Japanese Edicts Regulating Religion

The history of the state in Japan was very different from that of China. Between 1200 and 1600 Japan went through a period in which the state was eclipsed by aristocratic, warrior, and religious groups. When the Tokugawa Shogunate reasserted the authority of a central state in 1600, the memory of monk-soldiers and numerous independent armies called for a series of measures directed at controlling religious institutions and other independent powers. In one measure, all farmers were forbidden to have swords. Another regulated all religious temples. Between 1633 and 1639 the Tokugawa government took the further step of closing the country to all foreign religions, a move directed mainly at the influence previously enjoyed by Portuguese Catholic missionaries.

The first of the two documents in this selection is a vow by which Japanese Christians renounced their faith in 1645. The second document is a government edict regulating temples, mainly Buddhist temples, in 1665. What do these documents tell you about the relationship between the state and religion in Tokugawa Japan?

Thinking Historically

We tend to think of religions as fixed phenomena: eternal and unchanging. In fact, religious ideas and behavior change over time. Religious change is particularly striking in cases where missionaries convert people from a foreign culture. Inevitably, the religion that the convert accepts is different from the religion the missionary preaches. Can you identify some of the changes Christianity underwent in Japan?

Similarly, the regulation of Buddhist temples by the new centralizing Tokugawa government brought changes in Buddhism. How would you expect the edict of 1665 to have changed Japanese Buddhism?

Much in these documents will strike the modern reader as very foreign, even to the extent of requiring an imaginative leap to understand how people might have thought. Choose one of these passages and explain how and why it is so strange to you. Try also to explain how you might understand it.
Renouncing the Kirishitan Faith, 1645

Vow of Namban (Southern Barbarians): We have been Kirishitans for many years. But the more we learn of the Kirishitan doctrines the greater becomes our conviction that they are evil. In the first place, we who received instructions from the padre regarding the future life were threatened with excommunication which would keep us away from association with the rest of humanity in all things in the present world, and would cast us into hell in the next world. We were also taught that, unless a person committing a sin confesses it to the padre and secures his pardon, he shall not be saved in the world beyond. In that way the people were led into believing in the padres. All that was for the purpose of taking the lands of others.

When we learned of it, we “shifted” from Kirishitan and became adherents of Hokkekyō while our wives became adherents of Ikko-šū. We hereby present a statement in writing to you, worshipful Magistrate, as a testimony.

Hereafter we shall not harbor any thought of the Kirishitan in our heart. Should we entertain any thought of it at all, we shall be punished by Deus Paternus (God the Father), Jesus (His Son), Spirito Santo (the Holy Ghost), as well as by Santa María (St. Mary), various angels, and saints.

The grace of God will be lost altogether. Like Judas Iscariot, we shall be without hope, and shall be mere objects of ridicule to the people. We shall never rise. The foregoing is our Kirishitan vow.

Japanese Pledge: We have no thought of the Kirishitan in our hearts. We have certainly “shifted” our faith. If any falsehood be noted in our declaration now or in the future, we shall be subject to divine punishment by Bonten, Taishaku, the four deva kings, the great or little gods in all the sixty or more provinces of Japan, especially the Mishima Daimyōjin, the representatives of the god of Izu and Hakone, Hachiman Daibosatsu, Temman Daijizai Tenjin, especially our own family gods, Suwa Daimyōjin, the village people, and our relatives. This is to certify to the foregoing.

The second year of Shōhō [1645]
Endorsement.

Regulations for Buddhist Temples, 1665

1. The doctrines and rituals established for different sects must not be mixed and disarranged. If there is anyone who does not behave in accordance with this injunction, an appropriate measure must be taken expeditiously.
Japanese Edicts Regulating Religion

2. No one who does not understand the basic doctrines or rituals of
   a given sect is permitted to become the chief priest of a temple. Adden-
   dum: If a new rite is established, it must not preach strange doctrines.

3. The regulations which govern relationships between the main
temple and branch temples must not be violated. However, even the
main temple cannot take measures against branch temples in an unre-
asonable manner.

4. Parishioners of the temples can choose to which temple they
wish to belong and make contributions. Therefore priests must not
compete against one another for parishioners.

5. Priests are enjoined from engaging in activities unbecoming of
priests, such as forming groups or planning to fight one another.

6. If there is anyone who has violated the law of the land, and that
fact is communicated to a temple, it must turn him away without ques-
tion.

7. When making repairs to a temple or a monastery, do not make
them ostentatiously. Addendum: Temples must be kept clean without
fail.

8. The estate belonging to a temple is not subject to sale, nor can it
be mortgaged.

9. Do not allow anyone who has expressed a desire to become a
disciple but is not of good lineage to enter the priesthood freely. If there
is a particular candidate who has an improper and questionable back-
ground, the judgment of the domanial lord or magistrate of his dom-
icle must be sought and then act accordingly.

The above articles must be strictly observed by all the sects. . . .

Fifth year of Kanbun [1665], seventh month, 11th day.
BADA’UNI

Akbar and Religion

At the same time the Chinese and Japanese confronted Christian missionaries, the descendents of Muslim Turkic and Mongol peoples of central Asia were conquering the Hindu kingdoms of northern India. Babur (1483–1530), the first of these Mughal rulers, swept into India from Afghanistan in 1525. Successive Mughal emperors enlarged the empire so that by the time of Akbar (r. 1556–1605) it included all of northern India. Like his contemporaries Philip II of Spain (r. 1556–1598) and Elizabeth of England (r. 1558–1603), Akbar created an elaborate and enduring administrative bureaucracy. But unlike Philip and Elizabeth, who waged religious wars against each other and forcibly converted their domestic subjects and newly conquered peoples, Akbar reached out to his Hindu subjects in ways that would have astonished his European contemporaries. In fact, he angered many of his own Muslim advisors, including Bada’uni, the author of the following memoir. What bothered Bada’uni about Akbar? What does this selection tell you about Akbar’s rule? What factors might have motivated his toleration of heterodoxy?

Thinking Historically

What strikes the modern reader here is Akbar’s evident curiosity about religious ideas and his lack of doctrinal rigidity. These are not qualities most people expect from a Muslim ruler, perhaps especially a premodern one. Why are we modern readers surprised by this? How might our ideas about Islam and Hinduism in the modern world influence our understanding of these religious traditions in the past?

We know from other sources that Akbar made special efforts to include Hindus in his administration. About a third of his governing bureaucracy were Hindus and he gave Hindu-governed territories a large degree of self-rule—allowing them to retain their own law and courts. Various taxes normally paid by non-Muslims were abolished. Among Akbar’s five thousand wives his favorite was the mother of his

successor, Jahangir (r. 1605–1628). Akbar’s policy of toleration continued under his son and grandson, Jahangir and Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658), but was largely reversed by his great grandson, Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707). How does this understanding of a particular past affect our ideas about the present? Does it make conflict seem less inevitable?

In the year nine hundred and eighty-three [1605] the buildings of the ‘Ībādatekhāna\(^1\) were completed. The cause was this. For many years previously the emperor had gained in succession remarkable and decisive victories. The empire had grown in extent from day to day; everything turned out well, and no opponent was left in the whole world. His Majesty had thus leisure to come into nearer contact with ascetics and the disciples of his reverence [the late] Mu‘īn, and passed much of his time in discussing the word of God and the word of the Prophet. Questions of Sufism,\(^2\) scientific discussions, inquiries into philosophy and law, were the order of the day.

And later that day the emperor came to Fatehpur. There he used to spend much time in the Hall of Worship in the company of learned men and shaikhs and especially on Friday nights, when he would sit up there the whole night continually occupied in discussing questions of religion, whether fundamental or collateral. The learned men used to draw the sword of the tongue on the battlefield of mutual contradiction and opposition, and the antagonism of the sects reached such a pitch that they would call one another fools and heretics. The controversies used to pass beyond the differences of Sunni, and Shi‘a, of Hanafi and Shāfī‘ī, of lawyer and divine, and they would attack the very bases of belief. And Makhdūm-ul-Mulk wrote a treatise to the effect that Shaikh ‘Abd-al-Nabī had unjustly killed Khizr Khān Sarwānī, who had been suspected of blaspheming the Prophet [peace be upon him!], and Mīr Habsh, who had been suspected of being a Shi‘a, and saying that it was not right to repeat the prayers after him, because he was undutiful toward his father, and was himself afflicted with hemorrhoids. Shaikh ‘Abd-al-Nabī replied to him that he was a fool and a heretic. Then the mullās [Muslim theologians] became divided into two parties, and one party took one side and one the other, and became very Jews and Egyptians for hatred of each other. And persons of

\(^1\)Hall of Religious Discussions. [Ed.]
\(^2\)Mystical, poetic Islamic tradition. [Ed.]
novel and whimsical opinions, in accordance with their pernicious ideas and vain doubts, coming out of ambush, decked the false in the garb of the true, and wrong in the dress of right, and cast the emperor, who was possessed of an excellent disposition, and was an earnest searcher after truth, but very ignorant and a mere tyro, and used to the company of infidels and base persons, into perplexity, till doubt was heaped upon doubt, and he lost all definite aim, and the straight wall of the clear law and of firm religion was broken down, so that after five or six years not a trace of Islam was left in him: and everything was turned topsy-turvy.

And samanas [Hindu or Buddhist ascetics] and brāhmanas (who as far as the matter of private interviews is concerned gained the advantage over everyone in attaining the honor of interviews with His Majesty, and in associating with him, and were in every way superior in reputation to all learned and trained men for their treatises on morals, and on physical and religious sciences, and in religious ecstasies, and stages of spiritual progress and human perfections) brought forward proofs, based on reason and traditional testimony, for the truth of their own, and the fallacy of our religion, and inculcated their doctrine with such firmness and assurance, that they affirmed mere imaginations as though they were self-evident facts, the truth of which the doubts of the sceptic could no more shake “Than the mountains crumble, and the heavens be cleft!” And the Resurrection, and Judgment, and other details and traditions, of which the Prophet was the repository, he laid all aside. And he made his courtiers continually listen to those revilings and attacks against our pure and easy, bright and holy faith.

