

Reflected by the Atlantic – A N Donaldson & Thomas Munby

'We, my dear Crossman, are Greeks in this American empire. You will find the Americans much like the Greeks found the Romans...'

(Harold Macmillan, describing to Richard Crossman the relations between British and Americans at Allied Forces HQ, North Africa)

“Reflected by the Atlantic” is an on-going project to explore the curiosities and complexities of the relationship between Britain and the USA through a series of miniature biographies. Inspired by Plutarch’s ancient “Parallel Lives” of prominent Greeks and Romans, it will pair noteworthy Britons with Americans who occupy parallel places in their national story.

Over two and a half centuries, the culture of the two English-speaking powers has grown apart. But not that far apart: cosmopolitan and monolingual, libertarian and legalistic, scientific and anti-intellectual, capitalist and demotic, idealistic and imperialist. The individual details of similar lives, lived on opposite sides of the Atlantic, offer a mirror in which each side might choose to see some reflections of itself.

Founding Principles - John Locke and (pending) Thomas Jefferson

Between revolutionising Metaphysics and battling with an unfortunate complaint, John Locke became the most influential intellectual figure of the British Enlightenment, whose ideas more than anyone’s shaped the British political system. But the application of his theories to his own life casts grave doubts on the validity of any biography. Jefferson, more than any of the other Founding Fathers, stamped his character on the new nation of America, but his personal life did not always live up to his ideals.

'Locke... in his different personas... could claim to be at least two of the greatest men who ever lived. In every guise he suffered terribly with his bowels.'

Imperial Follies: - Reginald Dyer and William "Rusty" Calley

Reginald Dyer and ‘Rusty’ Calley were respectively the perpetrators of the Amritsar massacre and the My Lai massacres, perhaps the most publicised atrocities committed the course of British engagement in India and American engagement in Vietnam. Motivated by a confused sense of duty, both men returned home to official sanctions but became popular heroes among a general public at the height of its imperial hubris.

'Dyer led a 3-man strike force in the Rolls Royce...' *'Could it be I did something wrong?'*