CHAPTER 2

THE HIGH TIDE OF IMPERIALISM: AFRICA AND ASIA IN AN ERA OF WESTERN DOMINANCE

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. The Spread of Colonial Rule
   A. The Myth of European Superiority
   B. The Advent of Western Imperialism
      1. The Impact of the Industrial Revolution
      2. Tactics of Conquest
II. The Colonial System
   A. The Philosophy of Colonialism
      1. The White Man’s Burden
      2. Assimilation and Association
III. India Under the British Raj
   A. The Nature of British Rule
      1. Agricultural Reforms
      2. Manufacturing
IV. The Colonial Takeover of Southeast Asia
   A. The Imposition of Colonial Rule
   B. Colonial Regimes in Southeast Asia
      1. Colonial Administration
      2. Economic Development
      3. Rural Policies
      4. Imperialism in the Balance
V. Empire Building in Africa
   A. Africa Before the Europeans
   B. The Growing European Presence in West Africa
C. Imperialist Shadow Over the Nile
D. The Scramble for Africa
   1. The Motives
   2. The Berlin Conference
E. Bantus, Boers, and British in South Africa
   1. Boer War
F. Colonialism in Africa
   1. Indirect Rule
   2. Direct Rule
   3. Women in Colonial Africa
VI. Conclusion

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, the student should have an understanding of:

1. the ideas and assumptions as well as some of the historical developments behind the myth of the superiority of the West;
2. the relationship between western industrialism and western imperialism;
3. how, why, and where European colonialism developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;
4. the impact of Great Britain upon Indian society and culture;
5. the differences between western imperialism in South Asia and Southeast Asia and western imperialism in Africa;
6. the impact of western colonialism on the peoples of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa, and have a knowledge of major historical events in each region;
7. the causes and consequences of the “scramble for Africa”;
8. the various theories and ideologies which justified Western colonialism and imperialism;
9. the differences of colonialism in practice, particularly noting the approaches of Great Britain and France.

POSSIBLE CLASS LECTURE/DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Discuss at length the various motives that led to Western imperialism in the late nineteenth century, including factors within Western society as well as those existing in African and Asian societies.
2. A discussion or overview of imperialism throughout human history could be rewarding, thus placing the events of the past century or two in perspective, in terms of both the continuity and the uniqueness of the New Imperialism of the late nineteenth century.

3. A survey of the growth of the British Empire since the eighteenth century would provide a specific case study of modern imperialism, including its motives and its consequences.

4. Explore the factors both within Africa and elsewhere that resulted in the European colonization of that continent.

5. A comparison between British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese imperial rule in Africa could illustrate the differing motives and assumptions involved in colonialism.

6. Compare and contrast the impact of western imperialism in Asia with western imperialism in Africa.

7. Discuss the impact of Western imperialism on the societies of Asia and Africa, including both positive and negative affects on both the West and upon the colonial peoples.

8. An in depth discussion of the Boer War would reveal some of the complexities of late nineteenth imperialism in Africa and could usefully serve as a prologue to many of the conflicts and confrontations of the twentieth century.

THOUGHT/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR BOXED DOCUMENTS AND ESSAYS

1. “White Man’s Burden, Black Man’s Sorrow” — Compare Kipling’s The White Man’s Burden with the comments of Edward Morel. How do they differ? What are Morel’s criticisms of Western colonialism in Africa? Was “modern capitalist exploitation” the major characteristic of colonialism? Were there any beneficial aspects of capitalism in the colonial societies, and if so, what? Were there any non-economic benefits that might balance the economic exploitation? By common agreement, the Belgian Congo was the nadir of colonial rule. Could the experiences of another colony invalidate or mitigate Morel’s observations? Why or why not? (page 30)

