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**Opoku Agyeman. *Power, Powerlessness and Globalization: Contemporary Politics in the Global South*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014. 178 pp. ISBN: 9780739195215. \ \$80.00.**

Nanda Kishor

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“self-conscious cultural brokers” who acted in international port environments where the modern nation-state has little to no control over agents’ interactions. Another aspect of spatial interactions in this book is the circulation of people as part of empire building. As Tony Ballantyne demonstrates, whalers and sealers had their economic behavior and social practices intertwined within the “webs of empire” before the formal British Empire was established in New Zealand.

Cecilia Morgan’s chapter unveils interesting views about the British Empire by studying the personal correspondences between members of a family dispersed all over the world and through the circulation of letters from Britain to fur trade posts, to the Red River Colony and to Australia. These letters from children to their mothers give us insight “from below” into people’s subjectivities. Generally speaking, the authors of the essays in this collection have not made conventional use of colonial archives in the usual sense since most their sources were not state-produced. Caroline Bresseley highlights the agency of four coloured women through their daily intervention recorded in newspaper advertisements and in their personal letters to authorities. Clare Anderson explores prisons as spaces where people from all kinds of backgrounds, cultures and languages interacted. She manages to get a glimpse of this challenging environment through the study of particular types of sources: reports of prison discipline and complaints by prison keepers, prisoners and their families.

Despite the methodological challenges posed by their choice of sources, which are sometimes marked by more “gaps than lines”, this collection succeeds in demonstrating how “non-elite” individuals made use of writings and/or performances and the ways they could affect them and why. We discover how these non-state actors—whether local, foreigner, indigenous, or otherwise—played key roles in the establishment of the British and, surely, other European empires. This collection of essays opens up world history to more complex viewpoints by paving the way for the use of innovative and alternative sources to create fresh perspectives on new agents who fill voids left by traditional historiography. The authors leave behind the models of western knowledge diffusion through the classic center-periphery system and, instead, insist upon focusing on relations across social, cultural and linguistic boundaries. Such a perspective leads to a vision of the British Empire that is both trans-national and cross-cultural.

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Opoku Agyeman. *Power, Powerlessness and Globalization: Contemporary Politics in the Global South*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014. 178 pp. ISBN: 9780739195215. \$80.00.

This book offers telling evidence that not just imperialism and colonialism but also the human race bares the brunt of humiliations beyond imagination in the existence of humans themselves. It is a fine balance between truth and facts. The author makes a clear distinction between truth, which has different perspectives, and facts, which speak by themselves. Every argument made in the book shatters the glory of the developed nations of the “north” being constructed on the graves of the oppressed “south”. In the introduction to the book, the author quotes Kenneth Waltz’s statement that “weakness invites control” (1) and sets the tenor for the intellectual endeavour of his project. The project is simple, yet in-depth, in its analysis on the dehumanising aspects of imperialism that trigger dignitist politics as a core

objective. The author sketches out dealings with Asia, Latin America and Africa, in addition to testing the theories, praxis and institutions that are instrumental to contemporary globalisation. The book's introduction chapter is one of the best within the intellectual arena of academic writing in recent times. It lays down the preamble of the author's project and refers to some of the finest works to justify its arguments. This fact justifies the tagline of the book "imperialism-driven globalization" (4).

The subsequent chapter, on Asia, does not hold the same zeal and research rigor as the introductory chapter. It opens with remarks about Japan and then deals with East Asia, China and India with only a few contradictions. The author makes reference to imperialism imposed on Japan by the United States after World War II and, later in the section on China, subtly refers to Japan as (but does not call it) imperialist and justifies that it was due to the European powers that Japan utilised to defeat China (17). The author refers to the resistance by Mao and his followers towards U.S. imperialist tendencies but forgets to critically analyse capitalism existing in present day China in the garb of communism. Since the sections on East Asia and India offer no new revelations and cover facts already often written about, they are not particularly exceptional when compared to this book's chapters on Latin America and Africa. Nonetheless, some statistics on the economic condition of the Asian counties prior to imperialism and colonialism are of great help to those researching Asia and even to the general public. The chapter on Latin America, though rich in its analysis, lacks coherence as the author tries to profile the countries in a standard comparative approach first proceeding to describe the influence of the U.S. on ten selected countries of Latin America. This approach to the study leaves the readers to think as to what would be the methodological justification the author would give for the selection of these countries and for leaving out other colonisers and imperialists who equally had brutalized Latin America. There are quite a few speculations and conspiracy theories that the author throws at the reader with regard to U.S. assassination and coup attempts, both planned and successful (39). The sections of the book dealing with post-colonial resistance and finding new paths to sustain and reject the world's gigantic financial institutions by Latin American countries is an eye opener to present day neo-colonised nations. Latin America's tilt at neoliberalism is a short section but finely written with an excellent analysis. Needless to say, the whole chapter is an outcome of thorough research and this speaks volumes about the experience of an author with astonishing expertise and skill to handle the subject of neo-colonialism and globalisation.

