

Sinner, Scapegoat, or Savior: Macaulay and His Legacies, Con and Pro

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Robert E. Sullivan, *Macaulay: The Tragedy of Power* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2010), 614 pages, \$46 cloth.

Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2012), xxviii + 389 pages, \$85 cloth.

Zareer Masani, *Macaulay: Britain's Liberal Imperialist* (London: The Bodley Head, 2013), xvi + 272 pages, \$25 cloth.

The three books concerning Macaulay listed above have appeared in the last five years. One reason for this proliferation, especially applicable to Professor Robert Sullivan's study, is that since Professor John Clive died before following his *Macaulay: The Shaping of the Historian* (New York: Knopf, 1973) with a projected second volume, there has been no full-scale modern biography of Macaulay. A second reason is the expansion of available information provided by two now completed scholarly projects, Macaulay's *Correspondence*, edited by Professor Thomas Pinney (New York: Cambridge UP, 1974-81) and his *Journal*, edited by William Thomas (London: Routledge, 2008), both of which have benefited the writers in question.

Another kind of reason is invoked in Professor Catherine Hall's declaration that "History is always a site of confrontation; [...] always in

the context of the contemporary political world” (xiv). Whether or not this is *always* true, it is true of the books considered here, which particularly invite comparison since they all include claims that Macaulay’s career affords lessons applicable to ongoing issues regarding international intervention – whether cultural, economic, or military.

In Sullivan’s “Introduction” to his biography of Macaulay he states that “My subject is the tragedy of power that killed him and confounds us today” (4). Invoking Max Weber’s belief in the inherent toxicity of power to the wielder’s capacity for empathy, Sullivan compares Macaulay to McGeorge Bundy, National Security Advisor to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson during the Vietnam War – questionably, since the Victorian statesman did not individually authorize or supervise the kind of violence that Bundy oversaw. (As the biographer later observes, Macaulay, while secretary at war in the Melbourne cabinet from 1838 to 1841, “lacked any responsibility for planning strategy during the First Opium War” [244]; he did speak energetically about “empire and national security,” but quickly tired of the administrative work and its conflict with his personal reading and writing [230].)

Sullivan’s opening chapter deals with how young Macaulay’s family, their religion, and his early education shaped his development. His authoritarian father Zachary’s educational demands and efforts to control the growing prodigy’s personal reading and writing are seen by Sullivan as having generated an habitual tendency toward evasiveness and dissimulation in the boy. Moreover, the biographer describes Zachary’s sternness as having taught the son to “see human sympathy as circumscribed” (5) and desire for power and control as “inexorable” in both politics and personal relationships (21). Both dissimulation and constriction of sympathy proceed to be major issues in this book.

Regarding another family situation, Macaulay’s intense relationships with his young sisters Margaret and Hannah, Sullivan (and others) have criticized his nephew and first biographer G.O. Trevelyan for suppressing evidence of his uncle’s problematical feelings. But even Trevelyan’s restrained account prompted discussion in the 1960s by writers such as

Clive, George Levine, William Madden, G.S. Fraser, Eric Stokes, and others, some of whom included psychosexual speculations (114). Sullivan, however, sensibly quotes Pinney as to the "absurd" status of theories of overt incest based on the disconcertingly (to a twenty-first century reader) amorous language addressed to the young women (95).

Building on Pinney's opinion that there was "a need in Macaulay to have someone whom he could exalt without reservation" (95-96), Sullivan finds "the emotional core" of the brother's relationships with the sisters in the demand for "a return: he needed at least as much exaltation as he could give" (96). With this, the biographer associates Macaulay's sense of the meaning for himself of his sisters' marriages. As Hannah's wedding approached, he wrote to Margaret "'She was everything to me: and I am henceforth nothing to her – the first place in her affections is gone'" (128). The brother's first or nothing binary suggests to Sullivan "that possessing her had reassured him that he was not merely loved by someone but was supremely loveable" (128).

In interpreting Macaulay's interactions with Hannah and her family after her marriage to Charles Trevelyan, Sullivan pursues transaction analysis: "His relations with the Trevelyans were also transactions, a reality that fed his insecurity [...]. He helped them financially and in exchange they cared for him emotionally" (337). He needed "to be reassured that they reciprocated what he felt toward them" (338). This approach leads, however, to observations that hardly distinguish Macaulay from many older relatives: contributing heavily to niece Baba's trousseau "expressed the primordial urge to turn affection into a commodity" (339).

More valuably, Sullivan also provides an exposition of the theological and social views of the Clapham Sect, the evangelical Anglican group devoted to abolition of the slave trade and slavery, of which Zachary was a prominent member. The biographer's account of ways this connection influenced young Tom includes the observation that the Claphamites downplayed their definitively Christian motivation and rationale in favor of secular ethical terms, to gain support from wealthy and powerful non-religious sources – ironically giving young Macaulay an example of

strategic manipulation of sacred and secular vocabularies later adaptable for what Sullivan considers his anti-Christian purposes (13).

The biographer's account of Macaulay's boarding-school experience emphasizes the boy's immersion in the classics, most notably the works of Cicero. Although young Tom initially reported to Zachary being appalled by the endorsement of "duplicity" in Cicero's "Epistles" and proposed abandoning study of this writer, nearing graduation he declared that as exemplified by the treatise *De Oratore* Cicero "transcends any writer that any country has seen" (28). As Sullivan observes, Cicero in *De Oratore* asserted that all the liberal arts were rhetorical, the artist's role being to teach, please, and move, ethically as long as toward some worthwhile end – which activity, the biographer adds, Machiavelli recognized as compatible with imposture.

