



GETTY

made people healthier (a dubious claim given the practice of adding sugar), more hard-working and, above all, sober. As William Cowper wrote, it provided cups that “cheer but do not inebriate”. Rappaport may overestimate the impact of such propaganda, for popular habits and culture were largely impervious to preaching, and it is more likely that it was the positive attractions of a convenient and satisfying brew that led to the British becoming fond of tea. But what sort of tea?

Tea for most Britons meant tea from China, and as this book demonstrates, it took decades of advertising to persuade consumers to switch to the products of the empire’s plantations and to establish as both normal and patriotic the purchase of tea from India or Ceylon, thus enabling a more prosperous consumer society to underpin the expansion and profitability of the empire. By the 20th century, tea linked producers and consumers, includ-

ing Indian workers, London traders and the expanding chain stores of British retailers in a complex imperial economy. The British self-image became that of a nation addicted to its cuppa at the head of an imperial family of tea drinkers, an image that underpinned the war effort in both world wars.

This remarkable synthesis of imperial and consumer history concludes that, even after the end of the empire, the tea trade survived as a major force in the post-colonial world and in a global economy where, if Europe-based multinationals such as Unilever still control most of the trade, they have been joined as rulers of the empire of tea by India’s Tata conglomerate.

A. W. Purdue is a visiting professor of history at Northumbria University and is co-author, with **J. M. Golby**, of *The Civilisation of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England 1750-1900* (1984 and 1999).

The Last of the Light: About Twilight

Peter Davidson

Reaktion Books

A bold attempt to “map the territories of the dusk”, Peter Davidson’s book ranges widely across Western literature, painting and even music while also drawing extensively on his own experiences of seeing landscapes transformed by the late afternoon light. In seeking to define the changing moods and sensibilities associated with twilight, he explores a particular strand of “English melancholy”, the effects of shadows in the garden, the complex feelings associated with cities in the evening and the haunting atmosphere of fireworks and reflected light. With many striking extracts from poetry and fiction both well-known and obscure, *The Last of the Light* offers a highly unusual contribution to cultural history.

The Asshole Survival Guide: How to Deal with People Who Treat You Like Dirt

Robert I. Sutton

Penguin Books

Robert Sutton, a professor in Stanford University’s department of management science and engineering, believes in telling it how it is: many of our problems in life come from having to cope with “assholes” of various kinds. An earlier book on creating civilised workplaces attracted a huge postbag from people asking him about what they could do as individuals, so he has distilled his insights into guidance on “how to assess, escape, endure, fight, and force out bullies, backstabbers, and arses”. “Survival strategies” include everything from “mak[ing] a clean getaway” to “fighting back” by way of “mind tricks to protect your soul”.

The Language of Global Success: How a Common Tongue Transforms Multinational Organizations

Tsedal Neeley

Princeton University Press

In 2010, Hiroshi Mikitani, head of the Japanese e-commerce giant Rakuten, announced that communication within the company would henceforth be in English. To assess the impact, Tsedal Neeley did surveys and interviews all over the world. Native Japanese speakers based in Japan suddenly found “their daily work experiences fraught with language challenges”. Initially pleased anglophones soon discovered that “the shift to their native language ironically opened the door to [more Japanese] organizational practices”. Those who had to take on both a new language and new cultural practices often proved the most adaptable. This analysis offers sharp insights for any multinational thinking about adopting a “lingua franca”.

Uneasy Street: The Anxieties of Affluence

Rachel Sherman

Princeton University Press

“Scott” and “Olivia” have a flat worth \$4.5 million (£3.9 million), yet wonder if they “really want to live in such a fancy place”. They recall leaving a broken door unrepaired, as if determined to keep their lifestyle “just a little bit uncomfortable”. Like most of the elite New Yorkers interviewed for this book, they are deeply conflicted about “how to be both wealthy and morally worthy”. Although it is easy to judge the rich for such “anxieties”, Rachel Sherman suggests that this often distracts us from examining the wider “systems of distribution that produce inequality”.

The Foreigner: Two Essays on Exile

Richard Sennett

Notting Hill Editions

Since he wrote these essays, Richard Sennett explains in the introduction to this new edition, he has “become involved in urban planning work for the United Nations” and come into contact with the migrants who “flood into the giant cities of the developing world” in their tens of millions and need to find ways of “making sense of displacement”. The rest of the book explores how the Jews of Renaissance Venice forged new identities for themselves in Europe’s first modern ghetto and how the radical 19th-century Russian aristocrat, Alexander Herzen, “struggled to understand himself as a permanently unwanted, homeless individual”. Such historical examples, hopes Sennett, can “help illuminate the present”.

Matthew Reisz