The chapter titled "Africa: Powerlessness and Slavocracy" is the most important, particularly in a world where Africa often does not matter more than what resources it offers and/or as an example for the world's most undignified matters. The chapter opens with a note on civilisations and the place of Africa in the world history, with exemplary references to works that range from anthropological to ancient history and geography. The revelations made in the book on how a particular race is treated in the history and how it is being treated today has scathing similarities. They remind one that the present state of affairs are not much different from the past when we analyse the world response to the Charlie Hebdo incident in Paris and the brutalities of Boko Haram (which recently killed an estimated 2,000 people in the town of Baga) Nigeria. The author's definition of "slavocracy" as a "mindset that exudes a conviction about one's own inferiority ... that one's only purpose in life is to play up sycophantically to non-African 'human superiors' in ways that guarantee access to the cherished goods and services produced by their higher culture and civilization" (88) speaks volumes and is an empathetic call for the world to treat race in Africa, the basis for heinous crimes in the name of slavery,

with dignity. This part of the book, by one of the finest scholars on African and Pan-African affairs, is nothing but astonishing.

Chapter four, on the claimed Western thoughts of liberalism, realism and farm subsidies, encompasses several summits that range from the Havana Charter, to the first global trade agreement of 2013, is finely analysed to scrutinize the reality, as against the perceived notion, of the Global South. The concluding chapter on the U.S./E.U. conflict of the 1990's and the role of the WTO in it, critically analyses a conflict that had an impact on the Global South. This conflict not only provoked nations beyond imagination but also reveals a hidden cost on the environment in Latin America. The author could have had a better conclusion to his summing up of thoughts about neo-colonialism through globalisation and how world politics needs to learn to treat countries with dignity rather than treating them as types of economy.

Overall, Agyemen's book epitomizes a new beginning in the field of power and powerlessness in the present world. The scholarship that the author has exhibited through this work should inspire new generations of scholars to work on highly controversial subjects of great importance, a practice that is becoming increasingly rarity these days. For sure, this work would go a long way in understanding a phenomenon that has invariably affected the lives of each and every one in the global South. The book is rare, daring and perfect in an academia that too often drifts towards choosing subjects of comfort.

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## ASIA

Cassie Adcock. *The Limits of Tolerance: Indian Secularism and the Politics of Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 233 pp. \$35.00. ISBN: 9780199995448.

Writing the history of secularism in India is as fraught a task as writing the history of liberalism, the history of socialism, or the history of nationalism. Like these three other concepts, secularism implies both a set of ideas as well as practices that relate back, at some level, to the European origin point of these ideas. For their appearance in colonial India, historians have been offering a variety of interpretations that seek to both situate India in its own history but to come to terms with encounters with ideas that emerged elsewhere. Cassie Adcock's *The Limits of Tolerance: Indian Secularism and the Politics of Religious Freedom* is one of the latest contributions in the ongoing debates about the nature and history of secularism in India.

Through three parts of two chapters each, Adcock takes her readers on a critical history of secularism in India through the particular history of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab in the northwest of India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As a manifesto about the historiography of secularism and at the same time a history of the Arya Samaj, the book offers an intellectual history of the term religion in colonial India and the historical results of the emergence of this term in the specific context of the colonial Punjab.

She begins in her introduction with a brief analysis of the tendency for scholars to declare that Tolerance (used in Adcock's text with a capital T) functions as a discourse that played a