In his "Introduction," Sullivan concedes that Macaulay could "perhaps sometimes half-believe" the "enduring contradictions" he asserted (4). But later, and more characteristically, the biographer bristles at his subject's attribution of progress to "God – in whom he did not believe" (75). Similarly, the author terms Macaulay's claim, during an election rally at Leeds, to be a Christian as simply "false" (105). The son learned from conflicts with his father, according to the biographer, "that prudence demanded religious conformity, and his doubleness required him to conceal what he believed and felt and to pretend to believe and feel what he could not" (157). But readers' agreement must depend in part on their judgement of the implications of Macaulay's epistemological position, which may differ from Sullivan's assessment.

The biographer records that in 1848 Macaulay "affirmed that his 'metaphysical system is, and will I think continue to be [...] *acatalepsy*,'" i.e. "*incomprehensibility*" [...] "'For I am exactly of Arcesilas' [*sic*] mind'" (43). Cicero describes Arcesilaus, his own philosophical predecessor, as denying "that anything could be known, not even the residual claim [...] of] the knowledge that he didn't know anything. He taught that everything was hidden so deeply and that nothing could be discerned or understood. For these reasons he thought that we shouldn't affirm anything" (43).

Book Five of *De Finibus*, considered by Macaulay in 1822 at Trinity College and still in 1855 to be his favorite Cicero text, is compatible with Arcesilaus's position.

As for Macaulay's claim at Leeds, Clapham sect leader William Wilberforce, ruefully acknowledging the extent of "nominal Christianity" among the English middle and upper classes, observed that "The general notion seems to be that, if born in a country of which Christianity is the established religion, we are born Christians" (15). It is noticeable in Sullivan's account that in Macaulay's era a degree of acatalepsy was acceptable even among church establishment figures. The influential evangelical Anglican Charles Simeon, a Cambridge don and divine, was favorably described by a protégé, Charles Wilson, minister of a London church attended by the Macaulay family, as "'Determined not to speculate on matters far above human comprehension'" (16). Sullivan retrieves a milieu of theological vagueness and situates Macaulay within it disparagingly, more in terms of the biographer's own polemical views than his subject's religious context.

This is especially apparent concerning Macaulay's Erastianism, his belief that the church should be subordinate to the state. Sullivan describes him as "prudently" (44) employing classical acatalepsy to facilitate his "nonbelieving, nominal" Ciceronian Anglicanism which "guaranteed him respectability and preserved him from dispute [...]" (46). As Sullivan also clearly sets forth, however, acatalepsy has "conservative potential" (45): a person holding agnostic views might conscientiously refrain from disseminating them to avoid undermining the stabilizing religion of his society, and such a person could sincerely (whether or not correctly) consider himself a Christian on the basis of his commitment to sustaining Christianity as a communal resource, as the Greeks and Romans did their civic cults. But in whatever proportions these selfish and social motives may have been mixed in Macaulay, he is judged by Sullivan to have been both a Blifil-like hypocrite and foe of Christianity's proper autonomy.

Chapter 2 covers the years from 1825 to Macaulay's departure for India, concisely describing his development in religious and political

thought, as essayist, and in parliament, especially as rhetorician. There is ongoing condescension regarding self-promotion and manipulation, but less than elsewhere: Macaulay “succeeded in crafting an intricate and winning public face that often belied him” (51); he is twice described as “on the make” (67; 90). Sullivan does praise him for “nobly” opposing exclusion of Jews from Parliament – but quickly adds that he valued religious toleration less for protection of minorities than for keeping them subordinate to the state (82). The biographer’s analyses of Macaulay’s *Edinburgh Review* essays from this period are penetrating. Regarding “Milton” and “Dante” his expositions of how Macaulay’s early idea that “as civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines” anticipates the essayist’s secularizing inclinations is thought-provoking (56). The discussion of “The Present Administration” (June 1827) identifies such figures as George Canning, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Grey and their positions regarding Catholic emancipation, protectionism, and impending reform. Their desire for reform in order to decrease royal power rather than to increase workers’ power is made clear. So are Macaulay’s own affinity for the middle class on the Aristotelian grounds that possession of property fosters stability, his wish for the bourgeoisie’s alignment with the moderate aristocracy rather than the potentially volatile workers, and his firm opposition to universal suffrage.

Regarding Macaulay’s 10 July 1833 Parliamentary speech on the governing of India, just prior to taking up his Council position there, Sullivan asserts that the peroration envisions transition to Indian self-government “in the very distant future” (109). But the speaker’s own time notations do not necessarily add up to that subjective duration. Macaulay speaks emphatically of not wishing “to proceed hastily” but “by slow degrees” – still, the successive phrases “when the fullness of time is come, when the interest of India requires the change” (the latter quoted but not commented upon by the biographer) are synonymous, and the coming of the biblical fullness of time was thought to be unpredictable (110). The operative specification is “when the interest of India requires.” For Macaulay, speaking before arrival in India, to forgo a

precise time estimate for independence is "prudent" only in the most common sense way (110). His expressed hopes, however Eurocentric, idealistic, hypocritical, or conflicting, should be explored more fully.

