



# **Britain's Imperial Muse: The Classics, Imperialism, and the Indian Empire, 1784-1914 (Britain and the World)**

*Christopher Hagerman*

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Located at the intersection of British imperial and cultural history, and classical reception studies, *Britain's Imperial Muse* explores the classics' contribution to Britain's culture of imperialism and to the experience of empire in India through the long nineteenth century. Dismissing grammar-grind stereotypes, this study argues that classical education left powerful images of empire in many students destined to play a part in Britain's imperial drama; and that these classically founded images constituted a key pillar of British imperial identity. But it simultaneously acknowledges the classics' role as a rhetorical arsenal used and abused by commentators to justify imperial domination, particularly of India. In its final act, the book follows the classics to India, where they provided knowledge of Indian civilization, defined and maintained the cultural solidarity of the imperial elite, entrenched the 'difference' of Indians, and helped Britons cope with the social, physical, and cultural alienations of life in India.

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