

Two Essay QUESTIONS for Essay 3
Ancient and Pre-modern
Empires in World History or Cosmopolitanism
(Choose one or the other to write about)

(100 points)

1. Using one of the ancient or pre-modern empires as an example (Sargon of Akkad's empire, Old or New Babylonian, Tutmose III, Ramses II, Hittite, Assyrian, Persian, Athenian, Hellenistic, Mauryan- Chandragupta I or Ashoka, Gupta, Chin, Han, Tang, Sung, Carthaginian, Roman, Byzantine, Sassanian, Parthian, Macedonian, Carolingian, Bulgarian, Abbasid, Almohad, Almoravid, Mongolian, Kanem, Mali, Ghana, Songhai, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Khmer, Burmese, Teotihuacán, Aztec, Incan, Mayan) tell **whether you think the moral costs of conquering the empire justified the benefits received from the empire.**

Your essay should contain 5 paragraphs:

First paragraph: Thesis statement with your own answer to the essay question. To help you make up your mind, see three handout readings.

Second paragraph: Very briefly describe how the empire was conquered.

Third paragraph: Briefly describe how the empire was ruled (whether the imperial class exploited wealth and resources of conquered people or whether they invested in infrastructure and beneficial improvements, how conquered peoples were treated, etc.)

Fourth paragraph: Give main reasons for the fall of the empire and

Fifth paragraph: Conclusion using the following three readings and the background information included below to make up your mind whether or not you think the empire was justified.

Three readings:

The “**Melian Dialogue**” in the History of the Peloponnesian Wars by **Thucydides**. This is the discussion between the Athenians and Melians when the Athenians were trying to persuade Melians to join their imperial league. This is a realist argument. Realists assert war should be entered into

and fought according to “practical” considerations. They reject the need for a moral evaluation.

Facing the Myth of Redemptive Violence by Walter Wink, a Christian theologian, condemns the use of violence even though violence has been legitimized and justified for thousands of years.

Recessional by Rudyard Kipling questions if empire is justified in the long run.

Background Information on Empire

Empire can be defined as political and economic rule over a large territory by an emperor. Ambitious emperors had large military organizations and up-to-date weaponry and could plunder vast areas and exert control over indigenous peoples and their resources. Empires were typically ruled from a capital city where the imperial family and their attendants live in palaces with servants, fine clothing, choice foods, and exotic, luxury goods.

Empires have had positive and negative consequences in history.

Positive Aspects of Empire

When we discuss the positive elements of empires we see that they have **brought together diverse peoples who learned from each other**. This **collective learning** led to synergies which fostered new technologies, new ways of organizing, and new knowledge of spiritual beliefs, art, stories, and foods.

Empires fostered trade that was more extensive and dynamic than in earlier eras when people lived in smaller, more isolated communities. In this way, empires integrated regions and brought people together. Often emperors built roads, ports, and market places to insure survival and prosperity.

Empires were also constructed for security. They followed policies which would deter enemies and, in the event of attack and invasion, they fought back.

Well-known **pro-imperialists** who have justified empire are Thucydides, Machiavelli, Kautilya, and Li Si. Pro-imperialists assume empire is not a choice, but a necessity.

Negative Aspects of Empire

When we discuss the negative aspects of empires, we see that the **conquering** of empires was a brutal affair. It included massacres, slaughters, appropriation of land, plundering, forced labor and forced migrations. Empire builders often had ruthless advisors who justified brutality with an ideology (an ideology is an entire thought system) of conquest. The ideology of conquest included justifying that survival meant conquer, dominate, and control. It meant defeating one's enemies and expanding one's territory and resources. The assumption was, according to the laws of nature, the strong would dominate the weak and, therefore, aggression, wars, and violence are inevitable.

Empires were organized in a hierarchical manner with large bureaucracies of government officials (including administrators, secret service spies, census takers, and tax collectors), engineers and artisans, and large militaries. These government officials were ranked and higher ranking officials received more pay, benefits, and privileges.

Anti-imperialists who have questioned empire assert that killing and violence can rarely be justified. They believe cooperation, not domination and coercion is the basis of society. They say political elites used violence out of expediency and self-interest and engaged in warfare to maintain and expand their power. Anti-imperialists assert that conflict can be resolved peacefully and has traditionally been resolved through the intervention of members of the community who intervene and mediate.

The Roman historian Tacitus showed himself to be anti-imperialist when he wrote of how the Romans conquered England: "Robbery, butchery, raping – the liars call it Empire, but they create a desert and call it peace." (*Agricola*, 30) Other anti-imperialists were: Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Leo Tolstoy, and Henry David Thoreau.

ESSAY QUESTION
COSMOPOLITANISM: ETHICS IN A WORLD OF STRANGERS

By
Kwame Anthony Appiah

Directions: Select one of the following essay questions on Cosmopolitanism, write a standard college essay of 5 paragraphs, and consult your essay partner on it. **No late and no e-mailed essays. All essays must be hard copies.**

1. After giving the meaning and history of the word cosmopolitanism, describe how someone who is cosmopolitan would think and behave, and tell what advantages it would bring to be cosmopolitan in today's world.
2. How does the notion of cosmopolitanism (engaging with the experience and ideas of others, life with other people as a shared adventure, obligations to others) coincide with the major concepts and meanings of our World History course?
3. Who opposed cosmopolitanism in the past and who opposes it in today's world, and why?
4. Why does Appiah assert "Cosmopolitanism isn't hard work; repudiating it is."
5. In certain places like gyms, libraries, eateries, bars and many clubs, there's an ambiance and conviviality which attracts and binds people. Whether it's at a bar, a gym, a Greek or Italian restaurant, a Thai, Vietnamese, or Chinese restaurant, or on a cruise you can enjoy good company, food and drink with other people. In places like this, social class seems to evaporate and a sense of camaraderie and the pulse of life take over. What is this cosmopolitanism that permits accountants, sportsmen, immigrants, students, sales managers, truck drivers, and hairdressers to converse and feel a sense of companionship and community?
6. Since cosmopolitans have no out-group, and don't think of the world as rich and poor, us and them, rural and urban, they identify with all other human beings. Considering the realities of the world today, do you agree with Appiah that a global ethics is needed and, if so, what form should it take?

NOTE: Chapter 3 titled “The Escape from Positivism” deals with the philosophical school of positivism. This is a philosophy that holds that the only authentic knowledge is based on actual sense experiences. They emphasize facts, logic and scientific methods and insist on taking a neutral and value-free stance on issues.

Appiah takes exception to the philosophy of positivism and says it negates and undermines his effort to champion cosmopolitanism as a way to solve global problems. He does not feel taking a neutral stance, as Positivists do, is worthwhile. Positivists take a neutral stance because they think if someone values one quality, then they automatically devalue the opposite quality. They would say when Appiah champions cosmopolitanism he automatically devalues localism and nationalism.