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Bonnie G. Smith. *Modern Empires: A Reader.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 416 pp. $29.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-19-937592-9.

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A huge body of literature has grown around the theme of empires and it is no easy task to put together a volume that covers over five centuries of the history of empires across the world. Bonnie Smith has selected extracts from the pronouncements of empire builders as well as the responses of those who experienced the consequences, whether as leaders, slaves, soldiers, women, or subalterns. Inevitably, any selection of extracts will leave many area specialists disappointed. But for those interested in a global perspective this collection is a very valuable introduction.

The principal virtue of this book is that it presents an eclectic selection that can be used by undergraduates and their teachers with widely varying ideological perspectives. The twelve chapters of this book are chronologically arranged but the chapters themselves are organized on the basis of the dominant feature of the period. The introductions to the chapters and the headnotes before each extract provide the basic background for understanding the text that follows. The author has critiqued the greed and ambitions of the empire builders and more traditional Eurocentric views of empire; highlighted violence, plunder, and exploitation by the imperial powers; and incorporated women's viewpoints.

Tracking the emergence of empires since 1450, Smith has identified the Ottomans, Mongols, Russians, and Chinese in Asia; the Portuguese, Spanish, and Americans in the New World; and the British, French and other European powers in Asia and Africa. Modern world history has been shaped by the rise and fall of these empires as much as by industrialization and the rise of nation-states. She has tried to capture the "unfolding history of interactions" (p. 10) among peoples across the world using well-crafted headnotes before each extract. She shows how empires have contributed to globalization, migrations, and the movement of goods and ideas across the world, but more extracts are needed to give the reader a stronger sense of these worldwide interactions and interconnections.

Some extracts from the work of economists and economic historians could be added to bolster frequent references to the economic exploitation by imperial powers. A valuable collection of extracts can be found in a book by Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik (***The World that Trade Created: Society, Culture and the World Economy, 1400 to the Present***, 2006). Alternatively, the author could write separate comments, longer than the headnotes, on the maps in the book. These could be on the enslavement of Africans (map 3) and on the movement of commodities like sugar, cotton, and silver (maps 4, 7, and 9). Would it make sense to include extracts from Pomeranz on

the great divergence and Sanjay Subrahmanyam on connected histories? Although Adam Smith was unable to foresee the benefits or misfortunes accruing from the discovery of America and the sea route to India, he thought that the "general tendency would seem to be beneficial" (p. 160). The economics of empire—discussions of the costs and benefits of empire in the imperial centers as well as the economic critique of imperial exploitation in the periphery—deserve greater attention, even in a general history of empire.

There are extracts from imperialists like Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Robert Clive, and Commodore Perry. Castillo, who took part in the conquest of Mexico between 1519 and 1521, wrote about the Aztec emperor Monteczuma and Malinche, who aided the Spanish in their conquests. A reference to Stephen Greenblatt's discussion of the conquest of Mexico and the role of Malinche or Dona Marina could be made in the headnote (***Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World***, 1992). In general, the headnotes could refer to well-known works to help the reader in further research. The observations of Bartolomo de Las Casas could be introduced by referring to Walter Mignolo's work (***Local Histories/Global Designs***, 2012).

Although the bibliography at the end of the book is helpful some of the arguments of these books could be incorporated in the headnotes quite profitably. The Inca Empire gets a testimonial from Pedro de Cieza de Leon, who recorded with admiration in 1540 the order and prosperity maintained by its rulers over vast territories. Smith goes so far as to suggest that works like the ***Chronicles of the Incas*** by Leon "provided food for thought about government, society, culture, and the economy " in Europe (p. 129).

The complex impact of colonial conquest on indigenous people is dealt with in a manner that reveals the influence of postcolonial writings. Smith writes that "sacrifice was central to the Aztecs and other groups in the region as it was in fact to Christianity" (p. 49). Of course, there were differences too. Although the Laws of the Confederacy of the Iroquis Indians were familiar to the framers of the American Constitution—laws which were formulated because of Hiawatha's initiatives to achieve peace—the author argues that they were perceived as savages to justify violence against them. Citing Garcilaso dela Vega, the son of an Inca princess and a Spanish aristocrat, who wrote based on the accounts of his Inca relatives, Smith comments that marriages between the conquistadors and local noble women were "not always done on Spanish terms" (p. 75). She uses this text from 1609 to argue that it is doubtful whether "the Spanish (or later imperialists) were ever fully in control of people they were said to have 'conquered'" (p. 75).