2. “Indian in Blood, English in Taste and Intellect” — What are Macaulay’s suppositions about the superiority of English civilization, and why does he think as he does? Is Macaulay, writing in the early nineteenth century, merely a product of his time and place, or do his attitudes reflect a broader, timeless attitude toward “the other”? From the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, can Macaulay’s demand for the use of English as the common language be justified? Why and/or why not? (p. 33)

3. “The Effects of Dutch Colonialism in Asia” — Could Dekker’s comments be compared to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s critique of slavery in her novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin? What specific criticisms was Dekker making about Dutch imperialism in today’s Indonesia? How did those comments conflict with the major assumptions and practices of Western imperialism? Does Dekker idealize the native Javanese, and could he be accused of simply being paternalistic in his comments about Indonesian life? (p. 37)

STUDENT PROJECT OPTIONS
1. Have students organize a panel or debate, with the various participants defending the several economic and non-economic motives of Western Imperialism, and attempt to reach a possible consensus upon which were paramount.

2. Have students examine and discuss some of the “weaknesses” in India that allowed the British to eventually make that subcontinent Great Britain’s “Jewel in the Crown.”

3. Suggest that a student panel debate the benefits and the debits of Western imperialism on the peoples and societies of Asia and Africa as method of making those issues more relevant to their own experiences.

4. As a way to explore some of the differences as well as the similarities of imperialism in practice, assign various students to research the colonial systems of several of the Western nations including the United States and then present their findings either in oral or written form.

5. Assign members of the class the task of assuming the roles of the several different participants and communities in South Africa’s Boer War. Such a discussion could assist in elucidating some of the possible complexities in determining the winners and losers as well as the villains and victims.

6. Have selected students or student groups present the various philosophies of colonialism to the entire class, noting in part the chronological period and the national or cultural origin of each as a possible means to understand the appeal of the several imperial approaches.

7. Have students debate the impact of western colonialism as to its “successes” and its “failures.”

ESSAY/STUDENT PAPER TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. Define and discuss with examples the myth of European superiority

2. Discuss the various factors, British and Indian, which resulted in the Indian subcontinent becoming a part of the British Empire.

3. Discuss the possible non-economic motives of Western imperialism in establishing colonies in Southeast Asia and/or Africa in the nineteenth century.

4. “The Boer War was essentially a European conflict which was merely fought out on African soil.” Discuss.

5. What are the several possible reasons or explanations why the “scramble for Africa” occurred when it did?

6. “The motives of western imperialism were almost entirely economic.” Discuss pro and con.

7. Compare and contrast French, Dutch, and British imperialism in Africa and Southeast Asia in respect to colonial philosophies and administrative policies.

8. Discuss the positive and the negative consequences of British rule in India in the nineteenth century.

9. “Western imperialism gave no thought and little concern to the native populations of the colonies under their rule.” Discuss the accuracy of the quotation, using examples.
10. Compare and contrast “indirect rule” with “direct rule,” and discuss which individuals or groups among the native populations might benefit the most and which might benefit the least from the two imperial approaches.

11. “Western imperialism during the nineteenth century was a unique event with no precedent in history and unlikely to be replicated ever again.” Comment.

RELEVANT WORLD-WIDE WEB SITES/RESOURCES

http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/index.html
British India website. Many links.

http://www.imagesofempire.com/bin/empire.dll/go?a=disp&t=home-loader.html&_max=0&_maxlb=0&si=
Numerous images from the empire at the online British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, University of Bristol.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/independence1947_01.shtml
BBC site on history of Britain. Links on British empire/raj.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/popup/07/south_asia_indian_mutiny_/html/1.stm
BBC News online photographs of the Indian Mutiny.

http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/exhibitions/indiaRising/
Site of London’s National Army Museum. Much information on the Mutiny.

BBC site on History of Africa, including the scramble for Africa. Many links.

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook34.html
Fordham University’s Internet Modern History Sourcebook on Imperialism.

http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/kipling_ind.html
Complete texts of all of Kipling’s poems.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3516965.stm
BBC site on Leopold and the Congo.