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Deimperialization – How Would I Understand That?

For close to five years now I have been trying to understand Kuan-Hsing's idea of deimperialization from here, in Bangalore: a new city looking to global ambition. First question: do I see it from the side of a nation that used to be subject to an imperial power some time ago, and respond from the view of a comfortable nationalism? Even if I did that, would I see the ongoing consequences of, say, Partition, as constituting the unfinished business of deimperialization at this end? Or, perhaps, would I leave all that aside and address the new problems of imperialization, posed by India's new efforts to show muscle in the South Asian subcontinent? Or would this new imperialization be the deimperialization of the earlier version? Is there some need for a de- then to be always followed by a re-? I think the more significant question, to which Kuan-Hsing so relentlessly draws our attention, is to see these large historical issues - such as imperialism, nationalism, colonialism – not as settled classifications that we all know about but as tendencies, spaces for contest, each folding into its alter-ego. Kuan-Hsing has singlehandedly introduced me not only to the complex terrain of East Asia, but to issues that I had simply not associated with the settled linearity of Indian nationalism, and which seem so completely unsettled as I see it through his lens.