Sullivan proceeds to what he terms Macaulay's three Indian "legacies" (483), addressing first his Minute on Education, which argues for imperial instruction of Indians in the English language, and Western materials rather than native ones. The biographer attributes the "inflammatory hyperbole" of the document's notorious declaration that "'a single shelf of a good European library'" is "'worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'" in part to the influence of evangelical diatribes against Hindu idolatry presumably remembered from the Council member's boyhood (141). Sullivan presents this supposition provocatively as an example of Macaulay's aptitude for secularization. The writer of the Minute adopts the evangelical objective of converting India through religious education, blending that with the utilitarian project of uplifting the subcontinent through legal reform. Analogously to father Zachary's believing that the *Bible* conveyed the one true faith, son Tom postulates one valid culture pervaded by "a rational language and a humanizing literature" (141). The younger man perceived English as providing access to the knowledge that would lead to the Baconian-utilitarian Paradise on Earth instead of the Christian Paradise beyond; dividing languages and literatures into "civilized" and "barbarous" provided the British Empire with the ethical justification for Westernizing other peoples and, Sullivan adds, sanctioned violence or the threat thereof against recalcitrant natives (144).

Macaulay's second Indian legacy, as defined by Sullivan, is the fostering of what is envisioned in the Minute as "'a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect [...]"' (144). Sullivan comments that this development had an "unintended consequence" which Macaulay would have "rued" – the emergence of Jawaharlal Nehru (483). But a reader who recalls Macaulay's vision of an imperial rule that leads to the Indian

people's eventual transcendence of subject status might expect him to be not altogether dismayed (117).

As for how much of Macaulay's confidence regarding native potentiality survived and for how long, Sullivan is not consistent. On the one hand, he observes that Macaulay "saw his own 'race' more in terms of his Englishness than his skin color, and the biases he acquired in India were seemingly more cultural and social than racialist. He still believed in the reality of unequal, sometimes obnoxious, but *possibly changeable* national and class characteristics more than in immutable biological differences among peoples" (122, my italics). But twenty-three pages later, the biographer also writes that "Macaulay returned home denying that humanity possessed a common ethical dignity and positing intractable differences among certain national characters or races" (145).

The second view, however, though more consonant with the biographer's central thesis regarding his subject's development, conflicts with what Sullivan identifies as Macaulay's third Indian legacy, the Penal Code, written almost entirely by himself and still in use. In his unexpectedly affirmative assessment of the Code, the biographer describes the "Illustrations" accompanying each act as intended to "reconcile the utilitarian view of justice with indigenous conceptions of acceptable social behavior," an "accommodating" feature (147). The Code thus manifests, for however pragmatic the reasons, more humane toleration of Indian culture than the biographer elsewhere concedes to its putatively power-blinded author. Especially since the Code was Macaulay's last project in India, this tolerance conflicts with the biographer's most emphatic and often repeated claim regarding the effect of the statesman's experience there upon himself: "Helping to rule Indians on their soil had made him a celebrant of empire and killed his abstract sympathy for subject peoples, at home and abroad" (274).

As already noted, however, the biographer describes the constriction of his subject's capacity for sympathy and empathy as having begun in childhood due to his father's misguided parenting. And before Macaulay was thirty, Sullivan adds, he had expressed to Margaret what he wrote at

thirty-three to Hannah: "The more numerous my acquaintance becomes, the narrower and more exclusive my affection grows..." (453-54). The biographer also describes Margaret as recalling that at the time of their mother's death in 1831, Macaulay "insisted that sympathy could only exist in small groups" (98). And Margaret's brother's response to her engagement in 1832 is seen as revealing the limits of "his capacity for human affection and sympathy" (97). Moreover, the subject's "economic mindset," with its roots in his university years, is said to have "worked to turn other human beings into objects," as the habit of calculation derived from utilitarianism "tended to minimize the human dimension" (130). On his voyage to India itself, Sullivan adds, Macaulay's insatiable reading exclusively in Western literature fostered "a seaborne disdain for India and its people" (119).

In addition to these factors occurring before Macaulay's arrival in India, Sullivan lists others originating there but not related to wielding power, such as Hannah's wedding, after which her brother wrote to Margaret that "my affections are shutting themselves up and withering" (131). Moreover, the deep reading in classical Greek literature, from which he found sustenance after Margaret's death, intensified "his disdain for India and its people" and "biased him against the mass of humanity" (145). Even in his letters to his best friend Thomas Flower Ellis, Sullivan asserts, "classicism [...] inhibited his words and perhaps what he could feel" (129).

Being convinced of the shortness of compassion's range, Sullivan proposes, made Macaulay "unusually vulnerable" to the "impediment with experiencing sympathy" produced by wielding power (110). This susceptibility the biographer considers to be the "great frailty" that supports interpretation of Macaulay's career as a tragedy on Aristotelian terms (5). But the sheer number and chronological distribution of the asserted causal elements just surveyed seems sufficient to explain Macaulay's syndrome without the additional factor of corruption by power, which in this context may be thought not to bear the explanatory weight placed upon it.

