonial Switzerland

Colonial history and postcolonial studies have long been marginalized areas of research in Switzerland even though some occasional research on the topics were published.[19] This changed only in the early 21st century, when several works on the involvement of Swiss actors in the trans-Atlantic slave trade appeared.[20] They have made unmistakably clear that Swiss merchants and trading houses were deeply involved in various aspects of the colonial trade, and thus helped to overcome the colonial amnesia so common among historians of Switzerland.[21] These studies have also brought to light forgotten histories like the participation of Swiss soldiers in the attempted re-introduction of slavery in Haiti in 1803 or the direct involvement of a political body, the city of Bern, in the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the first part of the 18th century.[22] In the wake of these pioneering explorations, a growing interest in the colonial and postcolonial history of Switzerland has produced new and challenging scholarship in various disciplines. This includes investigations into the colonial entanglements of the Swiss economy,[23] Swiss participation in colonial scientific networks,[24] the colonial

trajectory of Swiss developmental aid[25] and the history of people of colour in Switzerland.[26] In recent years, more attention has been given to cultural and non-material aspects of colonialism.[27] This 'postcolonial turn' in Swiss studies was foregrounded by Patrick Harries' seminal work on the Swiss mission in South-East Africa. In his study, Harries makes apparent how the mission 'played an important role in shaping the way in which the Swiss – a people severely divided by language, religion, region and class – came to see themselves as a single community'.[28] In a similar vein, researchers have started exploring postcolonial, critical race and critical whiteness studies in order to explain past and current aspects of 'postcolonial Switzerland', thereby bringing the discursive and imaginary dimensions of (post)colonialism into focus.[29] Rohit Jain, for example, has worked out how a specific 'cathartic racism' has developed within the genre of Swiss satire in the past 20 years.[30] It allows a liberal public to assure itself of its national and racial belongings and to express its discomfort with the uncanny presence of the foreign 'other', while at the same time differentiating itself from the crude racism of the popular right. Current debates on racism and humour in the public space strongly support Jain's view of satire as an arena of 'liberal racism'.[31]

With this 'postcolonial turn' in the studies of Switzerland, the existing research on colonialism has not only grown vastly; it has also become much more intensely related to transnational research in global, colonial and postcolonial studies.[32] Thus far, however, this relationship has been largely unilateral: scholars of Switzerland writing in French and German have attempted to make use of the insights of the (almost exclusively Anglophone) products of postcolonial theory, while the fruits of their labour have gone largely unnoticed in international academic debates on (post)-colonialism. The present volume takes the flow of knowledge in the other direction by making the nascent interdisciplinary discussion on colonial and postcolonial Switzerland available in English for the first time. The editors hope that this book will mark the beginning of a productive dialogue between historians and social scientists in Switzerland and the wider academic world interested in the history, characteristics and long-term effects of colonialism on a global scale.

The present time seems to be particularly auspicious for initiating such a dialogue for more reasons than one. The field of imperial history has undergone tremendous changes over the past two decades, witnessing the 'rebirth' of the sub-discipline as 'new imperial history'. While self-labelling phenomena of this kind might be seen as inherently problematic, it is nonetheless safe to state that the 'new' avatar of imperial history clearly distinguishes itself from its more conservative predecessors in two aspects that make it look fairly conducive to our agenda. For one, it is open to the influence of postcolonial theory and receptive to more than the traditional spatial frameworks. Thus, there has been a strong interest in

what has been termed the 'counterflows' of colonialism,[33] that is, the repercussions of overseas empires on European societies. Likewise, 'trans-colonial' or 'transimperial' spatial frames of reference have challenged the established metropole–colony (or centre–periphery) dichotomy in a variety of ways.[34] Furthermore, the growing popularity of transnational or 'global' approaches to history writing has made a profound impact on the ways in which even those scholars of colonialism who are deeply rooted in an 'area studies' tradition have recalibrated their spatial focus. Thus, recent work on the emergence of consumer cultures[35] and a film industry[36] in colonized societies or on the development of global intellectual networks including western and non-western protagonists in the early 20th century[37] have added new layers of complexity to our understanding of the transformative power of global capitalism in the age of empire. Significantly, David Arnold, a historian of colonial South Asia, has responded to such insights by introducing the concept of 'contingent colonialism',[38] arguing against the usual neat nationalization of empires as 'French' or 'British' and laying bare their character as complex transnational enterprises involving historical actors from a broad variety of backgrounds. Karwan Fatah-Black made a similar point regarding the Dutch empire in the Caribbean with special reference to the role that Swiss migrants played.[39] Seen from such a perspective, a reassessment of the role of Switzerland and Swiss actors in 'other' European imperial configurations would acquire an entirely new significance.