Some time before this a brāhman, named Puruk’hotam, who had written a commentary on the Book, Increase of Wisdom (Khirad-afzā), had had private interviews with him, and he had asked him to invent particular Sanskrit names for all things in existence. And at one time a brāhman, named Debi, who was one of the interpreters of the Mahābhārata, was pulled up the wall of the castle sitting on a bedstead till he arrived near a balcony, which the emperor had made his bedchamber. Whilst thus suspended he instructed His Majesty in the secrets and legends of Hinduism, in the manner of worshipping idols, the fire, the sun and stars, and of revering the chief gods of these unbelievers, such as Brahma, Mahadev [Shiva], Bishn [Vishnu], Kishn [Krishna], Ram, and Mahama (whose existence as sons of the human race is a supposition, but whose nonexistence is a certainty, though in their idle belief they look on some of them as gods, and some as angels). His Majesty, on hearing further how much the people of the country prized their institutions, began to look upon them with affection.

Sometimes again it was Shaikh Tāj ud-dīn whom he sent for. This shaikh was son of Shaikh Zakariya of Ajodhan. . . . He had been a
pupil of Rashid Shaikh Zamân of Panipat, author of a commentary on the Paths (Lawâ'ih), and of other excellent works, was most excellent in Sufism, and in the knowledge of theology second only to Shaikh Ibn 'Arabi and had written a comprehensive commentary on the Joy of the Souls (Nuzhat ul-Arwâh). Like the preceding he was drawn up the wall of the castle in a blanket, and His Majesty listened the whole night to his Sufic obscenities and follies. The shai kh, since he did not in any great degree feel himself bound by the injunctions of the law, introduced arguments concerning the unity of existence, such as idle Sufis discuss, and which eventually lead to license and open heresy.

Learned monks also from Europe, who are called Padre, and have an infallible head, called Papa,3 who is able to change religious ordinances as he may deem advisable for the moment, and to whose authority kings must submit, brought the Gospel, and advanced proofs for the Trinity. His Majesty firmly believed in the truth of the Christian religion, and wishing to spread the doctrines of Jesus, ordered Prince Murâd to take a few lessons in Christianity under good auspices, and charged Abû'l Fazl to translate the Gospel.

Fire worshipers also came from Nousari in Gujarat, proclaimed the religion of Zardusht [Zarathustra] as the true one, and declared reverence to fire to be superior to every other kind of worship. They also attracted the emperor's regard, and taught him the peculiar terms, the ordinances, the rites and ceremonies of the Kaianians [a pre-Muslim Persian dynasty]. At last he ordered that the sacred fire should be made over to the charge of Abû'l Fazl, and that after the manner of the kings of Persia, in whose temples blazed perpetual fires, he should take care it was never extinguished night or day, for that it is one of the signs of God, and one light from His lights.

His Majesty also called some of the yogis, and gave them at night private interviews, inquiring into abstract truths; their articles of faith; their occupation; the influence of pensiveness; their several practices and usages; the power of being absent from the body; or into alchemy, physiognomy, and the power of omnipresence of the soul.

3The Roman Catholic Pope. [Ed.]
DONALD QUATAERT

Ottoman Inter-communal Relations

Between 1500 and 1922 the Ottoman Empire, centered in Turkey, embraced a greater variety of religious and ethnic groups than any other state in world history. Many of these peoples, like the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, came as exiles. According to this history of the empire by modern historian Donald Quataert, Ottoman administration of this incredibly diverse empire was remarkably tolerant. The degree of intercommunal peace and cooperation declined in later centuries, however. What evidence does the author offer of a generally cooperative interchange in the early centuries? Why, according to the author, did this situation change after 1800?

Thinking Historically

As the author points out in the beginning of this selection, the number of recent conflicts occurring in the territory of the old Ottoman Empire has engendered much interest in this topic. It is common to imagine that intractable contemporary conflicts have an ancient history. Often the participants in a conflict have a stake in overemphasizing the longevity of the conflict. But in this selection, the author argues that the roots of these conflicts are not nearly so deep. The causes are more recent than ancient. If he is right, how does that change our present understanding of these conflicts? How might it change our ability to deal with these conflicts?

The subject of historical intergroup relations in the Ottoman empire looms large because of the many conflicts that currently plague the lands it once occupied. Recall, for example, the Palestinian-Israeli struggle, the Kurdish issue, the Armenian question, as well as the horrific events that have befallen Bosnia and Kossovo. All rage in lands once Ottoman. What then, is the connection between these struggles of today and the inter-communal experiences of the Ottoman past?

There was nothing inevitable about these conflicts — all were historically conditioned. Other outcomes historically were possible but did not happen because of a particular unfolding of events. Nor are any of these struggles ancient ones reflecting millennia-old hatreds. Rather, each of them can be explained with reference to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, through the unfolding of specific events rather than racial animosities. But because these contemporary struggles loom so large and because we assume that present-day hostilities have ancient and general rather than recent and specific causes, our understanding of the Ottoman inter-communal record has been profoundly obscured.

Despite all stereotypes and preconceptions to the contrary, inter-group relations during most of Ottoman history were rather good relative to the standards of the age. For many centuries, persons who were of minority status enjoyed fuller rights and more legal protection in the Ottoman lands than, for example, did minorities in the realm of the French king or of the Habsburg emperor. It is also true that Ottoman inter-communal relations worsened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In large part, this chapter argues, the deterioration derives directly from the explosive mixture of Western capital, Great Power interference in internal Ottoman affairs, and the transitional nature of an Ottoman polity struggling to establish broader political rights. Such an assessment does not aim to idealize the Ottoman record of inter-communal relations, which was hardly unblemished, or explain away the major injustices and atrocities inflicted on Ottoman subjects.

Nonetheless, the goal is to replace the stereotypes that too long have prevailed regarding relations among the religious and ethnic Ottoman communities. One’s religion — as Muslim, Christian, or Jew — was an important means of differentiation in the Ottoman world. Indeed, ethnic terms confusingly often described what actually were religious differences. In the Balkan and Anatolian lands, Ottoman Christians informally spoke of “Turks” when in fact they meant Muslims. “Turk” was a kind of shorthand for referring to Muslims of every sort, whether Kurds, Turks, or Albanians (but not Arabs). Today’s Bosnian Muslims are called Turks by the Serbian Christians even though they actually have a common Slavic ethnicity. In the Arab world, Muslim Arabs used “Turk” when sometimes they meant Albanian or Circassian Muslim, one who had come from outside the region.

Stereotypes present distorted pictures of Ottoman subjects living apart, in sharply divided, mutually impenetrable religious communities called millets that date back to the fifteenth century. In this incorrect view, each community lived in isolation from one another, adjacent but separate. And supposedly implacable hatreds prevailed: Muslims hated Christians who hated Jews who hated Christians who hated Muslims. Recent scholarship shows this view to be fundamentally wrong on almost every score. To begin with, the term millet as a designator for
Ottoman non-Muslims is not ancient but dates from the reign of Sultan Mahmut II, in the early nineteenth century. Before then, *millet* in fact meant Muslims within the empire and Christians outside it.

Let us continue this exploration of inter-communal relations with two different versions of the past in Ottoman Bulgaria during the 1700–1922 era. In the first version, we hear the voices of Father Paisiiy (1722–1773) and S. Vrachanski (1739–1813) calling their Ottoman overlords “ferocious and savage infidels,” “Ishmaelites,” “sons of infidels,” “wild beasts,” and “loathsome barbarians.” Somewhat later, another Bulgarian Christian writer Khristo Botev (1848–1876) wrote of the Ottoman administration:

> And the tyrant rages  
> and ravages our native home:  
> impales, hangs, flogs, curses  
> and fines the people thus enslaved.

In the first quotation are the words of Bulgarian emigré intelligentsia who were seeking to promote a Bulgarian nation state and break from Ottoman rule.¹ To justify this separation, they invented a new past in which the Ottomans had brought an abrupt end to the Bulgarian cultural renaissance of the medieval era, destroying its ties to the West and preventing Bulgaria from participating in and contributing to western civilization.

And yet, hear two other Bulgarian Christian voices speaking about Bulgarian Muslims, the first during the period just before formal independence in 1908 and the other a few years later:

Turks and Bulgarians lived together and were good neighbors. On holidays they exchanged pleasantries. We sent the Turks *kozunak* and red eggs at Easter, and they sent us baklava at Bayram. And on these occasions we visited each other.²

In Khaskovo, our neighbors were Turks. They were good neighbors. They got on well together. They even had a little gate between their gardens. Both my parents knew Turkish well. My father was away fighting [during the Balkan Wars]. My mother was alone with four children. And the neighbors said: “You’re not going anywhere. You’ll stay with us...” So Mama stayed with the Turks... What I’m trying to tell you is that we lived well with these people.”³

¹The quotations provided from the oral interviews conducted in Bulgaria by Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Binghamton University.
²Interview with Simeon Radev, 1879–1967, describing his childhood before 1900, provided by Barbara Reeves-Ellington.
³Interview with Ireta Gospodarova, personal narrative, Sofia, January 19, 1995, provided by Barbara Reeves-Ellington.
Concepts of the “other” abound in history. The ancient Greeks divided the world into that of the civilized Greek and of the barbarian others. Barbarians could be brave and courageous but they did not possess civilization. For Jews, there are the goyim — the non-Jew, the other — whose lack of certain characteristics keeps them outside the chosen, Jewish, community. For Muslims, the notion of the dhimmi is another way of talking about difference. In this case, Muslims regard Christians and Jews as “the People of the Book” (dhimmi), who received God’s revelation before Muhammad and therefore only incompletely. Thus, dhimmi have religion, civilization, and God’s message. But since they received only part of that message, they are inherently different from and inferior to Muslims.