For Sullivan's claim that it was Macaulay's experience in India that "killed his abstract sympathy for subject peoples" (274), the earliest

writing offered as evidence is a passage inserted into the essay “Sir William Temple” on Macaulay’s return to England in 1838: “[...] it is in truth more merciful to extirpate a hundred thousand human beings at once and to fill the void with a well-governed population, than to misgovern millions through a long succession of generations” (196). This is a disturbing claim, indeed, but may be more accurately described as an “assertion” regarding mass slaughter than a “case” (182) or “argument” (203) for it or “lesson” (438) in it. Moreover, the statement itself is a generalization, which does not “advocate” the practice in any specific existing situation (6). In an 1844 speech on Ireland, Macaulay did attribute to Oliver Cromwell the idea of “decomposing a subject people in order to reconstruct their society” (261). But he proceeded to dismiss the strategy as not tenable in the present, and by 1845 his own proposed solution to the Irish problem was Catholic emancipation, as Sullivan acknowledges (261).

Elsewhere, in the *History*, Macaulay wrote less complacently than in “Temple” about what Sullivan calls “civilizing slaughter” (300). The 1692 Glencoe Massacre of thirty-eight clansmen (and collaterally dozens of their villagers) who missed the deadline for affirming allegiance to William III was of far smaller scale than the kind of devastation considered in “Temple” (though Macaulay attributes objectives reminiscent of “Temple” to the statesman he imputes as instigator of the event, praising his “end” of pacification and civilizing though not the means [394]). Still, as the biographer observes, his subject worked intermittently for two years in an attempt to exonerate William III in the *History* from what Macaulay calls this “crime which has cast a dark shadow over his glory” (392).

England’s dealings with Ireland were a more difficult subject for Macaulay than Scots matters, as Sullivan shows. The biographer himself adds an unnecessary complication, however, by attributing to Macaulay the recommendation for Ireland in 1833 of a strategy resembling that articulated in the “Temple” insert. The following passage is identified in Sullivan’s “Index” as “Ireland, civilizing slaughter and imperial ethic in: reconquest advocated by TBM, 101[:]” ““he would [...] have suspended the

laws for five years in Ireland, given the Lord-Lieutenant's proclamations the force of law, and got the D of W[ellingto]n to go there [...].’ Speaking in the Commons [...] Macaulay defended ‘suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act and the suspension of trial by juries’ and the blanket prohibition of public meetings” (101). This is martial law, not ethnic cleansing.

Sullivan is presumably right that by 1845 “the Irish question now seemed insoluble to Macaulay” (262). But he proceeds to discuss his subject’s involvement with an essay on the Irish famine nominally authored by brother-in-law Charles Trevelyan, by this time overseer of Irish relief. The biographer identifies in such phrases as “the sharp but effectual remedy by which the cure is likely to be effected” a tolerance of devastation reminiscent of the “Temple” interpolation (264). Sullivan acknowledges clearly that there was no conscious scheme to foster decimation by starvation, but he perceives the article as exhibiting belief that what the English considered best for England was God’s will for Ireland. He also makes clear that in producing the essay Trevelyan had the assistance of many advisors and collaborators, including Macaulay, who “was widely believed to have been its principal author” (265). As for the passage concerning “the sharp but effectual remedy,” Sullivan observes that Macaulay “may have only read” it – but adds “Or he may have written it” (265-66).

An indication of the contracting limits of Macaulay’s support for wide-scale violence, however, is especially pertinent as involving colonial conflict. His reaction, nineteen years after the addition to “Temple” and two years before his death, to the massacre of English family members during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 is more anguished and less dogmatic than the apparently complacent passage in the Temple essay. In his journal, Macaulay describes the revolt as having ““affected my spirits more than any public events in the whole course of my life”” (435). But while he admits that ““I could be very cruel just now,”” he describes himself as ““half ashamed at the craving for vengeance which I feel”” (435). As to whether severity can be better than lenity, he now observes that ““the

question may be argued long on both sides” (436). Macaulay’s speculations at this point include some jingoistic thoughts, but before concluding he observes that the “acting out of ‘real vindictive hatred’ could deform ‘the national character’: ‘[...] shall we not hold human life generally cheaper than we have done. Having brought ourselves to exult in the misery of the guilty, shall we not feel less sympathy for the sufferings of the innocent. [...] in exacting a horrendous retribution we are doing our duty & performing an act of mercy. [...] Yet the habit of hanging murderers is found to injure the character’” (436). A reader who perceives Macaulay as thinking beyond his apocalyptic aside in “Temple” here does so without help from Sullivan, who finds him just “exquisitely calculating” (436).

The biographer apparently believes that only a completely spontaneous, unqualified, and heartfelt belief is adequately creditable, but his subject’s reaction to a speech in the House of Lords advocating mass castration of surviving Sepoy rebels is more commendable than Sullivan concedes. After an initiatory acknowledgement that the scheme might be viable in theory, Macaulay declares in his journal that the “utter impossibility of proposing” it in “any English assembly should have been clear to any English statesman” (438).

Whatever the journal writer’s unarticulated process of assessing the plan’s status in theory may have been, in regard to the political world his dismissal of the proposed mass atrocity is categorical and immediate, neither calculated nor partisan, the predictability of the English rejection applying to both parties (and implicitly including himself). But Sullivan weighs Macaulay’s aside regarding theory more heavily than his emphatic confidence in material English decency. The biographer constructs a long-term historical context of “civilizing slaughter” for Macaulay’s “Temple” insertion, from Napoleonic transformative warfare through Boer displacement of South African natives and Andrew Jackson’s “Indian removal Act” (188) before Macaulay’s passage was written, through German decimation of Namibians and American extirpation in the Philippines before World War I, and beyond to Holocaust “genocide” and

French and English counter-insurgency campaigns in Algeria, Syria, Madagascar, and Kenya (481-82). Sullivan does include a convincing account of Macaulay's influence on Theodore Roosevelt's militaristic, imperialist thinking. But otherwise, one may wonder how much of the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries' carnage can properly be attributed to the English writer, especially in view of the head start ascribed to Napoleon and the decline of Macaulay's influence in the 1970s acknowledged by Sullivan (482). But although the biographer may overstate the effect of Macaulay's comment on extirpation in "Temple," no doubt he is right to call attention to it and urge further scholarly discussion of it, especially since, as he observes, it has been met by "commanding silence" until now (301) – even though the fact of that silence itself may argue against the influence claimed for the passage.