Studying the Colonial Margins

To be sure, the debate on the 'margins of colonialism' is not taking place only in Switzerland. Similar conclusions are being drawn in other European countries whose self-proclaimed status as colonial outsiders has come under suspicion. The present volume contributes to a wider debate that is trying to come to terms with the different ways of participating in, profiting from and supporting colonial endeavours by countries that were not formally involved in colonial expansion. It investigates how colonial bodies of knowledge and practices have been borrowed, remoulded and disseminated within the scientific communities, everyday cultures and political arenas of these states. This includes research on transnational networks of historical actors (such as, for instance, military mercenaries or scientific 'experts') as well as on the broad circulation of images and discursive formations.

Studying the margins of colonialism entails adding insights into three crucial areas: first, the (mostly ignored and strongly under-researched) issue of the actual significance of colonialism for the respective countries; second, colonial modes of operation that rarely came into the focus of colonial studies, especially in regard to transnational networks and non-formal regimes of power; and third, investigating examples and forerunners of a type of

informal imperialism that might be helpful when examining the current neoliberal and globalized operations of economic-cum-political power.

To address the first point first: recent attention to 'colonialism at the margins',[40] or 'colonialism without colonies',[41] is not least driven by the pressing questions that arise from contemporary debates on racism, migration, neo-colonial economies and access to democratic rights and citizenship within these countries. They make unambiguously clear that those European countries without formal attachment to colonialism struggle with their own colonial legacies, even if these ties have been widely neglected in the past. While the degree and forms of participation in colonialism and its effects on the respective societies greatly change with particular circumstances, some similarities and conjunctions can nonetheless be detected. Ulla Vuorela has recently used the term 'colonial complicity' to describe the ways in which Finland participated in colonialism.[42] This includes, among other aspects, the internal colonization of the Sami. The striking connections between the external and internal logics of colonization are also discussed in Switzerland, especially with regard to the Roma, Sinti and Yeniche, groups that were officially categorized as 'non-sedentary' and were formerly referred to mostly as 'Gypsies' or 'vagrants',[43] as well as the Alpine populations, often perceived by their urban compatriots as 'half-civilized'.[44] Other topics include the specific strategies that allowed these countries to establish their fluid and adaptable positions as mediators, outsiders and collaborators, which comprise discussions on the state of 'neutrality',[45] the claim to 'exceptionalism',[46] the recourse to the trope of 'colonial innocence'[47] and the workings of 'colonial amnesia'[48] in the public memory. The study of these specific modes of forgetting, downplaying and erasing the multifarious effects of colonialism adds insight into what has been termed the 'particular European form of "invisible" racialization' by Fatima El-Tayeb.[49]

This leads us to the second point: beyond a better understanding of the respective countries, the research on 'colonial freeloaders' broadens our view of Europe's colonial history as well as its postcolonial present. Kristín Loftsdóttir remarks that the study of 'colonialism at the margins' provides an opportunity to 'concentrate on those instances where the line dividing colonial subjects and colonialists is blurred or even controversial'.[50] It becomes clear that colonialism cannot be fruitfully understood as the exclusive interaction between a handful of imperial 'metropolitan countries' and their respective colonies. States without former colonies and their inhabitants (as well as states that were not formally colonized and their populaces) were part of colonial relationships in myriad ways and were intensely involved in colonial core practices such as military conquest and economic extraction, as well as engaged in the production and reproduction of colonial knowledge, representations and discourses. This has some serious repercussions on the notion of 'colonialism' itself. The study of colonial margins might help us to rethink the conceptual grip of this term. How does

the relation between politics and colonialism need to be adjusted, for example, if Switzerland's involvement in colonialism did not entail the political dimension of openly acting as a colonial power? What does it mean that the country sometimes profited from its position as a seeming outsider that could facilitate economic relations with colonial agents but also with anticolonial forces? Such investigations produce new insights into the workings of colonialism and provide ample evidence of the necessity to transgress a narrow national framework in order to capture crucial aspects of colonial endeavours.

