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**Emily Kenway: *The Truth About Modern Slavery*, London: Pluto Press, 2021, ix + 227 pp.**

A writer and an activist, Emily Kenway previously worked as an advisor to the UK's anti-slavery commission. With this, her first book, *The Truth About Modern Slavery*, Kenway sets out to challenge, question and expose the "modern slavery" narrative as perpetuated by New Abolitionists such as Kevin Bales and Andrew Forest since the 1990s, as well as by the British state and media more broadly since the 2010s. In so doing, she shows how the term is being used in a very undifferentiated way for a whole breath of groups, situations and circumstances of exploitation, while at the same time it's usage function to conceal a host of contradictory practices. Predominantly inspired by the work of George Lakoff, Kenway employed a frame analysis to interrogate the specific meanings behind the metaphor. Besides the Introduction and Conclusion, the book has 5 analytical chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the emergence of a neat narrative around "modern slavery", while also pointing to the messier reality behind it. Chapter 2 examines the UK's border and criminalisation practices and policies, leading to the conclusion that

the state itself is in fact creating the conditions for trafficking. Chapter 3 then deals with sex work, while chapter 4 focuses on non-sex work labour exploitation. Chapter 5 takes a look at the role of the public and campaigns, highlighting how 85 per cent of anti-trafficking projects are focused on awareness raising; A fact which does service to a government which would rather avoid making change to structures and cultures of exploitation. Kenway's book is well researched and convincingly argued. It does not, however, stop at providing a frame analysis. At different points throughout, the author shifts into her role as advocate outlining what people and states *should* do. This indicates that the target audience is intended to be NGO employees and the broader public. While consciously focused on UK discourses and practices, the book may nevertheless prove insightful for those concerned with the topic of human trafficking in other national contexts. At the same time, however, the book may stimulate the thoughts of historians of 19th and 20th century migration; Not for the basic historicisation which Kenway has attempted, but rather for her knowledge on why marginalized individuals make certain decisions for themselves and their children, as well as for her proposal for alternative

descriptive vocabularies which try to avoid reproducing discourses, while neither oversimplifying or romanticizing migratory experiences. Historians are of course well aware of the problems of comparing the past and present, yet we are also aware of the issues in trying to capture and imagine the perspectives of those who have not been able to leave their own record. Kenway's book exposes how today "modern slavery" narratives function to tell one story while silencing others.

Ruth Ennis, Leipzig

**Essai sur la monarchie autrichienne en son état actuel en 1790, a cura di Derek Beales e Renato Pasta, Florence: Firenze University Press, 2018, 218 pp.**

This small book, which nevertheless reproduces more than 500 manuscript pages, is one of the most comprehensive descriptions of the Austrian monarchy from a moment when its dual character appeared particularly endangered, since after the death of Joseph II in 1790 it was quite questionable whether the election as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire could continue to be associated with the Habsburg crown. Only a short time before Joseph, the wife of Archduke Franz had died in childbirth together with their baby, leaving a frantic search for a new wife for the aspirant to the throne, who was finally found in the eldest daughter of the ruling couple of Naples. In order to prepare the 15-year-old Maria Theresa for her eventual political role, one of the customary inventories of the structures and resources of the domain was made, which turned out to be unusually thorough and competent.

The fact that the work later received little attention was due on the one hand to the political lack of interest on the part of the intended reader, who was to distinguish herself more as a patron of music and gave birth to the expected heirs to the throne in quick succession, but above all to the relatively smooth transition of the crowns first to Leopold II and then to Archduke Franz, so that the dynastic crisis that had caused the repertoire remained relatively brief.

While one copy of the description was found in the estate of Baron Acton, who became Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge in 1895, another copy probably reached the library of the Centre for Austrian Studies at the University of Minnesota during the Second World War, where Derek Beales was able to consult it but not copy it, while Renato Pasta made the version that survived in Cambridge the basis of this first publication, which he most competently introduces with a concise essay on the political order and finances of the Habsburgs and then reviews all those studies that have relied on various parts of the manuscript without ever considering its complete publication.

In future, researchers will be able to access the carefully edited text without having to travel to Minneapolis or Cambridge, and at the same time compare it with other descriptions of such kind, which were a genre often used in the second half of the 18th century not only in Vienna to inform various publics about the internals of government business. Sometimes the authors took longer passages from older accounts, but sometimes, and this seems to have been the case here, they sketched out the necessary basis for a new start in the face of a foreseeable serious crisis that made a