Concerning the *History* more generally, Sullivan provides a substantial account of "Macaulay's great theme, the English Revolution of the seventeenth-century, that is to say, the transfer of the supreme control of the executive administration from the crown to the House of Commons" (308, cf. 274). This development, the biographer demonstrates, the historian perceived as "the auspicious union of order and freedom" from which "sprang a prosperity of which the annals of human affairs had furnished no example" (272). The second installment of the *History*, Sullivan emphasizes, looks forward to when "the nation and its Parliament would supersede the church and the court as the English race's center" (306).

Sullivan proceeds further, however, to describe Macaulay as not only defining the events of 1688 as leading to the decrease in power of the established church but as furthering that diminishment himself as writer. This least convincing aspect of Sullivan's account of the *History*, a carry-over from his analysis of Macaulay's religious beliefs in private and political life, is central to his assertion of "secularization" being another of Macaulay's "legacies" (482). According to the biographer, Macaulay did not practice Ciceronian skeptical Erastianism in the *History*, aiming rather "to diffuse" destabilizing knowledge "as widely as possible" (160).

Sullivan adds that as early as I.66 of the *History*, “politics, respectability, and language and literature more than Christianity started to define Englishness” (303). Yet he defines the historian as “Like many believing Anglicans [...] a robust anti-clerical who acquiesced in the church as the state’s *necessary* tool” (302, my italics). In his penultimate chapter, the biographer observes that Macaulay “would be buried, as he wished, in a religious ceremony in ‘a religious edifice,’ believing not in God (or the gods) but in what Cicero had taught him as a young man about the state’s proper demands on its subjects’ allegiance” (461). The attribution to Macaulay of Ciceronian Erastianism conflicts with the assertion that he worked deliberately to undermine Christianity in the *History*.

Moreover, some offered examples of the Victorian’s subversive activity are not convincing. Commenting on Macaulay’s declaration in Chapter 1 that his narrative will “excite the thankfulness of all religious minds, and hope in the breasts of all patriots,” Sullivan offers this gloss: “the pious looked gratefully backward, but patriots found hope in the future” (280). This interpretation is applicable, however, only if individuals must be presumed members of one group or the other exclusively, which is not self-evidently Macaulay’s meaning.

Concerning John Churchill, the eventual 1st Duke of Marlborough, Macaulay observes as a paradox that the otherwise habitually corrupt Churchill maintained firm loyalty to his Anglican religion. Sullivan sees this as one of Macaulay’s expressions of “the church’s inability to inspire either personal morality or national feeling” (311). But since he has immediately beforehand quoted Macaulay’s description of Churchill as “a prodigy of turpitude,” the church’s failure to redeem him need not be meant or taken to imply its inefficacy in normal cases (311).

The biographer also provides an obscure exchange between William and Bishop Burnett, and a proposed interpretation of it by Macaulay as an instance of William teasing the modestly intelligent Bishop. But this anecdote concerns two individuals’ belief in “providence,” which both affirm, rather than the existence thereof (304).

Whether or not such passages indicate recognition or approval of the church being dislodged from the center of English culture, they hardly constitute material "that effectively evacuated Christian belief and theology from modern English culture and history" (47).

Sullivan's book is well documented, as is Hall's *Macaulay and Son*. Either provides a good introduction to contemporary cultural studies regarding the matters they consider, both in their notes, and Hall also within her text, where she identifies her affiliations with feminist and multiethnic scholarship, to which she has previously contributed, and to postcolonial theory.

Hall's first two chapters are devoted to the life of Zachary through the death of his wife Selina in 1831. Included as they become relevant to his development are the book's opening accounts of such matters as slavery in Jamaica, Anglican evangelicalism, the Clapham Sect, Christian manhood and femininity, marriage, family, home and community. The key terms "barbarism" (18) and "civilization" (7), shared with Sullivan, are introduced, as are "other" (13) and "difference," (13), ramifications of which are pursued as the book proceeds.

Prominent in Chapter 1 is a narrative of Zachary's experience from 1794 to 1799 as governor of Sierra Leone, the English colony in Africa for emancipated slaves. Zachary did believe in the potential of Africans for citizenship as he understood it, if they were firmly mentored. He adopted an authoritarian manner from the start, offending African settlers who understood Company rhetoric as implying partnership and equal rights for white and black. Conflict continued over land distribution, rents, marriage and sexual mores, religious beliefs and practices, and representation in bureaucratic positions and on juries. Soon after Zachary's departure, open rebellion broke out. While acknowledging his capacity for self-criticism and some administrative achievements, Hall judges that his Christian belief in the universal human capacity for salvation and civilization was based on an illusion of universal sameness, which obstructed recognition and acceptance of difference.