In addition to the new perspectives that thus enhance our understanding of the historical trajectories of imperialism and colonialism, Dace Dzenovska has recently advanced a fresh take on colonial outsiders that focuses rather on colonial continuities. She discusses Latvia's recent efforts to be recognized as part of a colonial past from which most European countries want to distance themselves. As Dzenovska concludes, Latvia's seemingly ill-timed ambitions to gain recognition as a colonizing power make apparent how coloniality proves persistently central to a European self-understanding: 'The Latvians' anachronistic colonial aspirations bring into sharp focus the fact that colonial expansion, slavery, and racism are fundamentally constitutive of European modernity.'[51]

Third, to study the margins of European colonialism does not necessarily mean to go against the currency of a scholarship, which – in the spirit of 'provincializing Europe'[52] – radically questions the centrality of the European model of colonialism.[53] It might contribute to the understanding of imperial strategies that depart from those exercised by the 'classic' European colonizers in the age of High Imperialism. In this vein, Shalini Randeria has asked whether the case of 'crypto-colonial' countries like Switzerland does not constitute the new norm rather than the former exception of current postcolonial relations. The study of Swiss colonial entanglements would thus provide new insights into contemporary forms of global power, into 'today's imperialism without formal colonial possessions'.[54] This provocative suggestion can serve as a reminder of the fact that studying the margins of the colonial project does not necessarily imply the production of marginal knowledge. Conversely, it might bring highly significant insights into what Ann Laura Stoler has recently called 'imperial formations', by generating a more precise understanding of 'gradated forms of sovereignty and what has long marked the technologies of imperial rule – sliding and contested scales of differential rights' as well as 'racialized relations of allocations and appropriations'.[55] Early on, and in order to get access to the imperial project, colonial outsiders developed informal networks, indirect forms of dominance and non-formal politics of governing that they successfully combined with colonial discourses and imaginaries. In a seemingly paradoxical manner, the study of the colonial margins hence might lead us right into the heart of current imperial formations. This is not because the

historical *modus operandi* of informal empire can be directly projected onto today's postcolonial map. Yet an analysis of European imperialism's forgotten players can well serve to elucidate informal strategies of racialized power that might be re-appropriated in the politics of the present. Besides this, it might give us a sense of the challenges facing current postcolonial, neoliberal and globalized networks of power in which agents, accountabilities and rules of order are highly diffuse and ever-changing while, at the same time, the effects of exclusion, segregation and discrimination are possibly more palpable than ever.

Structure of the Book and Chapter Previews

Rather than following a conventional chronological fashion, the chapters of this book are clustered around thematic foci that have emerged as crucial in research on the colonial entanglements of Switzerland and the Swiss. As indicated above, it was Patrick Harries' groundbreaking research on the manifold scientific activities of Swiss missionaries from the Swiss Romande in southern Africa that first raised awareness about Swiss participation in the larger European exercise of producing colonial knowledge, although this insight is still scarcely reflected in the more popular books on colonial knowledge production.[56] The first section, entitled 'Colonialism and Science', therefore brings together fresh research in this line of enquiry.

Here, Bernhard C. Schär applies the concept of 'tropicality' to the history of Alpine studies in Chapter 1, 'On the Tropical Origins of the Alps: Science and the Colonial Imagination of Switzerland, 1700–1900'. His paper brings to light how knowledge and notions of the 'tropics' informed the ways that not only Swiss but also European naturalists in general tried to make sense of Alpine nature and its inhabitants in the 18th and 19th centuries. While Alpine nature was constructed to epitomize the best virtues of the divine, temperate and modest European nature in contrast to the 'heat and vermin' in the 'tropics' during the 18th century, in the 19th century naturalists came to discover that 'primeval' Alpine Swiss nature had itself once been 'tropical'. Schär's insights thus support recent re-examinations of the concept of 'colonial knowledge'. He shows that such knowledge was produced not only by scientists in the colonies and in the service of empire, but also by Swiss naturalists in the Alps simultaneously forging Swiss national identities and looking for a theodicy.