In the Ottoman world, people were acutely aware of differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. Muslims, as such, shared their religious beliefs with the dynasty and most members of the Ottoman state apparatus. The state itself, among its many attributes, called itself an Islamic one and many sultans included the term “gazi,” warrior for the Islamic faith, among their titles. Later on, as seen, they revived the title of caliph, one with deep roots in the early Islamic past. Further, for many centuries military service primarily was carried out as a Muslim duty, although there were always some non-Muslims in the military service such as Christian Greeks serving as sailors in the navy during the 1840s. Yet, in a real sense, the military obligation had become a Muslim one. Even when an 1836 law required Ottoman Christian military service, the purchase of exemption quickly became institutionalized as a special tax. A 1909 law ended this loophole but then hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Christians fled the empire rather than serve. Thus, subjects understood that Muslims needed to fight but non-Muslims did not.

A variety of mechanisms maintained difference and distinction. Clothing laws... distinguished among the various religious communities, delineating the religious allegiance of passersby. They reassured maintenance of the differences not simply as instruments of discipline but useful markers of community boundaries, immediately identifying outsiders and insiders. Apparel gave a sense of group identity to members of the specific community.

Until the nineteenth century, the legal system was predicated on religious distinctions. Each religious community maintained its own courts, judges, and legal principles for the use of coreligionists. Since Muslims theologically were superior, so too, in principle, was their court system. Muslim courts thus held sway in cases between Muslims and non-Muslims. The latter, moreover, simply did not possess the necessary authority (velayet) and so, with a few exceptions, could not testify against Muslims. The state used the religious authorities and courts to announce decrees and taxes and, more generally, as instruments of...
imperial control. The ranking government official of an area, for example, the governor, received an imperial order and summoned the various religious authorities. They in turn informed their communities which negotiated within themselves over enforcement of the order or distribution of the taxes being imposed.

Muslim courts often provided rights to Christians and Jews that were unavailable in their own courts. And so non-Muslims routinely sought out Muslim courts when they were under no obligation to do so. Once they appeared before the Islamic court, its decisions took precedence. They often appealed to Muslim courts to gain access to the provisions of Islamic inheritance laws which absolutely guaranteed certain shares of estates to relatives—daughters, fathers, uncles, sisters. Thus, persons who feared disinheritation or a smaller share in the will of a Christian or Jew placed themselves under Islamic law. Christian widows frequently registered in the Islamic courts because these provided a greater share to the wife of the deceased than did ecclesiastical law. Or, take the case of dhimmi girls being forced into arranged marriages by fellow Christians or Jews. Since Islamic law required the female’s consent to the marriage contract, the young woman in question could go to the Muslim court that took her side, thus preventing the unwanted arranged marriage.

With the Tanzimat reforms, the old system of differentiation and distinction and of Muslim legal superiority formally disappeared. Equality of status meant equality of obligation and military service for all. The clothing laws disappeared and, while the religious courts remained, many of their functions vanished. New courts appeared: so-called mixed courts at first heard commercial, criminal, and then civil cases involving persons of different religious communities. Then, beginning in 1869, secular courts (nizamiye) presided over civil and criminal cases involving Muslim and non-Muslim. Whether or not these changes automatically and always improved the rights and status of individuals—Christian, Jew, or Muslim—currently is being debated by scholars. Some, for example, argue that women’s legal rights overall declined with the replacement of Islamic by secular law, but others disagree.

So, how equal were Ottoman subjects and how well were non-Muslims treated? Quite arbitrarily, I offer the testimony of the Jewish community of Ottoman Salonica, as recorded in the “Annual Report of the Jews of Turkey” of the Bulletin de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1893. French Jews had founded the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1860 to work for Jewish emancipation and combat discrimination all over the world. The organization placed great stress on schools and education as a liberating device, establishing its first Ottoman school in 1867 and within a few decades, some fifty more. It published a journal,
the *Bulletin*, in Paris, to which Jewish communities from all over the world sent letters reporting on local conditions. Here then is the statement which the Jewish community of Salonica sent to the *Bulletin* in 1893:

There are but few countries, even among those which are considered the most enlightened and the most civilized, where Jews enjoy a more complete equality than in Turkey (the Ottoman Empire). H. M. the sultan and the government of the Porte display towards Jews a spirit of largest toleration and liberalism.

To place these words in context, we need to consider several points. First of all, the statement likely can be read at face value since it was not prepared for circulation within the empire. Second, Ottoman Jewish-Muslim relations were better than Muslim-Christian (or Jewish-Christian) relations. Nonetheless, this statement likely represents the sentiments of large numbers of Ottoman non-Muslim subjects, Christian and Jewish alike during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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19

MARTIN LUTHER

Law and the Gospel: Princes and Turks

Martin Luther (1483–1546) launched the Protestant Reformation when he published his “95 Theses” in 1517, challenging the domination of Christianity by Rome and the Papacy. Luther’s immediate complaint centered on the authority of the Pope and his agents to sell indulgences, which promised lessened time in purgatory for deceased loved ones on receipt of a contribution to a building fund for St. Peter’s Cathedral. As Luther’s criticism of papal practices reached the point of a breach, Luther turned to the German princes to support churches independent of Rome.

The issue of religious and political authority has long been debated and negotiated in Christian Europe. Unlike Islam, which was founded
by a prophet who also governed, Christianity was founded and grew in an anti-Roman and even antipolitical environment. Typically, Christianity settled on an ambiguous or dualistic relationship between government and God. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s,” Jesus declared according to Mark (12:17) and Matthew (22:21). St. Augustine distinguished between the two cities: the city of God and the city of Man. In the Middle Ages, the doctrine of the two swords, temporal and spiritual, suggested a similar duality. Periodically one force asserted superiority over the other. In 800 Charlemagne took the coronation crown from the hands of the Pope. In 1054, the Holy Roman Emperor was said to crawl through the snow on his hands and knees to beg forgiveness from the Pope. The popes of the Italian Renaissance lived like kings, but in the sixteenth century, secular princes increased the power of the state.

Martin Luther’s initial break with Rome encouraged other protests against both secular and religious authorities. His stress on individual interpretation of scripture and the power of following one’s own conscience inspired more radical groups like the German Anabaptists to defy all worldly authority. In the wake of a peasant’s revolt throughout Germany in 1523–1525, Luther joined forces with the German princes and voiced approval of the authority of the state.

This selection is drawn from a collection of conversational statements by Luther that were recorded by his followers and published under the title Table-Talk in 1566, after Luther’s death.

What was Luther’s attitude toward law and the state? What role did he think princes or governments ought to have in enforcing religious doctrine or behavior? What did he think of the Ottoman Turks?

**Thinking Historically**

Luther’s ideas live on today in the minds of modern Protestants, especially Lutherans. Even the words Luther used — law, conscience, government — are as familiar now as they were in the sixteenth century. But Luther’s ideas are also the product of a sixteenth-century thinker in sixteenth-century circumstances. Consequently, we can never assume that when we use these words or express these ideas we mean what Luther meant.

Notice, for instance, how Martin Luther dealt with the laws of the state and the call of conscience or the Gospel in the selections on “Law and the Gospel.” What did “law” mean for the first Protestant? How did “conscience” or “the Gospel” provide better footing for Luther’s challenge of the church? How do people compare or contrast law and conscience today? Would Luther have understood a modern appeal to conscience that led to civil disobedience?

In the selections on “Princes and Potentates” Luther turns his attention to the laws that would be enforced by his allies, the German
princes. What vision of religion and politics is implied in these selections? What role did Luther leave for conscience or nonconformity? Would we want to allow a greater freedom of conscience today? Do we?

In what ways are Luther’s ideas of the Ottoman Turks similar to European ideas of Muslim countries today? Was Luther poorly informed or prejudiced? Are we?

Of the Law and the Gospel

CCLXXI

We must reject those who so highly boast of Moses’ laws, as to temporal affairs, for we have our written imperial and country laws, under which we live, and unto which we are sworn. Neither Naaman the Assyrian, nor Job, nor Joseph, nor Daniel, nor many other good and godly Jews, observed Moses’ laws out of their country, but those of the Gentiles among whom they lived. Moses’ law bound and obliged only the Jews in that place which God made choice of. Now they are free. If we should keep and observe the laws and rites of Moses, we must also be circumcised, and keep the mosaical ceremonies; for there is no difference; he that holds one to be necessary, must hold the rest so too. Therefore let us leave Moses to his laws, excepting only the Moralia, which God has planted in nature, as the ten commandments, which concern God’s true worshipping and service, and a civil life. . . .

CCLXXXVIII

In what darkness, unbelief, traditions, and ordinances of men have we lived, and in how many conflicts of the conscience we have been ensnared, confounded, and captivated under popedom, is testified by the books of the papists, and by many people now living. From all which snares and horrors we are now delivered and freed by Jesus Christ and his Gospel, and are called to the true righteousness of faith; insomuch that with good and peaceable consciences we now believe in God the Father, we trust in him, and have just cause to boast that we have sure and certain remission of our sins through the death of Christ Jesus, dearly bought and purchased. Who can sufficiently extol these treasures of the conscience, which everywhere are spread abroad, offered, and presented merely by grace? We are now conquerors of sin, of the

1Moral code. [Ed.]
law, of death, and of the devil; freed and delivered from all human traditions. If we would but consider the tyranny of auricular confession, one of the least things we have escaped from, we could not show ourselves sufficiently thankful to God for loosing us out of that one snare. When popedom stood and flourished among us, then every king would willingly have given ten hundred thousand gilders, a prince one hundred thousand, a nobleman one thousand, a gentleman one hundred, a citizen or countryman twenty or ten, to have been freed from that tyranny. But now seeing that such freedom is obtained for nothing, by grace, it is not much regarded, neither give we thanks to God for it.