Chapter 2 covers Zachary's unrelenting devotion to abolition of the slave trade and slavery after his return from Sierra Leone. Hall emphasizes the Clapham Sect leaders' familiarity and connections with power in London and the empire, in politics, finance, trade, and law – she is concerned to establish Evangelical reform activity as part of imperial development itself, rather than simply opposition from outside. Even after the battle against slavery was ostensibly won, however, new conflicts emerged, most notably regarding “apprenticeship” of emancipated slaves, to provide compensation to former slave-holders and a period of education for those liberated. This form of indenture caused intense disagreement among supporters of abolition, but was approved by Zachary (and Wilberforce). Hall respects Zachary for his long fight against slavery, but concludes that he contributed to hierarchical racist thought by assuming the emancipated needed “saving from themselves” by those who knew that assimilation to Western Christian civilization was the only way ahead (92). Her account of his career is absorbing and informative and well worth reading for its own sake, even without the perspective it provides on the activities of his son.

As for Thomas Babington Macaulay's “formulations to his father,” the author observes that “many [...] appear dutiful rather than heartfelt, a pattern which continued into his adulthood” (105). Hall uses the words “dutiful” and “deferential” repeatedly to describe the son's communications to the father on subjects of potential discord, as well as “apparent compliance” and “evasion” (105; 108; 109; 111). But unlike Sullivan she does not employ the words “duplicity” (535; 37), “cunning” (6), “dissembling” (29), or “calculating” (130), and she does not argue that the boy's restraint was the source of a life-long general deviousness.

Hall does state that “Tom certainly resented in later life” what he called the “admonitory and rather severe” attitude conveyed by his father (102-3). But her account also includes the observation from Hannah's *Recollections*, written for her children and grandchildren, that “‘Your Uncle’ [...] regarded his father's memory with ‘love and reverence’ [...] mingled with ‘a shade of bitterness that he had not met quite the

encouragement and appreciation from him he received from others.' [...] she was quick to add that he was never disrespectful in 'word or look, [...] & at last he was the entire stay and support of his Father's declining years'" (103). Most vividly, Hannah recalls the son overcoming his own grief at the time of his mother's death in 1831, in order to console his father and siblings: "I never forget the comfort and support he was to my Father [...]. His extreme tenderness, his efforts to interest him & to draw him into conversation, his soothing, loving care of us all relieved the misery of that sad week'" (111-12). One may discount this passage somewhat due to its intended audience. Still, there is no evident reason for "calculation" in Macaulay's observation to Hannah that "the greatest pleasure he got" from praise received for a reform speech "was the sense of the pleasure it would give to his father and sisters" (122).

Nevertheless, Hall later observes, apparently undecided, that Macaulay's omission of material on slavery from the *History* constitutes a "disavowal of the significance of the slave trade and slavery to his nation's history" which "could be read as the most potent rejection of his father's legacy" (321).

The context provided by attention to the whole family unit is especially illuminating in relation to Macaulay's emotions regarding his sisters. Hall considers his letters to Margaret and Hannah and his other writings expressing his feelings about them alongside their own letters to him and – strikingly – to each other, as well as, on Hanna's part, to additional family members.

In discussing the brother's interactions with his sisters, Hall draws upon the theory of sibling relationships as conveyed by Juliet Mitchell and Margaret Rustin, in preference to psychoanalytic theory with its patriarchal assumptions or transactional analysis as employed by Sullivan: "Ambivalence might be the central sibling experience; love *and* hate [...] always being the dominant emotions" (113). A possible reservation is that there is no sign of a negative pole in the emotions of either Tom or the sisters toward one another prior to Margaret's marriage, and even thereafter, his "self-pity" and "self-justification" are easier to discern than

“rage” and “hatred” among the attributes claimed by Hall for this passage: “‘Everything is dark. The world is a desert before me. I have nothing to love – I have nothing to live for’ [...]. This was a ‘bitter lesson’ and it was all he had got ‘in exchange for the blighted hopes and squandered affections of a life’” (134).

Particularly remarkable are Margaret’s cautions to Hannah against letting marriage destroy her relationship with their brother. On 28 January 1833, less than seven weeks after her wedding, Margaret writes “‘you will not know [...] how much you love him until you are parted from him. If ever you are tempted to leave him [...] be sure first that you know well what you are going to, and for whom you exchange him’” (126). Apparently Macaulay’s all-or-nothing binary thinking is not his alone. On 1 March 1834, Margaret adds to Hannah “‘May every day that passes over your head unite you in the bonds of a closer attachment. You may love long and go far and never meet with such love again’” (130). It helps in trying to understand the brother’s romantic rhetoric to know that it is shared among the siblings.

This chapter is rewarding as a study of their relationship, but the focus on family bypasses Macaulay’s intellectual development as he acquires the knowledge of classical literature that sustained him after the loss of Margaret – a topic on which Sullivan is very informative. (Hall does recommend Sullivan’s account of Macaulay’s classical reading in a footnote [136, n. 194].) Concerning her subject’s experience at Cambridge, she says little more than that he was introduced to utilitarianism there. Nor does she discuss his devotion to the works of Cicero and that writer’s skepticism or adaptability for opportunistic purposes. (She does, however, quote Macaulay’s statement that “‘the object of oratory is not truth but persuasion’” from his early essay “The Athenian Orators” [154].)