A more sinister aspect of Swiss participation in (quasi-)colonial knowledge production is addressed by Pascal Germann. His essay 'Race in the Making: Colonial Encounters, Body Measurements and the Global Dimensions of Swiss Racial Science, 1900–1950' (Chapter 2) attempts to assess the extent to which colonial encounters, representations and discourses influenced Swiss anthropology and its concepts of difference, which in turn also played a crucial role for the development of 'race science' and eugenics. While thus

shedding fresh light on an important if neglected chapter in the history of Swiss science, Germann's piece also analyses the repercussions of Swiss anthropological practices on the broader academic discourses of racial difference around the globe. In so doing, his contribution provides highly original insights into the transnational character of 'race science'.

Lukas Meier, finally, takes us to Africa in the late colonial period on the eve of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s. His chapter 'The Other's Colony: Switzerland and the Discovery of Côte d'Ivoire' (Chapter 3) reminds us that after World War II, Switzerland became more closely involved in colonial affairs as Swiss research institutions were established in various European colonies in Africa. Thus, the Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques in Côte d'Ivoire, under scrutiny in Meier's study, owed its existence to the support of a state-driven French research institute whose large scientific complex near Abidjan provided a home for both French and Swiss scientists. Meier's chapter shows that insights into specific Swiss contributions to colonial science can be gained by taking a closer look at this particular joint venture, and by comparing differing Swiss and French perceptions of what constituted an 'adequate' scientific approach for the colony.

Economic historians have been among the first to point to the heavy involvement of Swiss actors, companies and capital in various colonial enterprises. Our second section, on '(Post)colonial Economies', takes inventory of recent research in this important field. The case studies assembled here provide a fascinating cross-section of topics and approaches ranging from a reconstruction of Swiss merchant communities in the Dutch East Indies in the 1850s to the analysis of an exoticizing 'cultural festival of India' organized in Zurich in the 2000s aiming to secure a share in the booming South Asian market.

'Patriotic Bonds and the Danger of Estrangement: Swiss Networks in Colonial South-East Asia, 1850–1930' by Andreas Zangger (Chapter 4) provides a glimpse into the social history of Swiss communities residing in Asia while simultaneously explaining how Switzerland organized access to colonial territories as a non-colonial power. Unlike the Dutch with their large and homogeneous colonial territories, the Swiss bourgeoisie established a network of small trading colonies over the globe. Zangger shows that the small size of the communities and the lack of state support made informal contacts more relevant and shaped a very unique self-perception of the inhabitants of the small Swiss commercial enclaves. The prospect of a future return of the colonists to their home country added to the self-segregation of these Helvetic expatriate communities. The author finally makes clear that, once they were back in Switzerland, social conventions left hardly any room for the returnees to cultivate their 'hybrid identities'.

A different type of Swiss expatriate is at the centre of Angela Sanders' contribution '"Wonderland Peru": Migration and the Making of an Andean Switzerland' (Chapter 5). After World War II, governmental and economic

relations between Switzerland and Peru intensified. Swiss media praised Peru as a 'wonderland' of abundance and numerous possibilities. A growing consciousness of themselves as 'Swiss living abroad' and their importance as economic 'outposts' stimulated the construction of a self-image as a pioneering 'Swiss colony' in Peru and encouraged Swiss actors to embark on a quasi-colonial 'civilizing mission' as torchbearers of 'development'. Drawing on ethnographic and archival materials, Sanders shows that the Swiss economic and humanitarian involvement in the Andes through the implementation of hydroelectricity and various aid projects can thus be interpreted as a symbolic 'colonization', by seemingly embodying Swiss superiority and therefore legitimizing the presence of Swiss migrants in Peru.

In his article 'Bollywood, Chicken Curry – and IT: The Public Spectacle of the Indian Exotic, and Postcolonial Anxieties in Switzerland' (Chapter 6), Rohit Jain argues that postcolonial anxieties have arisen in Switzerland as the former developing country India has started to emerge as a global economic player. The re-articulation of colonial, and especially exotic, representations – epitomized not least in the growing interest in Bollywoodesque forms of popular culture – has become an imaginary and material resource for the Swiss public, the state and corporate actors. Its main function is to make sense of the changing postcolonial hierarchies between Switzerland and India. The various practices of exoticizing and othering promise to assert Swiss cultural superiority while at the same time engaging the new South Asian markets. Jain's argument draws on ethnographic research conducted in Switzerland and India, and engages postcolonial studies as well as its materialist and anthropological critiques.