Women get their due in this collection. Elite figures like the queen of Hawaii, Liliuokalani, who was coerced into abdicating power, and Golda Meir, the prime minister of Israel, who claimed that the Jews did not steal the lands from the Arabs are included. There is also an excerpt from the diary of Fadwa Tuqan, a Palestinian poet, whose opposition to the repression of women made her unacceptable to many Palestinian Arabs. In her headnote to the extract from an address by Qiu Jin, the Chinese reformer, Bonnie Smith points out that "in many instances women had more rights outside the west" (p. 257). The argument did not find much purchase because colonial powers claimed that it was their rule that promoted better treatment of women. On the other hand, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan listed at least eight "superior advantages the Asiatic women enjoy over the European" in the "Vindication of the Liberties of the Asiatic Women" in 1801 (p. 170).

Evidence of both exploitation and resistance is included in the book. There is the testimony of Ch'oe Il-rye, a comfort woman during the Second World War and that of a South African trade union activist, Emma Mashinini. The devastating impact of the influenza epidemic in Africa is culled

from a novel by Buchi Emecheta. Smith argues that women took advantages of "courts, churches and schools" in French Algeria just as they had done in the earlier Spanish Empire. Using an extract from the autobiography of Fadhma Amrouche, a Berber woman in French Algeria, she makes a case for the "mixed experiences" of those women who had access to French culture and education (p. 230).

The author points out the contradiction in the attitude of Clive while justifying the conquest of Bengal. The British justified taking over a region "whose talented and active population" had created considerable wealth because its lazy people "did not deserve the wealth that their talent had created" (p. 147). Smith has chapter introductions that reveal a radical critique of imperialism. She writes that British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's "racist" attitude towards Indians was responsible for the deaths of three million people during the Second World War. He stripped India of its crops and refused offers of grain from America and Australia "saying that ordinary Indians were already over-stuffed with food" (pp. 315, 316). An extract to support this point would have been quite valuable. Mainstream scholars explain Churchill's policy in terms of his hostility to the Congress, Indian nationalism, and Gandhi.

For the last few chapters dealing with anticolonial movements and their spokesmen, the extracts are primarily from major figures. The responses to colonial rule could be varied—with calls for Muslim unity and Pan-Islamism as well as modernization by figures like Jamal al-din Afghani and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk respectively. Statements and speeches of iconic figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Ho Chi Minh, Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, and Nelson Mandela are appropriate, but there may be some reason to reconsider the choice of extracts. Mao Zedong's thoughts on New Democracy or an account of the Long March would have been more valuable in understanding anti-imperialism than one celebrating the founding of the People's Republic of China. The statement by Gandhi in 1942 explaining his decision to launch a movement asking the British to quit India is well chosen. On the other hand his response to questions by an American journalist in 1924 regarding nonviolent noncooperation could be replaced by an extract from ***Hind Swaraj*** of 1909, which is a very substantial work. Besides, Smith erroneously states that Mohandas Gandhi was born to prosperous "Jain parents" (p. 293) and that "when pilgrims gathered at a shrine in Amritsar"—referring to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919—the British attacked the pilgrims and activists (p. 285). These are the sort of errors that area specialists can find disconcerting but would pass unnoticed by a nonspecialist.

There are several extracts on slavery and exploitation. The late eighteenth-century diary of Antera Duke, the "only known diary of an African slave merchant," describes the everyday lives and practices of African slavers and white ship captains (p. 121). A report of the French government claimed that the Bambara in Senegal were "as good as white soldiers" (p. 207). This is comparable to the British preference for certain "martial races" after the revolt of 1857 in India. The British however, could recruit soldiers for their armies in India more easily than the French in parts of Africa. In Senegal, African captives were enticed by the offer of freedom if they were willing to serve in the French colonial army for several years. This was after the legal end to slavery. Anthony Trollope, a writer and traveler, describing the workers in the diamond mines of South Africa observed, "they seem always to be good-humoured, always well-behaved,—but then they are always thieves" (quoted, p. 220).

Jomo Kenyatta, the Kenyan nationalist, asserted in 1937 that the British had destroyed the democratic culture and traditions of the Kikuyu ethnic group. He fought for independence, the restoration of precolonial democracy, and Pan-Africanism. In dealing with the "villagization" policy

adopted by the British government in Kenya to suppress the Mau Mau uprising, an extract from the memoir of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is used with telling effect. Under this policy villagers in central Kenya were herded into concentration camps and villages to isolate the guerrillas in the mountains. He writes, "The inmates of the concentration camps were mostly men, those in the concentration villages mostly women and children" (quoted, p. 338). On the other hand, memoirs of Senegalese soldiers reveal that they felt that their participation in the First World War had enhanced their status in the eyes of their white rulers. This "respect" increased steadily until they achieved independence (p. 276).

Modern Empires is a substantial selection of extracts spanning five centuries of world history. Bonnie Smith has tried to establish interconnections between events and regions, capture the diversity of responses to empire, and trace the flow of ideas back and forth. If the book does not fully succeed in its objective I cannot recall any other single volume covering as much ground. It will spur other scholars to produce more interdisciplinary global histories of empire.