Hall is less interested in her subject’s academic education than his development through observing and engaging in political activities as in Leicester. She is not preoccupied with the issue of pretense – she writes of self-fashioning as self-making. Her young Macaulay is ambitious and desires power, but to pursue objectives considered worthy: “like many of

his generation," he "was preoccupied with national stability, a preoccupation that characterized his thinking for the rest of his life" (139-40). The author perceives his specific concerns as "reforming the constitution, reinvigorating the state and the nation, [and] ensuring that dangerous internal divisions were resolved and that order could be maintained" (140).

In relation to Macaulay's political career, Hall's discussion of the Reform Act includes a lively account of resistance to its passing, and subsequent public dissatisfaction, particularly with the exclusionary £10 franchise qualification. Comments from Karl Marx and E.P. Thompson are considered along with voices immediately following the legislation. She describes Macaulay as contributing to creation of a "narrative of a reform without conflict" in a speech following his re-election at Calne, but attributes his inaccuracy not to dishonesty but – perhaps too generously – to his having lived in London during the time of agitation and thus being unfamiliar with the discord beyond the capital (163). The same explanation is offered for his being "singularly ignorant" of the issues concerning factory reform, including his skepticism regarding the extent of the exploitation of child workers, an unlikely obliviousness given the amount of protest against the "malign factory system" documented by Hall herself (166).

Her account of the 1832 campaign for election at Leeds, however, which Macaulay and his fellow Whig candidate won in spite of bitter opposition, does include convincing evidence of his central, fundamental belief in the "*natural*" superiority of the middle class due to its affinity with "property" and thus "order," a point she shares with Sullivan and that underlies both Macaulay's support of the Reform Bill and eventually his *History* (162).

Discussing Macaulay's Indian penal code, Hall observes that although British law was meant to apply to natives and colonists alike, this was not the case, providing the example that convicted English criminals were to be banished rather than serve long terms in Indian prisons, which it was believed they could not survive. Though she calls the distinction a

matter of “the courts and the gaols,” the evidence she draws upon more specifically refers to “prison discipline,” not trial or conviction procedures (233). “We are legislating for *them* [...] and though *our* notions and usages are different, it is *our* duty, while *their* opinions and feelings remain unchanged, to respect them as if they were our own” (234, Hall’s italics). She notes, following Thomas Metcalf, that “in delineating the difference, the space between the two cultures was demarcated” (234) – but how could it not be? As observed earlier, Hall criticizes Zachary for a naïve belief in human universality which rendered him unable to acknowledge or cope with difference. But if not to recognize difference and to insist on respecting it are both wrong, what can be done? Hall sees the issue as most acute when difference is not only labeled but “hierarchised” (248), as inherently in an imperial context. An implication is that colonialism must be particularly demeaning to some among the subject people, for reasons exemplified in the younger Macaulay’s representation of Bengal natives in “Warren Hastings” (248). Connections among skin-color, moral qualities, and redeemability “elide” in such analyses (330): “What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty is [...] to woman, deceit is to the Bengalee” (248). The imperial anticipation was that ultimately all subjects would be Anglicized, but in reality some remained “unassimilable” (333). “Race,” argues Hall, following Amitav Ghosh, should be perceived as “foundational to empire,” being “the flexible fault line between those who could be included and those who could not” (336).

Hall’s analysis may dissuade some readers from supporting further Western interventions, but not necessarily Zareer Masani. In *Macaulay: Britain’s Liberal Imperialist*, this writer identifies himself as educated as an Anglophile, in a Bombay preparatory school for the “westernized elite” (xiii), and through dedicating his book to his History teachers there associates himself with those “proud to be Macaulay’s children,” a customarily derisive term for Indians educated to be transmitters of English language and culture, as envisioned in the Education Minute (v).

Masani's smoothly written volume, directed toward the intelligent general reader, stops short of being a fully-rounded biography. Regarding home and family, there is a sensible re-telling of Macaulay's interactions with his father and sisters, sufficient as background for examination of his later years, but with no striking new perceptions. Also, there is limited attention to the subject's writings other than correspondence, journals, and administrative documents. The *History* is summarized in a single, abstract paragraph describing the historian as "the most authoritative interpreter of what was then the world's unchallenged superpower" without attempting to convey his interpretation (213). "Lord Clive" and "Warren Hastings" are drawn upon for background information, but few other essays are mentioned. The author acknowledges that his subject was a "cultural racist by today's standards" (xv) but does not analyze his prejudices in depth, since such "unashamed ethnic stereotyping was commonplace for its time" (145).

Masani's elite, cosmopolitan status does not, however, lead him to disregard the contributions of native intellectuals of Macaulay's era or the effect of Macaulay's work on underprivileged Indians since then. As to whether the English statesman and the Hindu reformer Raja Ram Moha Roy, whose thoughts on universal human rights had parallels, actually interacted, about which Hall does not comment and Sullivan is skeptical, Masani, while judging the evidence inconclusive, leaves the question open. Similarly, he describes at greater length than Sullivan or Hall Bengali renaissance groups associated from the 1820s with Hindu College in Calcutta, which sought to reconcile Western thought and a revised Hinduism. By the time Macaulay arrived to join Governor-General Bentinck's administration, Masani observes, Indian demand for Western oriented studies was rapidly increasing. The Indian writer also devotes more attention than his American and British predecessors to the continuing celebration of Macaulay as a "saviour" by many "Dalits," the "untouchables" of traditional caste discrimination, for the emancipatory opportunities fostered by his educational efforts (xii).