Jain's intriguing analysis builds an ideal bridge to the third thematic section of the book, which is concerned with '(Post)colonial Self-Representations'. A biographical perspective on this problematic is provided in the first contribution by Ruramisai Charumbira, titled 'Becoming Imperial: A Swiss Woman's Shifting Identity in British Southern Africa' (Chapter 7). Charumbira's chapter offers a close reading of the diaries of Bertha Hardegger, a Swiss medical missionary caught in the crosshairs of the imperial immigration policy barring non-British trained medical doctors from practising in South Africa in the 1930s. Rather than give up her missionary dream and return to Europe, Hardegger changed the location of her missionary work to colonial Lesotho, a place she considered just as able to give her a fulfilling professional life. Europe, though her home, was less appealing to Hardegger because of the hurdles and gender discrimination that women encountered in pursuit of their dreams, especially in male-dominated professions like medicine. Through Hardegger's story, we not only encounter a less-studied dimension of colonial history in southern Africa – the relationships between and among the colonizers themselves – but also come to understand some of the (gendered) reasons why citizens of nations like Switzerland, with no colonies in Africa, eagerly participated in the British imperial project beyond the

civilizing mission. The chapter concludes with a reflection on Hardegger's legacy in Lesotho, and its larger meaning for Afro-Swiss relations today, where the dependency aid model is still the dominant *modus operandi* between Switzerland and the continent.

The focus shifts from individual to national identities in Patricia Purtschert's piece entitled 'From "Native" Alpine Guides to Foreign "Sahibs" in the Himalayas: Swiss Identity Formation at the Moment of Decolonization' (Chapter 8). Historians of Switzerland have extensively examined the metaphoric meaning of the mountains in the construction of a Swiss national identity. That being said, it is curious to note that thus far almost no attention has been paid to the role colonialism and decolonization played in these processes. By analysing a broad array of source materials related to the Swiss Everest expeditions of 1952, Purtschert shows that the images of Swiss mountaineering in the mid-20th century were filled with with colonial imaginaries, and that the remnants of colonial adventurism along with late colonial visions of cooperation with the 'Third World' were formative elements in the creation of Swiss identity in the early Cold War era.

This section concludes with a contribution that comes back to the issue of 'development' and extends the temporal focus from the 1950s to the 1970s. In their chapter 'Overburdened White Men (and Women): Ruptured Self-Images of Young Swiss in the "Third World", 1940s–1970s' (Chapter 9), Patricia Hongler and Marina Lienhard reconstruct the everyday lives and reflections of young Swiss men and women who lived in (former) European colonies while working for transnational companies or in development aid. On the basis of two case studies – one on graduates of the Swiss Tropical School and one on the official Swiss Voluntary Service – this chapter investigates ideals, self-images and notions of the 'other' that lay behind these young people's commitment to their work in the 'Third World'. It focuses on how the actors dealt with the ubiquitous issues of colonialism and decolonization, and how these affected their daily routines. The authors argue that even in the era of decolonization, colonialism continued to serve as the most important point of reference for the young Swiss expatriates.

The fourth and final section of the book breaks new ground by looking at '(Post)colonial Politics and Counter-Politics' in Switzerland. The section kicks off with Harald Fischer-Tiné's exploration of 'The Other Side of Internationalism: Switzerland as a Hub of Militant Anti-Colonialism, c. 1910–1920' (Chapter 10). The focus here is not so much on Swiss actors as on Switzerland as a hub for the anti-imperial activities for 'revolutionaries' from Asia and the Middle East during the 1910s. Concentrating on a small circle of Indian revolutionaries residing in Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich, the author first shows why neutral Switzerland with its liberal press laws and tradition as *terre d'asile* became so attractive for the members of the 'anti-imperial ecumene'. As Fischer-Tiné elucidates, Switzerland remained an ideal platform on which to forge alliances against Europe's imperial

