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Edmund Burke. *On Empire, Liberty, and Reform: Speeches and Letters.* Edited by David Bromwich. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. 526 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-300-08147-3.

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The historical usage of Edmund Burke's reputation in the years since his death in 1797 in one sense bears a remarkable resemblance to the search for the Historical Jesus (or for that matter Karl Marx). Such was the perceived impact of Burke's contribution to various and sundry levels of human activity that different generations and numerous political or social causes are apt to seek and then find the Edmund Burke they desire. Hence, in the twentieth century, we had a Liberal Burke, a Conservative Burke, an Anti-Bolshevik/Cold Warrior Burke, a Catholic Burke, a Gay Burke, and even, surreptitiously, a Nazi Burke. It is therefore hardly surprising that the first major anthology of Burke's speeches and letters for the new century, superbly edited by the noted eighteenth-century scholar David Bromwich, should have a definite bias towards a Burke who speaks to an age which values multi-culturalism and which is busy reintegrating the study of British imperialism back into its academic curriculum. Presumably, the matter of 1789-1989 now seems of less importance with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of European totalitarianism. Thus, in a five hundred page book, only around seventy pages are devoted to Burke's letters or speeches on French revolutionary affairs. Ireland too, and Burke's epistolary attacks on the Protestant Ascendancy, possibly of diminished interest after the Good Friday Agreement, gets decidedly short shrift. The vast majority of the book eschews Burke's thoughts on European affairs and gazes towards what the British used to term "beyond the seas." Those students and scholars interested in Edmund Burke's meditations on the American Revolution, the nature of eighteenth-century imperialism, and, above all, his long struggle against Warren Hastings and the East India Company, will be decidedly rewarded by a perusal of *On Empire, Liberty, and Reform.* Burke himself might well have approved the economy on Europe and the largesse on India. A few months before his death, he asserted his belief that of all the great causes of his eventful life, that against "Indianism" was the most important.

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