CCLXXXIX

. . . We must make a clear distinction; we must place the Gospel in heaven, and leave the law on earth; we must receive of the Gospel a heavenly and a divine righteousness; while we value the law as an earthly and human righteousness, and thus directly and diligently separate the righteousness of the gospel from the righteousness of the law, even as God has separated and distinguished heaven from earth, light from darkness, day from night, etc., so that the righteousness of the Gospel be the light and the day, but the righteousness of the law, darkness and night. Therefore all Christians should learn rightly to discern the law and grace in their hearts, and know how to keep one from the other, in deed and in truth, not merely in words, as the pope and other heretics do, who mingle them together, and, as it were, make thereout a cake not fit to eat. . . .

Of Princes and Potentates

DCCXI

Government is a sign of the divine grace, of the mercy of God, who has no pleasure in murdering, killing, and strangling. If God left all things to go where they would, as among the Turks and other nations, without good government, we should quickly dispatch one another out of this world.

DCCXII

Parents keep their children with greater diligence and care than rulers and governors keep their subjects. Fathers and mothers are masters naturally and willingly; it is a self-grown dominion; but rulers and magis-

\footnote{Catholic confession to a priest. [Ed.]}
trates have a compulsory mastery; they act by force, with a prepared
domination; when father and mother can rule no more, the public police
must take the matter in hand. Rulers and magistrates must watch over
the sixth commandment.

DCCXIII

The temporal magistrate is even like a fish net, set before the fish in a
pond or a lake, but God is the plunger, who drives the fish into it. For
when a thief, robber, adulterer, murderer, is ripe, he hunts him into the
net, that is, causes him to be taken by the magistrate, and punished; for
it is written: "God is judge upon earth." Therefore repent, or thou must
be punished.

DCCXIV

Princes and rulers should maintain the laws and statues, or they will be
condemned. They should, above all, hold the Gospel in honor, and bear
it ever in their hands, for it aids and preserves them, and ennobles the
state and office of magistracy, so that they know where their vocation
and calling is, and that with good and safe conscience they may execute
the works of their office. At Rome, the executioner always craved par-
don of the condemned malefactor, when he was to execute his office, as
though he were doing wrong, or sinning in executing the criminal;
whereas 'tis his proper office, which God has set.

St. Paul says: "He beareth not the sword in vain"; he is God's min-
ister, a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that does evil. When the
magistrate punishes, God himself punishes.

On the Turks

DCCCXXVII

The power of the Turk is very great; he keeps in his pay, all the year
through, hundreds of thousands of soldiers. He must have more than
two millions of florins annual revenue. We are far less strong in our
bodies, and are divided out among different masters, all opposed the
one to the other, yet we might conquer these infidels with only the
Lord's prayer, if our own people did not spill so much blood in reli-
gious quarrels, and in persecuting the truths contained in that prayer.
God will punish us as he punished Sodom and Gomorrah, but I would
fain 'twere by the hand of some pious potentate, and not by that of the
accursed Turk....
DCCCXXX

News came from Torgau that the Turks had led out into the great square at Constantinople twenty-three Christian prisoners, who, on their refusing to apostatize, were beheaded. Dr. Luther said: Their blood will cry up to heaven against the Turks, as that of John Huss\(^3\) did against the papists. 'Tis certain, tyranny and persecution will not avail to stifle the Word of Jesus Christ. It flourishes and grows in blood. Where one Christian is slaughtered, a host of others arise. 'Tis not on our walls or our arquebuses\(^3\) I rely for resisting the Turk, but upon the Pater Noster. 'Tis that will triumph. The Decalogue is not, of itself, sufficient. I said to the engineers at Wittenberg: Why strengthen your walls — they are trash; the walls with which a Christian should fortify himself are made, not of stone and mortar, but of prayer and faith. . . .

DCCCXXXV

. . . The Turks pretend, despite the Holy Scriptures, that they are the chosen people of God, as descendants of Ishmael. They say that Ishmael was the true son of the promise, for that when Issac was about to be sacrificed, he fled from his father, and from the slaughter knife, and, meanwhile, Ishmael came and truly offered himself to be sacrificed, whence he became the child of the promise; as gross a lie as that of the papists concerning one kind in the sacrament. The Turks make a boast of being very religious, and treat all other nations as idolaters. They slanderously accuse the Christians of worshipping three gods. They swear by one only God, creator of heaven and earth, by his angels, by the four evangelists, and by the eighty heaven-descended prophets, of whom Mohammed is the greatest. They reject all images and pictures, and render homage to God alone. They pay the most honorable testimony to Jesus Christ, saying that he was a prophet of preeminent sanctity, born of the Virgin Mary, and an envoy from God, but that Mohammed succeeded him, and that while Mohammed sits, in heaven, on the right hand of the Father, Jesus Christ is seated on his left. The Turks have retained many features of the law of Moses, but, inflated with the insolence of victory, they have adopted a new worship; for the glory of warlike triumphs is, in the opinion of the world, the greatest of all.

Luther complained of the emperor Charles's\(^3\) negligence, who, taken up with other wars, suffered the Turk to capture one place after

\(^1\)In Czech, known as Jan Hus. Hus (1369–1415) was a Czech forerunner of the Protestant Reformation. [Ed.]

\(^2\)Primitive firearms used from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. [Ed.]

\(^3\)Charles V (1500–1558), the Habsburg Emperor, fought the French as well as the Ottomans. [Ed.]
The American Declaration of Independence

If anyone had taken a poll of Americans in the thirteen colonies as late as 1775, independence would not have won a majority vote anywhere. Massachusetts might have come close, perhaps, but nowhere in the land was there a definitive urge to separate from the British Empire. Still, three thousand miles was a long way for news, views, appointees, and petitions to travel and tensions between the colonies and Britain had been growing.

Of course, each side looked at the cost of colonial administration differently. The British believed that they had carried a large part of the costs of migration, administration of trade, and control of the sea, while the colonists resented the humiliation resulting from their lack of political representation and the often inept royal officials and punitive legislation imposed on them from afar by the Parliament and the king.

By the spring of 1775, events were rapidly pushing the colonies toward independence. In April, British troops engaged colonial forces at Lexington and Concord, instigating a land war that was to last until 1781. In the midst of other urgent business, most notably raising an army, the Continental Congress asked a committee that included Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams to compose a statement outlining these and other reasons for separation from Britain. Jefferson wrote the first draft, the bulk of which became the final version accepted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776.

The Declaration of Independence was preeminently a document of the Enlightenment. Its principal author, Thomas Jefferson, exemplified the Enlightenment intellectual. Conversant in European literature, law, and political thought, he made significant contributions to eighteenth-century knowledge in natural science and architecture. Benjamin Franklin and other delegates to the Congress in Philadelphia were similarly accomplished.

It is no wonder, then, that the Declaration and the establishment of an independent United States of America should strike the world as the realization of the Enlightenment's basic tenets. That a wholly new country could be created by people with intelligence and foresight, according to principles of reason, and to realize human liberty was heady stuff.

What were the goals of the authors of this document? In what ways was the Declaration a call for democracy? In what ways was it not?

**Thinking Historically**

Before interpreting any document, we must read it carefully and put it into context — that is, determine the what, where, and why. Some of this information may be available in the text itself. For instance, whom is the Declaration addressed to? What is the reason given for writing it?

We interpret or extract meaning from documents by asking questions that emerge from the reading. These questions may arise from passages we do not understand, from lack of clarity in the text, or from an incongruence between the text and our expectations. It may surprise some readers, for example, that the Declaration criticizes the king so sharply. To question this might lead us to explore the need for American colonists to defend their actions in terms of British legal tradition. For years, the American colonists blamed the king’s ministers for their difficulties; in July 1776 they blamed the king — a traditional sign of revolutionary intent in England, which meant efforts toward independence were imminent.

Consider also the disparity between the lofty sentiments of liberty and independence and the existence of slavery in the Americas. How is it possible that Jefferson and some of the signers of the Declaration could own slaves while declaring it “self-evident that all men are created equal”? To whom did this statement apply?

**In Congress, July 4, 1776, the Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America**

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its pow-
ers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws of naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.
He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these States:
For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:
For imposing taxes on us without our consent:
For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:
For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences:
For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:
For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:
For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every state of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them
of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by authority of the good people of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

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The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

The founding of the Republic of the United States of America provided a model for other peoples chafing under oppressive rule to emulate. Not surprisingly then, when the French movement to end political injustices turned to revolution in 1789 and the revolutionaries convened at the National Assembly, the Marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834), hero of the American Revolution, proposed a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Lafayette had the American Declaration in

mind, and he had the assistance of Thomas Jefferson, present in Paris as the first United States ambassador to France.

While the resulting document appealed to the French revolutionaries, the French were not able to start afresh as the Americans had done. In 1789 Louis XVI was still king of France; he could not be made to leave by a turn of phrase. Nor were men created equal in France in 1789. Those born into the nobility led lives different from those born into the Third Estate (the 99 percent of the population who were not nobility or clergy), and they had different legal rights as well. This disparity was precisely what the revolutionaries and the Declaration sought to change. Inevitably, though, such change would prove to be a more violent and revolutionary proposition than it had been in the American colonies.

In what ways did the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen resemble the American Declaration of Independence? In what ways was it different? Which was more democratic?

**Thinking Historically**

The French Declaration is full of abstract, universal principles. But notice how such abstractions can claim our consent by their rationality without informing us as to how they will be implemented. What is meant by the first right, for instance? What does it mean to say that men are "born free"? Why is it necessary to distinguish between "born" and "remain"? What is meant by the phrase "general usefulness"? Do statements like these increase people's liberties, or are they intentionally vague so they can be interpreted at will?