powers even during World War I, when some of these liberties were severely curtailed. The partners of the anti-colonial activists from India included not only German agents and Italian anarchists but also small circles within Swiss society, namely socialist internationalists and adherents of an anti-imperialism inspired by an esoteric fascination for oriental cultures, as well as early women's rights activists. However, while small segments of the Swiss population thus apparently viewed the presence of anti-colonial radicals in their midst as positive, the growing numbers of non-European radicals and continuing reports of their contacts with local anarchists and Bolsheviks created anxieties among the majority of the population, which fed into the popular discourse of *Überfremdung* (superalienation). The popularity of this discourse, in turn, led to the adoption of a more xenophobic attitude and triggered concrete measures of exclusion shortly after the end of the Great War. By way of conclusion, Fischer-Tiné suggests that the controversies about 'undesirable Orientals' in the 1910s and 1920s could well be read as a kind of prehistory to current immigration debates.

Ariane Knüsel's paper '"The Chinaman of old cannot be compared to the Chinaman of today": Official Views of China and the Construction of Colonial Knowledge in Interwar Switzerland' (Chapter 11) also deals with Swiss perceptions of 'Orientals'. In contradistinction to Fischer-Tiné's focus on Indians, however, it analyses a series of semi-official reports on China and the Chinese written in 1923. As Knüsel reminds us, Switzerland was the last foreign power to be granted extraterritoriality by China in 1918, and Swiss nationals in China now had the same economic and legal privileges as other foreigners. While Swiss media perceptions of China in the 1920s denied Swiss complicity in informal imperialism in China, Swiss government officials adopted a colonial gaze in their reports, as seen in the close reading of seven articles written by Friedrich Kästli of the Swiss Consulate General in Shanghai for publication in the *Schweizerisches Handelsamtsblatt*. Emphasizing Chinese racial and cultural difference, Kästli described strategies that allowed Swiss companies to increase their share of the China market. The Orientalist stereotypes used by Kästli demonstrate that the reports can serve as prime examples of the construction of colonial knowledge, which was achieved through the classification and organization of Chinese and Swiss societies into monolithic, static and fundamentally different entities. As Knüsel points out, the categories thus created were, of course, inherently ambivalent and highly problematic.

More recent ambivalences in the perception of foreigners are at the centre of Anne Lavanchy's contribution 'Glimpses into the Hearts of Whiteness: Institutions of Intimacy and the Desirable National' (Chapter 12). Lavanchy explores the institutional production of 'desirable nationals' through the administrative procedures of marriage and civil partnership in contemporary Switzerland. In line with research in critical whiteness studies, she argues that bureaucratic practices in registry offices constitute

an appropriate vantage point from which to analyse the intertwining of unspoken racialized categories with social markers of difference such as nationality, gender and sexuality. Her main contribution has to do with the specific shapes of whiteness and its privileges in Switzerland: Swiss society, despite its muteness on race, is far from being free from the racialized hierarchies that are peculiar to postcolonial Europe. Nationality constitutes the 'legitimate' idiom for talking about race. In the context of registry offices, racialized premises are based on presupposed ideas of the 'obviousness' that fiancés are 'poorly matched' and of a 'visible discrepancy' between them. The effects of these premises are then adjusted according to their intersection with further social markers such as gender and sexuality. By analysing how couples' intimacy is policed through state representatives, Lavanchy allows a glimpse into the hearts of whiteness of a race-mute society that is far from being race-blind.

The book concludes with Shalini Randeria's thoughtful afterword, which takes up some of the issues raised in this introduction and critically comments upon and interrogates the main lines of argument presented in the four thematic sections of this collection.

Notes

The authors are grateful to Vasudha Bharadwaj, Martin Lengwiler, Bernhard C. Schär, Jakob Tanner and Janine Wilhelm for their valuable comments and indispensable support.

