

# A Turn to Empire

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## A TURN TO EMPIRE

THE RISE OF IMPERIAL LIBERALISM IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE



JENNIFER PITTS

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A dramatic shift in British and French ideas about empire unfolded in the sixty years straddling the turn of the nineteenth century. As Jennifer Pitts shows in "A Turn to Empire", Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, and Jeremy Bentham were among many at the start of this period to criticize European empires as unjust, as well as politically and economically disastrous for the conquering nations. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the most prominent British and French liberal thinkers, including John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville, vigorously supported the conquest of non-European people. Pitts explains that this reflected a rise in civilizational self-confidence, as theories of human progress became more triumphalist, less nuanced, and less tolerant of cultural difference. At the same time, imperial expansion abroad came to be seen as a political project that might assist the emergence of stable liberal democracies within Europe. Pitts shows that liberal thinkers usually celebrated for respecting not only human equality and liberty but also pluralism supported an inegalitarian and decidedly nonhumanitarian international politics. Yet, such moments represent not a necessary feature of liberal thought but a striking departure from views shared by precisely those late-eighteenth-century thinkers whom Mill and Tocqueville saw as their forebears. Fluently written, "A Turn to Empire" offers a novel assessment of modern political thought and international justice, and an illuminating perspective on continuing debates over empire, intervention, and liberal political commitments.

作者简介:

珍妮弗·皮茨, 哈佛大学政治学博士, 美国芝加哥大学政治系副教授。《阿列克西·德·托克维尔: 有关帝国与奴隶制的著作》一书的编辑和译者。

封底语:

珍妮弗·皮茨……通过展示18世纪和19世纪早期杰出的英法自由主义者对于帝国主义的深刻批判, 表明了对帝国主义的支持并非自由主义所固有的特征。……该书行文优美, 治学不同凡响。

——《选择》(Choice)

每一页都体现了研究的深度、通俗易懂的文风和敏锐的才思, 该书是一个布局均衡且天衣无缝的整体, 揭示了帝国对于现代自由主义起源的影响。它不仅对政治理论家来说是一部头等重要的著作, 对哲学、历史及文学读者而言也同样如此。

——大卫·阿米蒂奇, 哈佛大学, 《大英帝国的意识形态起源》(The Ideological Origins of the British Empire) 的作者

这本内容丰富、促人思考的著作, 审视了一个目前在政治理论、国际关系及欧洲历史等领域都令人极感兴趣的课题。它值得并且应该得到广泛的阅读。其中的学术研究既细致入微, 又令人信服, 而皮茨的行文也引人入胜。随着分析的展开, 希望理解何种因素导致某位理论家拒绝或支持对外征服的激情, 既推动着皮茨的叙述, 也令读者欲罢不能。

——谢里尔·韦尔奇, 西蒙斯学院, 《自由与功利》(Liberty and Utility) 的作者

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## 标签

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政治哲学

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经济，思想史

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政治思想史

## 评论

比Muthu的那本好不了多少。作者没有试图去探究这个"Turn"的可能原因，并且完全没有讨论书中所提到的早期对帝国进行批判的思想对具体的帝国实践有什么影响。以义理式的方法试图阐释这么大的一个问题，恐怕略嫌简单粗暴了一点。

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## 书评

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