Otherwise, *Macaulay: Britain's Liberal Imperialist* focuses on the title figure's work as an administrative official and legislator in and

concerning India, and as a theorist of the British Empire's future on the subcontinent and possibly beyond. Regarding the major steps in these roles, Masani is consistently affirmative, without the reservations and qualifications characteristic of Sullivan and Hall. His analysis of Macaulay's 10 July 1833 parliamentary speech provides a broad overview of the values and objectives that the speaker was to take with him to India (countering his own later claim that he only went for the money). The author describes Macaulay as anticipating a future "age of globalization through free trade," perhaps bearing too hard on a single reference to "the vast population of the East" in a speech otherwise definitely focused upon "the people of India" (45). Similarly, the reader may wish the claim that a passage "sounds remarkably modern in its anticipation of the language and rhetoric of twentieth and twenty-first century Western interventions everywhere from Sierra Leone to Iraq and Afghanistan" was supported by recent verbal examples (46). But though Masani does assert a relationship between the 1833 speech and the rhetoric of modern encroachments, he does not claim that Macaulay is responsible for any deplorable subsequent consequences or that such later developments undermine the value of his work in India (46).

Concerning Macaulay's efforts there on behalf of freedom of the press and equality of Western and native litigants in the courts, all three writers are affirmative, the Indian one most emphatically so. As for the Indian Penal Code, Masani declares that "Macaulay's humanitarian thinking" made it "the most liberal and humane of its time, in some respects more so than English criminal law" (117). He quotes the passage stressing that "we are legislating for them" (138) as wholly enlightened, without sharing Hall's concern that difference is therein "demarcated" (234). And though he mentions Macaulay's provision for banishment rather than imprisonment of convicted English malefactors, also disturbing to Hall, he balances that by noting the Code's insistence on respecting Indian religious sentiments and practices, however offensive to the English. As for Macaulay's work on reform of Indian Civil Service entrance examinations, far from sharing Sullivan's view that he and his

committee conspired to contrive a self-consciously hegemonic English élite, Masani considers it evidence that he “remained ardently committed to the task of providing them with the best administration that Britain could offer; and his efforts resulted in an Indian Civil Service far superior in education, talent, and integrity to Britain’s own domestic service, for which it later became the model” (206-7).

The Indian writer’s most resounding acclamation, however, is for the Minute on Education itself. Though he earlier included a guarded reference to modern interventions “whatever one might think of their underlying motivation or practical outcomes” (46), the Minute is now described as having become the template of liberal imperialism across the world and one of the most important and controversial political documents of the nineteenth-century. It outlined an imperial mission more ambitious and global than any since ancient Rome. India was to become the crucible in which the British Empire would create a new, modern, rational and scientific society, Indian in ethnicity but British in education, values, thinking and – most important of all – language (102).

In his “Epilogue,” Masani summarizes what he considers the outcome of the Victorian’s work for education in the imperial tongue: in addition to facilitating the emancipation of the Dalits; English fostered communication and cohesion when competing states adhered to regional vernaculars; the rapidly-growing English-educated middle class is India’s best resource for progress as a democracy and an economy. “English remains indispensable for technical education,” Masani adds, quoting historian Ramchandra Guha, ““The software revolution in India might never have happened had it not been for Macaulay’s Minute”” (235).

These opinions are of particular interest as those of an Indian person, of course, but it should be noted that they are not shared by all Indians or observers of India. The 2014 “Election Manifesto” of the Bharatiya Janata Party, for example, calls for promotion of Indian languages as repositories of the country’s cultural and scientific heritage and to create “a knowledge society” [Sec. 41] <<http://www.bjp.org/manifesto2014>. Other internal opposition positions are mentioned in G.I.V. Prasad, “A Minute Stretching

Into Centuries: Macaulay, English, and India,” *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Fall 2006), 175- 96 [especially 187ff.]. Further conflicting views, not all from Indians themselves, appear in Niall Gillespie, “John Bull Knows Best. “Rev. of *Macaulay: Britain’s Liberal Imperialist*, by Zareer Masani. *Dublin Review of Books* 21 October 2013, and the reviewer’s reply to Masani’s response to his review, Gillespie, Niall. Blogspot. 6 January 2014 <<http://niallgillespie.blogspot/>>

Macaulay has become the most controversial figure among the major Victorian prose writers, regarding not his work’s content but its influence. The books reviewed here are more convincing apropos of his lifetime than beyond. Masani describes the Education Minute as providing the basis for a “distinctively British” conception of imperial purpose, before adding that after nearly two hundred years its fundamental principles sanction “Anglo-American” interference in troubled areas (98). Hall describes undertaking her study of Macaulay to clarify why the English public so uncritically followed Tony Blair’s call to enter Iraq, without noting that 9/11, Terrorism, and the supposed “weapons of mass destruction” introduced an issue of “national security” not anticipated in Macaulay’s speeches or Minute. The extent to which Blair’s rhetoric draws upon Macaulay as distinguishable from George Bush’s writers or Dick Cheney is not explored within Hall’s text. But her study remains valuable in avoiding either demonization or canonization of Macaulay, focusing less on individual agency than definition of problems intrinsic to imperialism. And despite Sullivan’s hanging-judge stance elsewhere, he makes substantial contributions in his examinations of early nineteenth-century Anglican thought and Macaulay’s classical reading.

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