1. James Baldwin (1963).
2. David Leeming (1994: 74–83).
3. Evocative (and quite different) reissues of Baldwin's experience in Leukerbad have recently been put forward by Ntando Cele (2014) and Teju Cole (2014).
4. W. E. B. Dubois (1903).
5. Frantz Fanon (1952).
6. Paul Vallely, 'Switzerland: Europe's Heart of Darkness?', *The Independent*, 7 September 2007.
7. These votes also document how migration currently constitutes a contested site of politics and creates a deeply divided population – the 'mass immigration initiative' passed with 50.3 per cent of the votes, overruling almost half of the voters.
8. The role of the Swiss extreme right as a precursor for right-wing populist movements in Europe can be traced back to the 1960s. See Damir Skenderovic (2007).
9. Philipp Kalbermatter (2008).
10. Benedict Anderson (1983).
11. Guy P. Marchal and Aram Mattioli (1989); Urs Altermatt, Catherine Bosshard-Pfluger and Albert Tanner (1998); Ulrich Im Hof (1991).
12. See Madlaina Janett and Dorothe Zimermann (2014).
13. Regula Bochsler (2006: 225).
14. Malik Mazbouri, Sébastien Guex and Rodrigo Lopez (2012: 503); Amanda Weibel (2000); Jean-François Bergier (2002); Damir Skenderovic (2007); Peter Hug (2007); Mascha Madörin (2008).

15. Jakob Tanner (1986) and (1999); Jean-François Bergier (2002); Georg Kreis (2007).
16. Walter Leimgruber and Gabriela Christen (1992).
17. Patrick Minder (2011: 18).
18. See for example Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988); Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989).
19. Early studies of Swiss colonial history comprise Richard Fritz Behrendt (1932); Marianne Amiet-Keller (1974); Jacques Pous (1979); Béatrice Ziegler (1985); Beat Witschi (1987); Simone Prodolliet (1987); Hans Werner Debrunner (1991); Niklaus Röthlin (1991); Regina Bendix (1993); Cikuru Batumike (1993); Balthasar Staehelin (1994); Rea Brändle (1995); Christoph Keller (1995); René Lenzin (1999); Véronique Mottier (2000). Questions on Swiss imperialism were raised in Thomas David and Bouda Etemad (1998); Albert Wirz (1998); Patrick Minder (2004). In the wake of a Swiss 'third world movement', a critical debate on Switzerland's role in a neo-colonial world order emerged. See for example Lorenz Stucki (1968); Jean Ziegler (1982); Ruth-Gaby Vermot, Regula Renschler and Annina Hess (1981). For an overview see Monica Kalt (2010) and Konrad J. Kuhn (2011). A particularly important place for the critique of neo-colonial politics was the Geneva Africa Institute (today's Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies), which opened its doors in 1961 and hosted scholars such as Gilbert Rist and Roy Preiswerk. On the foundation and the first director of the African Institute, the missionary Henri-Philippe Junod, see Eric Morier-Genoud (2011). An earlier discussion on Swiss colonial entanglements emerged in the field of mission studies in the mid-1990s. In a much-debated essay, Tinyiko Maluleke criticized the Swiss Mission in South Africa, which began its work in 1875. Maluleke argues that the linguistic and ethnic homogeneity of the Tsonga was an effect of these Swiss missionaries' activities, and that they had later constituted a pretext of Apartheid's homeland policy. See Tinyiko S. Maluleke (1993); for an overview on the debate see Klauspeter Blaser (1998: 100). For a recent and comprehensive account on the relation between Swiss churches in South Africa and Apartheid see Caroline Jeannerat, Eric Morier-Genoud and Didier Péclard (2011).
20. Niklaus Stettler, Peter Haenger and Robert Labhardt (2004); Hans Fässler (2005); Thomas David, Bouda Etemad and Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl (2005); Sandra Bott, Thomas David, Claude Lützelschwab and Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl (2005). See also Konrad J. Kuhn and Béatrice Ziegler (2009). Recent scholarship has investigated how conservative Swiss elites made use of abolitionist arguments against the so-called Arab-led slave trade in East and Central Africa in order to legitimize colonial conquest at the end of the 19th century. See Thomas David and Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl (2010).
21. That being said, it is also necessary to point out that these insights are only very slowly entering the mainstream of Swiss historiography. Thus, several recent handbooks on the history of Switzerland, some of which are very ambitious in scope, completely neglect or only marginally discuss this new current of research. See, for instance, François Walter (2009); Thomas Maissen (2010); Volker Reinhardt (2011); Clive H. Church and Randolph C. Head (2013); and Georg Kreis (2014). For a fuller discussion see also Harald Fischer-Tiné's chapter below.
22. Hans Fässler (2005: 36, 174–6).
23. Georg Kreis (2005); Claude Lützelschwab (2006); Andrea Franc (2008); Andreas Zangger (2011); Christof Dejung (2013); Andreas Zangger (2013).
24. Jürg Schneider, Ute Röschenthaler and Bernhard Gardi (2005); Jürg Schneider and Barbara Lüthi (2007); Patrick Harries (2007a); Patrick Harries (2007b); Ruth

Hagen (2009); Serge Reubi (2011); Harald Fischer-Tiné (2014); Lukas Meier (2014); Bernhard C. Schär (2015).