The slogan of the French Revolution was "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Which of the rights in the French Declaration emphasize liberty, which equality? Can these two goals be opposed to each other? Explain how.

The representatives of the French people, organized in National Assembly, considering that ignorance, forgetfulness, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole causes of public misfortunes and of the corruption of governments, have resolved to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man, in order that such declaration, continually before all members of the social body, may be a perpetual reminder of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power and those of the executive power may constantly be compared with the aim of every political institution and may accordingly be more respected; in order that the demands of the citizens, founded henceforth upon simple and incontestable principles,
may always be directed towards the maintenance of the Constitution and the welfare of all.

Accordingly, the National Assembly recognizes and proclaims, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and citizen.

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights; social distinctions may be based only upon general usefulness.

2. The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and inalienable rights of man; these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

3. The source of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation; no group, no individual may exercise authority not emanating expressly therefrom.

4. Liberty consists of the power to do whatever is not injurious to others; thus the enjoyment of the natural rights of every man has for its limits only those that assure other members of society the enjoyment of those same rights; such limits may be determined only by law.

5. The law has the right to forbid only actions which are injurious to society. Whatever is not forbidden by law may not be prevented, and no one may be constrained to do what it does not prescribe.

6. Law is the expression of the general will; all citizens have the right to concur personally, or through their representatives, in its formation; it must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal before it, are equally admissible to all public offices, positions, and employments, according to their capacity, and without other distinction than that of virtues and talents.

7. No man may be accused, arrested, or detained except in the cases determined by law, and according to the forms prescribed therein. Whoever solicit, expedite, or execute arbitrary orders, or have them executed, must be punished; but every citizen summoned or apprehended in pursuance of the law must obey immediately; he renders himself culpable by resistance.

8. The law is to establish only penalties that are absolutely and obviously necessary; and no one may be punished except by virtue of a law established and promulgated prior to the offence and legally applied.

9. Since every man is presumed innocent until declared guilty, if arrest be deemed indispensable, all unnecessary severity for securing the person of the accused must be severely repressed by law.

10. No one is to be disquieted because of his opinions, even religious, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law.

11. Free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Consequently, every citizen may speak,
write, and print freely, subject to responsibility for the abuse of such liberty in the cases determined by law.

12. The guarantee of the rights of man and citizen necessitates a public force; therefore, is instituted for the advantage of all and not for the particular benefit of those to whom it is entrusted.

13. For the maintenance of the public force and for the expenses of administration a common tax is indispensable; it must be assessed equally on all citizens in proportion to their means.

14. Citizens have the right to ascertain, by themselves or through their representatives, the necessity of the public tax, to consent to it freely, to supervise its use, and to determine its quota, assessment, payment, and duration.

15. Society has the right to require of every public agent an accounting of his administration.

16. Every society in which the guarantee of rights is not assured or the separation of powers not determined has no constitution at all.

17. Since property is a sacred and inviolate right, no one may be deprived thereof unless a legally established public necessity obviously requires it, and upon condition of a just and previous indemnity.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) lived a short but influential life as a writer in England and France in the midst of the French Revolution. She wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) in response to the radical changes that were occurring in France. She also lent support to Thomas Paine's radical *Rights of Man* (1791) which challenged conservative Edmund Burke's critical *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790).

The American and French revolutions enshrined many of the ideas and much of the language of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The very success of these revolutions demonstrated the power of En-
lightenment ideas about freedom and equality and, thus, inspired other marginalized groups to wonder about their own rights. If all men were created equal, then what about slaves? If kings and their governments could be overthrown and replaced by the rule of “the people,” why, then, did women have no power politically—they were people too, weren’t they? Mary Wollstonecraft, sometimes called the first feminist, was one of those who wondered about this, and who took Enlightenment reasoning a step further.

The male thinkers of the Enlightenment had been content to declare the “rights of man” as sufficient protection for women, assuming that “man” stood for mankind. Wollstonecraft forced them to confront that when they declared that “all men” are created equal, they did not mean to include women. In fact, they believed that women did not have the same rational faculties as men, and that women were principally meant to attend to their appearance and the service of the naturally dominant sex. Wollstonecraft pointed out that women were trained by society to accept these insults as part of the “natural” state of things.

Modern feminists sometimes distinguish between two types of demands: political/legal and cultural. Generally political and legal demands are easier to identify and label—like the right to vote or the right to own property—and the only requirement for these rights to become available to women is that legislation be enacted. Cultural demands are often more subtle and complicated and require changes in the way people think. Which of Wollstonecraft’s demands are political or legal? Which are cultural? Which of her demands have been realized since 1792? Which have not?

Thinking Historically

When Jefferson wrote that “all men are created equal,” he was writing in the language of eighteenth-century enlightened universalism. But he did not imagine that any of his contemporaries would think the document included women or African slaves. Notice how Mary Wollstonecraft speaks of man in general in most of the first chapter and then turns to “men” in most of the rest of the selection. Why do you think she changes her focus from mankind to men?

In addition to the enormous differences between eighteenth-century and modern vocabulary and writing styles, both the questions and the answers of the eighteenth century were different from our own. Most people today would answer eighteenth-century questions very differently from the way they were answered then. If asked, few people today, for instance, would say that men alone should be educated. The idea that both men and women should be educated is an example of an idea that was new in 1792, but is now almost universally
accepted. What other ideas does Wollstonecraft express that have since become fairly universal?

In addition, we no longer ask some of the questions that were asked in the eighteenth century. What examples do you see here of questions that are generally no longer asked? What other kinds of questions have we stopped asking? Why?

Chap. I. The Rights and Involved Duties of Mankind Considered

In the present state of society it appears necessary to go back to first principles in search of the most simple truths, and to dispute with some prevailing prejudice every inch of ground. To clear my way, I must be allowed to ask some plain questions, and the answers will probably appear as unequivocal as the axioms on which reasoning is built; though, when entangled with various motives of action, they are formally contradicted, either by the words or conduct of men.

In what does man's pre-eminence over the brute creation consist? The answer is as clear as that a half is less than the whole; in Reason.

What acquirement exalts one being above another? Virtue, we spontaneously reply.

For what purpose were the passions implanted? That man by struggling with them might attain a degree of knowledge denied to the brutes, whispers Experience.

Consequently the perfection of our nature and capability of happiness must be estimated by the degree of reason, virtue, and knowledge that distinguish the individual, and direct the laws which bind society; and that from the exercise of reason, knowledge and virtue naturally flow is equally undeniable, if mankind be viewed collectively.

The rights and duties of man thus simplified, it seems almost impertinent to attempt to illustrate truths that appear so incontrovertible; yet such deeply rooted prejudices have clouded reason, and such spurious qualities have assumed the name of virtues, that it is necessary to pursue the course of reason as it has been perplexed and involved in error, by various adventitious circumstances, comparing the simple axiom with casual deviations.

Men, in general, seem to employ their reason to justify prejudices, which they have imbibed, they cannot trace how, rather than to root them out. The mind must be strong that resolutely forms its own principles; for a kind of intellectual cowardice prevails which makes many men shrink from the task, or only do it by halves. Yet the imperfect conclusions thus drawn, are frequently very plausible, because they are built on partial experience, on just, though narrow, views. . . .
Chap. II. The Prevailing Opinion of a Sexual Character Discussed

To account for, and excuse the tyranny of man, many ingenious arguments have been brought forward to prove, that the two sexes, in the acquirement of virtue, ought to aim at attaining a very different character: or, to speak explicitly, women are not allowed to have sufficient strength of mind to acquire what really deserves the name of virtue. Yet it should seem, allowing them to have souls, that there is but one way appointed by Providence to lead mankind to either virtue or happiness.

If then women are not a swarm of ephemeral triflers, why should they be kept in ignorance under the specious name of innocence? Men complain, and with reason, of the follies and caprices of our sex, when they do not keenly satirize our headstrong passions and groveling vices. Behold, I should answer, the natural effect of ignorance! The mind will ever be unstable that has only prejudices to rest on, and the current will run with destructive fury when there are no barriers to break its force. Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, outward obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, every thing else is needless, for, at least, twenty years of their lives.

How grossly do they insult us who thus advise us only to render ourselves gentle, domestic brutes! For instance, the winning softness so warmly, and frequently, recommended, that governs by obeying. What childish expressions, and how insignificant is the being — can it be an immortal one? who will condescend to govern by such sinister methods! "Certainly," says Lord Bacon,\(^1\) "man is of kin to the beasts by his body; and if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature!" Men, indeed, appear to me to act in a very unphilosophical manner when they try to secure the good conduct of women by attempting to keep them always in a state of childhood.

Chap. IV. Observations on the State of Degradation to Which Woman Is Reduced by Various Causes

... The power of generalizing ideas, of drawing comprehensive conclusions from individual observations, is the only acquirement, for an immortal being, that really deserves the name of knowledge. Merely to observe, without endeavoring to account for any thing, may (in a very

\(^1\)Francis Bacon (1561–1626), English philosopher, writer, and statesman. [Ed.]
incomplete manner) serve as the common sense of life; but where is the store laid up that is to clothe the soul when it leaves the body?

This power has not only been denied to women; but writers have insisted that it is inconsistent, with a few exceptions, with their sexual character. Let men prove this, and I shall grant that woman only exists for man. I must, however, previously remark, that the power of generalizing ideas, to any great extent, is not very common amongst men or women. But this exercise is the true cultivation of the understanding; and every thing conspires to render the cultivation of the understanding more difficult in the female than the male world.

I am naturally led by this assertion to the main subject of the present chapter, and shall now attempt to point out some of the causes that degrade the sex, and prevent women from generalizing their observations.

Ah! why do women, I write with affectionate solicitude, condescend to receive a degree of attention and respect from strangers, different from that reciprocation of civility which the dictates of humanity and the politeness of civilization authorize between man and man? And, why do they not discover, when “in the noon of beauty’s power,” that they are treated like queens only to be deluded by hollow respect, till they are led to resign, or not assume, their natural prerogatives?