25. Sara Elmer (2012); Sara Elmer, Konrad J. Kuhn and Daniel Speich Chassé (2014); Lukas Zürcher (2014).
26. Eleonora Matare-Ineichen, Jürg Schneider and Bettina Zeugin (2002); Women of Black Heritage (2003); Carmel Fröhlicher-Stines and Kelechi Monika Mennel (2004); Cikuru Batumike (2006); Manuel Menrath (2010); Cintia Meier-Mesquita (2013); Shelley Berlowitz, Elisabeth Joris and Zeedah Meierhofer-Mangeli (2013); Kijan Espahangizi and Halua Pinto de Magalhães (2014).
27. Harald Fischer-Tiné (2010).
28. Patrick Harries (2007a: 4). See also Patrick Harries (1998) and (2000).
29. Patricia Purtschert (2008a), (2008b), (2011) and (2014); Noémi Michel and Manuela Honegger (2010); Patrick Minder (2011); Patricia Purtschert, Barbara Lüthi and Francesca Falk (2012) and (forthcoming); Manuel Menrath (2012); Ariane Knüsel (2012); Rohit Jain (2012b); Jovita dos Santos Pinto (2013); Amélie Barras and Xavier Guillaume (2013); Jana Häberlein (2013); Lionel Gauthier and Jean-François Staszak (2012); Stefanie C. Boulila (2013); Melanie Rohner (2013); Anne Lavanchy (2013); Noémi Michel (2013); Sushila Mesquita and Patricia Purtschert (forthcoming); Eva Keller (2015). For a critical account see Bouda Etemad and Mathieu Humbert (2014).
30. Rohit Jain (2012a).
31. Christof Moser (2014).
32. See for example the special issue of the *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* entitled 'Beyond Eccentricity: Non-European History in Switzerland', edited by Christof Dejung (2014). Of special interest are Gesine Krüger's and Corinne A. Pernet's articles (2014), which both make a strong point for the strengthening of entangled and non-eurocentric approaches to history within Swiss academia (and beyond).
33. Michael H. Fisher (2006). Cf. also Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (2006); Zine Magubane (2003); and Pascal Blanchard and Sandrine Lemaire (2003).
34. Durba Ghosh and Dane Keith Kennedy (2006).
35. Peter N. Stearns (2006); Douglas Haynes et al. (2010); and Nira Wickramasinghe (2014).
36. Babli Sinha (2013).
37. Kris Manjapra (2014).
38. David Arnold (2013).
39. Karwan J. Fatah-Black (2013).
40. Kristín Loftsdóttir (2012).
41. Patricia Purtschert, Francesca Falk and Barbara Lüthi (forthcoming).
42. Ulla Vuorela (2009).
43. Bernhard C. Schär (2007); Francesca Falk (2012); Bernhard C. Schär and Béatrice Ziegler (2014).
44. Bernhard C. Schär (2008) and (2012).
45. Daniel Speich Chassé (2012).
46. Kristín Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen (2012).
47. Ulla Vuorela (2009: 28); Clemens Pfeffer (2012). See also Gloria Wekker's (2004) very useful concept of 'innocence unlimited', which she develops in regard to the postcolonial Netherlands.
48. Araba Evelyn Johnston-Arthur (2007); Patricia Purtschert (2011).
49. Fatima El-Tayeb (2011).

50. Kristín Loftsdóttir (2012).
51. Dace Dzenovska (2013).
52. Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000).
53. Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan and Peter C. Perdue (2007).
54. Shalini Randeria (2012: 11).
55. Ann Laura Stoler (2008: 193).
56. Thus, for instance, Swiss contributions to colonial science are completely absent in the otherwise excellent survey of Ricardo Roque and Kim A. Wagner (2011). One exception is a recently edited volume by Rebekka Habermas and Alexandra Przyrembel, as it contains two chapters dealing with Swiss engagements with colonial science. Rebekka Habermas and Alexandra Przyrembel (2013).

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