Confined then in cages like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but to plume themselves, and stalk with mock majesty from perch to perch. It is true they are provided with food and raiment, for which they neither toil nor spin; but health, liberty, and virtue, are given in exchange. But, where, amongst mankind has been found sufficient strength of mind to enable a being to resign these adventitious prerogatives; one who, rising with the calm dignity of reason above opinion, dared to be proud of the privileges inherent in man? And it is vain to expect it whilst hereditary power Chokes the affections and nips reason in the bud.

"I have endeavoured," says Lord Chesterfield,² “to gain the hearts of twenty women, whose persons I would not have given a fig for.”

I lament that women are systematically degraded by receiving the trivial attentions, which men think it manly to pay to the sex, when, in fact, they are insultingly supporting their own superiority. It is not condescension to bow to an inferior. So ludicrous, in fact, do these ceremonies appear to me, that I scarcely am able to govern my muscles, when I see a man start with eager, and serious solicitude to lift a handkerchief, or shut a door, when the lady could have done it herself, had she only moved a pace or two.

²Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth earl of Chesterfield (1694–1773), English statesman, diplomat, and wit. [Ed.]
Mankind, including every description, wish to be loved and respected for something; and the common herd will always take the nearest road to the completion of their wishes. The respect paid to wealth and beauty is the most certain, and unequivocal; and, of course, will always attract the vulgar eye of common minds. Abilities and virtues are absolutely necessary to raise men from the middle rank of life into notice; and the natural consequence is notorious; the middle rank contains most virtue and abilities. Men have thus, in one station, at least, an opportunity of exerting themselves with dignity, and of rising by the exertions which really improve a rational creature; but the whole female sex are, till their character is formed, in the same condition as the rich: for they are born, I now speak of a state of civilization, with certain sexual privileges, and whilst they are gratuitously granted them, few will ever think of works of supererogation, to obtain the esteem of a small number of superior people. . . .

Women, commonly called Ladies, are not to be contradicted in company, are not allowed to exert any manual strength; and from them the negative virtues only are expected, when any virtues are expected, patience, docility, good-humor, and flexibility; virtues incompatible with any vigorous exertion of intellect. Besides, by living more with each other, and being seldom absolutely alone, they are more under the influence of sentiments than passions. Solitude and reflection are necessary to give to wishes the force of passions, and to enable the imagination to enlarge the object, and make it the most desirable. The same may be said of the rich; they do not sufficiently deal in general ideas, collected by impassioned thinking, or calm investigation, to acquire that strength of character on which great resolves are built.

Chap. XII. On National Education

The good effects resulting from attention to private education will ever be very confined, and the parent who really puts his own hand to the plow, will always, in some degree, be disappointed, till education becomes a grand national concern. A man cannot retire into a desert with his child, and if he did he could not bring himself back to childhood, and become the proper friend and play-fellow of an infant or youth. And when children are confined to the society of men and women, they very soon acquire that kind of premature manhood which stops the growth of every vigorous power of mind or body. In order to open their faculties they should be excited to think for themselves; and this

3More than is necessary. [Ed.]
can only be done by mixing a number of children together, and making them jointly pursue the same objects.

Let an enlightened nation then try what effect reason would have to bring them back to nature, and their duty; and allowing them to share the advantages of education and government with man, see whether they will become better, as they grow wiser and become free. They cannot be injured by the experiment; for it is not in the power of man to render them more insignificant than they are at present.

To render this practicable, day schools, for particular ages, should be established by government, in which boys and girls might be educated together. The school for the younger children, from five to nine years of age, ought to be absolutely free and open to all classes.

After the age of nine, girls and boys, intended for domestic employments, or mechanical trades, ought to be removed to other schools, and receive instruction, in some measure appropriated to the destination of each individual, the two sexes being still together in the morning; but in the afternoon, the girls should attend a school, where plain-work, mantua-making, millinery, etc. would be their employment.

The young people of superior abilities, or fortune, might now be taught, in another school, the dead and living languages, the elements of science, and continue the study of history and politics, on a more extensive scale, which would not exclude polite literature.

Girls and boys still together? I hear some readers ask: yes. And I should not fear any other consequence than that some early attachment might take place; which, whilst it had the best effect on the moral character of the young people, might not perfectly agree with the views of the parents, for it will be a long time, I fear, before the world is so far enlightened that parents, only anxious to render their children virtuous, will let them choose companions for life themselves.

In short, in whatever light I view the subject, reason and experience convince me that the only method of leading women to fulfill their peculiar duties, is to free them from all restraint by allowing them to participate in the inherent rights of mankind.

Make them free, and they will quickly become wise and virtuous, as men become more so; for the improvement must be mutual, or the injustice which one half of the human race are obliged to submit to, retorting on their oppressors, the virtue of man will be worm-eaten by the insect whom he keeps under his feet.

Let men take their choice, man and woman were made for each other, though not to become one being; and if they will not improve women, they will deprave them!
TOUSSAINT L’OUVERTURE

Letter to the Directory

When the French revolutionaries proclaimed the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789, the French colony of Saint-Domingue, now Haiti, contained a half million African slaves, most of whom worked on the sugar plantations that made France one of the richest countries in the world. Thus, the French were confronted with the difficult problem of reconciling their enlightened principles with the extremely profitable, but fundamentally unequal, institution of slavery.

French revolutionaries remained locked in debate about this issue when in 1791, the slaves of Saint-Domingue organized a revolt that culminated in establishing Haiti’s national independence twelve years later. François Dominique Toussaint L’Ouverture, a self-educated Haitian slave, led the revolt and the subsequent battles against the French planter class and French armies, as well as the Spanish forces of neighboring Santo Domingo, now the other half of the island known as the Dominican Republic and the antirevolutionary forces of Britain, all of whom vied for control of the island at the end of the eighteenth century.

At first Toussaint enjoyed the support of the revolutionary government in Paris; in the decree of 16 Pluviôse (1794) the National Convention abolished slavery in the colonies. But after 1795, the revolution turned on itself and Toussaint feared the new conservative government, called the Directory, might send troops to restore slavery on the island.

In 1797 he wrote the Directory the letter that follows. Notice how Toussaint negotiated a difficult situation. How did he try to reassure the government of his allegiance to France? At the same time, how did

san doh MANG  Santo Domingo was the Spanish name for the eastern half of Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic). Saint-Domingue was the French name for the western half of the island, now Haiti. San Domingo, which is used in the text, is a nineteenth-century abbreviation for Saint-Domingue. To further complicate matters, both the Spanish and French sometimes used their term for the whole island of Hispaniola. Spain controlled the entire island until 1697 when the Spanish recognized French control of the west. [Ed.]

*too SAN  loo vehr TUR

he attempt to convince the Directory that a return to slavery was unthinkible?

Thinking Historically

Notice how the author is torn between the ideals of the French Revolution and the interests of the people of Saint-Domingue. Where did Toussaint’s true loyalty lie? At the time he wrote this letter events had not yet forced him to declare the independence of Saint-Domingue (Haiti); this would not happen until January 1, 1804. But, according to the letter, how and why did Toussaint regard the principles of the French Revolution as more important than his loyalty to France?

... The impolitic and incendiary discourse of Vaublan has not affected the blacks nearly so much as their certainty of the projects which the proprietors of San Domingo are planning: insidious declarations should not have any effect in the eyes of wise legislators who have decreed liberty for the nations. But the attempts on that liberty which the colonists propose are all the more to be feared because it is with the veil of patriotism that they cover their detestable plans. We know that they seek to impose some of them on you by illusory and specious promises, in order to see renewed in this colony its former scenes of horror. Already pernicious emissaries have stepped in among us to ferment the destructive leaven prepared by the hands of liberticides. But they will not succeed. I swear it by all that liberty holds most sacred. My attachment to France, my knowledge of the blacks, make it my duty not to leave you ignorant either of the crimes which they meditate or the oath that we renew, to bury ourselves under the ruins of a country revived by liberty rather than suffer the return of slavery.

It is for you, Citizens Directors, to turn from over our heads the storm which the eternal enemies of our liberty are preparing in the shades of silence. It is for you to enlighten the legislature, it is for you to prevent the enemies of the present system from spreading themselves on our unfortunate shores to sully it with new crimes. Do not allow our brothers, our friends, to be sacrificed to men who wish to reign over the ruins of the human species. But no, your wisdom will enable you to avoid the dangerous snares which our common enemies hold out for you...

I send you with this letter a declaration which will acquaint you with the unity that exists between the proprietors of San Domingo who are in France, those in the United States, and those who serve under the English banner. You will see there a resolution, unequivocal and carefully constructed, for the restoration of slavery; you will see there that
their determination to succeed has led them to envelop themselves in the mantle of liberty in order to strike it more deadly blows. You will see that they are counting heavily on my complacency in lending myself to their perfidious views by my fear for my children. It is not astonishing that these men who sacrifice their country to their interests are unable to conceive how many sacrifices a true love of country can support in a better father than they, since I unhesitatingly base the happiness of my children on that of my country, which they and they alone wish to destroy.

I shall never hesitate between the safety of San Domingo and my personal happiness; but I have nothing to fear. It is to the solicitude of the French Government that I have confided my children. . . . I would tremble with horror if it was into the hands of the colonists that I had sent them as hostages; but even if it were so, let them know that in punishing them for the fidelity of their father, they would only add one degree more to their barbarism, without any hope of ever making me fail in my duty. . . . Blind as they are! They cannot see how this odious conduct on their part can become the signal of new disasters and irreparable misfortunes, and that far from making them regain what in their eyes liberty for all has made them lose, they expose themselves to a total ruin and the colony to its inevitable destruction. Do they think that men who have been able to enjoy the blessing of liberty will calmly see it snatched away? They supported their chains only so long as they did not know any condition of life more happy than that of slavery. But to-day when they have left it, if they had a thousand lives they would sacrifice them all rather than be forced into slavery again. But no, the same hand which has broken our chains will not enslave us anew. France will not revoke her principles, she will not withdraw from us the greatest of her benefits. She will protect us against all our enemies; she will not permit her sublime morality to be perverted, those principles which do her most honour to be destroyed, her most beautiful achievement to be degraded, and her Decree of 16 Pluviose which so honours humanity to be revoked. But if, to re-establish slavery in San Domingo, this was done, then I declare to you it would be to attempt the impossible: we have known how to face dangers to obtain our liberty, we shall know how to brave death to maintain it.

This, Citizens Directors, is the morale of the people of San Domingo, those are the principles that they transmit to you by me.

My own you know. It is sufficient to renew, my hand in yours, the oath that I have made, to cease to live before gratitude dies in my heart, before I cease to be faithful to France and to my duty, before the god of liberty is profaned and sullied by the liberticides, before they can snatch from my hands that sword, those arms, which France confided to me for the defence of its rights and those of humanity, for the triumph of liberty and equality.
SIMÓN BOLÍVAR
A Constitution for Venezuela

As we have seen, the Enlightenment principles of reason, human rights, and equality ignited revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic. In Europe, these revolutions overturned kings and tyrannies, marshaling national citizen armies and creating parliamentary democracies. In the American colonies, the revolutions took shape as anticolonial struggles for independence. Sometimes the effort to create both an independent nation and a democracy proved overwhelming.

Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), called "the Liberator," successfully led the Latin American revolution for independence from Spain between 1810 and 1824. (See Map 6.1.) In 1819, he became president of Venezuela and of what is today Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama, and he gave the speech on the Constitution of Venezuela that follows.

What does Bolívar see as the difference between the independence of Spanish-American colonies and that of the American colonies? What does he mean when he says that Latin Americans have been denied "domestic tyranny"? Would you call Bolívar a "democrat"? Is he more or less democratic than the French or North American revolutionaries? What kind of society do you think would result from the constitution he envisions?

Thinking Historically

How does Bolívar characterize the revolutionary population of South America? How does he think this population differs from the North American revolutionaries? What do you think accounts for this difference?

In what ways did the revolutionaries of South America, North America, and France see their problems and needs differently? How did Bolívar propose to solve what he perceived to be the unique problems of South America? What do you think of his solution?

*see MOHN  boh LEE vaehr

Let us review the past to discover the base upon which the Republic of Venezuela is founded.

America, in separating from the Spanish monarchy, found herself in a situation similar to that of the Roman Empire when its enormous framework fell to pieces in the midst of the ancient world. Each Roman division then formed an independent nation in keeping with its location or interests; but this situation differed from America's in that those members proceeded to reestablish their former associations. We, on the contrary, do not even retain the vestiges of our original being. We are not Europeans; we are not Indians; we are but a mixed species of aborigines and Spaniards. Americans by birth and Europeans by law, we find ourselves engaged in a dual conflict: We are disputing with the natives for titles of ownership, and at the same time we are struggling to maintain ourselves in the country that gave us birth against the opposition of the invaders. Thus our position is most extraordinary and complicated. But there is more. As our role has always been strictly passive...
and political existence nil, we find that our quest for liberty is now even more difficult of accomplishment; for we, having been placed in a state lower than slavery, had been robbed not only of our freedom but also of the right to exercise an active domestic tyranny. Permit me to explain this paradox.

In absolute systems, the central power is unlimited. The will of the despot is the supreme law, arbitrarily enforced by subordinates who take part in the organized oppression in proportion to the authority that they wield. They are charged with civil, political, military, and religious functions; but, in the final analysis, the satraps of Persia are Persian, the pashas of the Grand Turk are Turks, and the sultans of Tartary are Tartars. China does not seek her mandarins in the homeland of Genghis Khan, her conqueror. America, on the contrary, received everything from Spain, who, in effect, deprived her of the experience that she would have gained from the exercise of an active tyranny by not allowing her to take part in her own domestic affairs and administration. This exclusion made it impossible for us to acquaint ourselves with the management of public affairs; nor did we enjoy that personal consideration, of such great value in major revolutions, that the brilliance of power inspires in the eyes of the multitude. In brief, Gentlemen, we were deliberately kept in ignorance and cut off from the world in all matters relating to the science of government.

Subject to the three-fold yoke of ignorance, tyranny, and vice, the American people have been unable to acquire knowledge, power, or [civic] virtue. The lessons we received and the models we studied, as pupils of such pernicious teachers, were most destructive. We have been ruled more by deceit than by force, and we have been degraded more by vice than by superstition. Slavery is the daughter of darkness: An ignorant people is a blind instrument of its own destruction. Ambition and intrigue abuse the credulity and experience of men lacking all political, economic, and civic knowledge; they adopt pure illusion as reality; they take license for liberty, treachery for patriotism, and vengeance for justice. This situation is similar to that of the robust blind man who, beguiled by his strength, strides forward with all the assurance of one who can see, but, upon hitting every variety of obstacle, finds himself unable to retrace his steps.

If a people, perverted by their training, succeed in achieving their liberty, they will soon lose it, for it would be of no avail to endeavor to explain to them that happiness consists in the practice of virtue; that the rule of law is more powerful than the rule of tyrants, because, as the laws are more inflexible, every one should submit to their beneficent austerity; that proper morals, and not force, are the bases of law; and that to practice justice is to practice liberty. Therefore, Legislators, your work is so much the more arduous, inasmuch as you have to reeducate men who have been corrupted by erroneous illusions and false incen-
tives. Liberty, says Rousseau, is a succulent morsel, but one difficult to digest. Our weak fellow-citizens will have to strengthen their spirit greatly before they can digest the wholesome nutriment of freedom. Their limbs benumbed by chains, their sight dimmed by the darkness of dungeons, and their strength sapped by the pestilence of servitude, are they capable of marching toward the august temple of Liberty without faltering? Can they come near enough to bask in its brilliant rays and to breathe freely the pure air which reigns therein? . . .

The more I admire the excellence of the federal Constitution of Venezuela, the more I am convinced of the impossibility of its application to our state. And to my way of thinking, it is a marvel that its prototype in North America endures so successfully and has not been overthrown at the first sign of adversity or danger. Although the people of North America are a singular model of political virtue and moral rectitude; although the nation was cradled in liberty, reared on freedom, and maintained by liberty alone; and — I must reveal everything — although those people, so lacking in many respects, are unique in the history of mankind, it is a marvel, I repeat, that so weak and complicated a government as the federal system has managed to govern them in the difficult and trying circumstances of their past. But, regardless of the effectiveness of this form of government with respect to North America, I must say that it has never for a moment entered my mind to compare the position and character of two states as dissimilar as the English-American and the Spanish-American. Would it not be most difficult to apply to Spain the English system of political, civil, and religious liberty? Hence, it would be even more difficult to adapt to Venezuela the laws of North America. Does not L'Esprit des Lois state that laws should be suited to the people for whom they are made; that it would be a major coincidence if those of one nation could be adapted to another; that laws must take into account the physical conditions of the country, climate, character of the land, location, size, and mode of living of the people; that they should be in keeping with the degree of liberty that the Constitution can sanction respecting the religion of the inhabitants, their inclinations, resources, number, commerce, habits, and customs? This is the code we must consult, not the code of Washington! . . .

Venezuela had, has, and should have a republican government. Its principles should be the sovereignty of the people, division of powers, civil liberty, proscription of slavery, and the abolition of monarchy and privileges. We need equality to recast, so to speak, into a unified nation, the classes of men, political opinions, and public customs.

Among the ancient and modern nations, Rome and Great Britain are the most outstanding. Both were born to govern and to be free and both were built not on ostentatious forms of freedom, but upon solid institutions. Thus I recommend to you, Representatives, the study of
the British Constitution, for that body of laws appears destined to bring about the greatest possible good for the peoples that adopt it; but, however perfect it may be, I am by no means proposing that you imitate it slavishly. When I speak of the British government, I only refer to its republican features; and, indeed, can a political system be labelled a monarchy when it recognizes popular sovereignty, division and balance of powers, civil liberty, freedom of conscience and of press, and all that is politically sublime? Can there be more liberty in any other type of republic? Can more be asked of any society? I commend this Constitution to you as that most worthy of serving as model for those who aspire to the enjoyment of the rights of man and who seek all the political happiness which is compatible with the frailty of human nature.

Nothing in our fundamental laws would have to be altered were we to adopt a legislative power similar to that held by the British Parliament. Like the North Americans, we have divided national representation into two chambers; that of Representatives and the Senate. The first is very wisely constituted. It enjoys all its proper functions, and it requires no essential revision, because the Constitution, in creating it, gave it the form and powers which the people deemed necessary in order that they might be legally and properly represented. If the Senate were hereditary rather than elective, it would, in my opinion, be the basis, the tie, the very soul of our republic. In political storms this body would arrest the thunderbolts of the government and would repel any violent popular reaction. Devoted to the government because of a natural interest in its own preservation, a hereditary senate would always oppose any attempt on the part of the people to infringe upon the jurisdiction and authority of their magistrates. It must be confessed that most men are unaware of their best interests, and that they constantly endeavor to assail them in the hands of their custodians—the individual clashes with the mass, and the mass with authority. It is necessary, therefore, that in all governments there be a neutral body to protect the injured and disarm the offender. To be neutral, this body must not owe its origin to appointment by the government or to election by the people, if it is to enjoy a full measure of independence which neither fears nor expects anything from these two sources of authority. The hereditary senate, as a part of the people, shares its interests, its sentiments, and its spirit. For this reason it should not be presumed that a hereditary senate would ignore the interests of the people or forget its legislative duties. The senators in Rome and in the House of Lords in London have been the strongest pillars upon which the edifice of political and civil liberty has rested.

At the outset, these senators should be elected by Congress. The successors to this Senate must command the initial attention of the government, which should educate them in a collegio designed especially to train these guardians and future legislators of the nation. They ought to
learn the arts, sciences, and letters that enrich the mind of a public figure. From childhood they should understand the career for which they have been destined by Providence, and from earliest youth they should prepare their minds for the dignity that awaits them.

The creation of a hereditary senate would in no way be a violation of political equality. I do not solicit the establishment of a nobility, for as a celebrated republican has said, that would simultaneously destroy equality and liberty. What I propose is an office for which the candidates must prepare themselves, an office that demands great knowledge and the ability to acquire such knowledge. All should not be left to chance and the outcome of elections. The people are more easily deceived than is Nature perfected by art; and, although these senators, it is true, would not be bred in an environment that is all virtue, it is equally true that they would be raised in an atmosphere of enlightened education. Furthermore, the liberators of Venezuela are entitled to occupy forever a high rank in the Republic that they have brought into existence. I believe that posterity would view with regret the effacement of the illustrious names of its first benefactors. I say, moreover, that it is a matter of public interest and national honor, of gratitude on Venezuela’s part, to honor gloriously, until the end of time, a race of virtuous, prudent, and persevering men who, overcoming every obstacle, have founded the Republic at the price of the most heroic sacrifices. And if the people of Venezuela do not applaud the elevation of their benefactors, then they are unworthy to be free; and they will never be free.

A hereditary senate, I repeat, will be the fundamental basis of the legislative power, and therefore the foundation of the entire government. It will also serve as a counterweight to both government and people; and as a neutral power it will weaken the mutual attacks of these two eternally rival powers. In all conflicts the calm reasoning of a third party will serve as the means of reconciliation. Thus the Venezuelan senate will give strength to this delicate political structure, so sensitive to violent repercussions; it will be the mediator that will lull the storms and it will maintain harmony between the head and the other parts of the political body.

REFLECTIONS

The Enlightenment and its political legacies — secular order and revolutionary republicanism — were European in origin but global in impact. In this chapter, we have touched on just a few of the crosscurrents of what some historians call an “Atlantic Revolution.” A tide of revolutionary fervor swept through France, the United States, and Latin
America, found sympathy in Russia in 1825, and echoed in the Muslim heartland, resulting in secular, modernizing regimes in Turkey and Egypt in the next century.

The appeal of the Enlightenment, of rationally ordered society, and of democratic government continues. Elements of this eighteenth-century revolution — the rule of law; regular, popular elections of representatives; the separation of church and state, of government and politics, and of civil and military authority — are widely recognized ideals and emerging global realities. Like science, the principles of the Enlightenment are universal in their claims and often seem universal in their appeal. Nothing is simpler, more rational, or easier to follow than a call to reason, law, liberty, justice, or equality. And yet every society has evolved its own guidelines under different circumstances, often with lasting results. France had its king and still has a relatively centralized state. The United States began with slavery and still suffers from racism. South American states became free of Europe only to dominate Native Americans, and they continue to do so. One democratic society has a king, another a House of Lords, another a national church. Are these different adaptations of the Enlightenment ideal? Or are these examples of incomplete revolution, cases of special interests allowing their governments to fall short of principle?

The debate continues today as more societies seek to realize responsive, representative government and the rule of law while oftentimes respecting conflicting traditions. Muslim countries and Israel struggle with the competing demands of secular law and religion, citizenship and communalism. Former communist countries adopt market economies and struggle with traditions of collective support and the appeal of individual liberty.

Perhaps these are conflicts within the Enlightenment tradition itself. How is it possible to have both liberty and equality? How can we claim inalienable rights on the basis of a secular, scientific creed? How does a faith in human reason lead to revolution? And how can ideas of order or justice avoid the consequences of history and human nature?

The great revolutionary declarations of the Enlightenment embarrass the modern skeptic with their naïve faith in natural laws, their universal prescriptions to cure all ills, and their hypocritical avoidance of slaves, women, and the colonized. The selections by Diderot, Tousaint, and Wollstonecraft, however, remind us that Enlightenment universalism was based not only on cool reason and calculation and the blind arrogance of the powerful. At least some of the great Enlightenment thinkers based their global prescription on the felt needs, even the sufferings, of others. For Diderot, Tousaint, and perhaps especially, Wollstonecraft, the recognition of human commonality began with a capacity for empathy that the Enlightenment may have bequeathed to the modern world.
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Two principal forces have shaped the modern world: capitalism and the industrial revolution. As influential as the transformations discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 (the rise of science and the democratic revolution), these two forces are sometimes considered to be one and the same, because the industrial revolution occurred first in capitalist countries such as England, Belgium, and the United States. In fact, the rise of capitalism preceded the industrial revolution by centuries.

Capitalism denotes a particular economic organization of a society, whereas industrial revolution refers to a particular transformation of technology. Specifically, in capitalism market forces (supply and demand) set money prices that determine how goods are distributed. Before 1500, most economic behavior was regulated by family, religion, tradition, and political authority rather than by markets. Increasingly after 1500 in Europe, feudal dues were converted into money rents, periodic fairs became institutionalized, banks were established, modern bookkeeping procedures were developed, and older systems of inherited economic status were loosened. After 1800, new populations of urban workers had to work for money to buy food and shelter; after 1850 even clothing had to be purchased in the new “department stores.” By 1900, the market had become the operating metaphor of society: One sold oneself; everything had its price. Viewed positively, a capitalist society is one in which buyers and sellers, who together compose the market, make most decisions about the production and distribution of resources. Viewed less favorably, it is the capitalists — those who own the resources of the society — who make the decisions about
production and distribution. The democratic process of one person, one vote is supplanted by one dollar, one vote.

The industrial revolution made mass production possible with the use of power-driven machines. Mills driven by waterwheels existed in ancient times, but the construction of identical, replaceable machinery — the machine production of machines — revolutionized industry and enabled the coordination of production on a vast scale, occurring first in England's cotton textile mills at the end of the eighteenth century. The market for such textiles was capitalist, though the demand for many early mass-produced goods, such as muskets and uniforms, was government-driven.

The origins of capitalism are hotly debated among historians. Because the world's first cities, five thousand years ago, created markets, merchants, money, and private ownership of capital, some historians refer to an ancient capitalism. In this text, capitalism refers to those societies whose markets, merchants, money, and private ownership became central to the way society operated. As such, ancient Mesopotamia, Rome, and Sung dynasty China, which had extensive markets and paper money a thousand years ago, were not among the first capitalist societies. Smaller societies in which commercial interests and merchant classes took hold to direct political and economic matters were the capitalist forerunners. Venice, Florence, Holland, and England, the mercantile states of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, exemplify commercial capitalism or mercantile capitalism. Thus, the shift to industrial capitalism was more than a change in scale; it was also a transition from a trade-based economy to a manufacturing-based economy, a difference that meant an enormous increase in productivity, profits, and prosperity.

**THINKING HISTORICALLY**

*Distinguishing Causes of Change*

Because industry and capitalism are so closely associated, it is difficult to distinguish the effects of one from the other. Still, such a distinction is necessary if we are to understand historical change.

Try to make an analytical distinction between capitalism and industrialization, even when the sources in this chapter do not. By determining what changes can be attributed to each, you will come to understand the changes that capitalism and industrialization might bring to other societies and the impact they may have had in other time periods.
ARNOLD PACEY

Asia and the Industrial Revolution

Here a modern historian of technology demonstrates how Indian and East Asian manufacturing techniques were assimilated by Europeans, particularly by the English successors of the Mughal Empire, providing a boost to the industrial revolution in Britain. In what ways was Indian technology considered superior prior to the industrial revolution? How did European products gain greater markets than those of India?

Thinking Historically

Notice how the author distinguishes between capitalism and the industrial revolution. Was India more industrially advanced than capitalistic? Did the British conquest of India benefit more from capitalism, industry, or something else?

Deindustrialization

During the eighteenth century, India participated in the European industrial revolution through the influence of its textile trade, and through the investments in shipping made by Indian bankers and merchants. Developments in textiles and shipbuilding constituted a significant industrial movement, but it would be wrong to suggest that India was on the verge of its own industrial revolution. There was no steam engine in India, no coal mines, and few machines. . . . [E]xpanding industries were mostly in coastal areas. Much of the interior was in economic decline, with irrigation works damaged and neglected as a result of the breakup of the Mughal Empire and the disruption of war. Though political weakness in the empire had been evident since 1707, and a Persian army heavily defeated Mughal forces at Delhi in 1739, it was the British who most fully took advantage of the collapse of the empire. Between 1757 and 1803, they took control of most of India except the Northwest. The result was that the East India Company now administered major sectors of the economy, and quickly reduced the role of the big Indian bankers by changes in taxes and methods of collecting them.

Meanwhile, India’s markets in Europe were being eroded by competition from machine-spun yarns and printed calicoes made in Lancashire, and high customs duties were directed against Indian imports into Britain. Restrictions were also placed on the use of Indian-built ships for voyages to England. From 1812, there were extra duties on any imports they delivered, and that must be one factor in the decline in shipbuilding. A few Indian ships continued to make the voyage to Britain, however, and there was one in Liverpool Docks in 1839 when Herman Melville arrived from America. It was the *Irrawaddy* from Bombay and Melville commented: “Forty years ago, these merchantmen were nearly the largest in the world; and they still exceed the generality.” They were “wholly built by the native shipwrights of India, who . . . surpassed the European artisans.” Melville further commented on a point which an Indian historian confirms, that the coconut fibre rope used for rigging on most Indian ships was too elastic and needed constant attention. Thus the rigging on the *Irrawaddy* was being changed for hemp rope while it was in Liverpool. Sisal rope was an alternative in India, used with advantage on some ships based at Calcutta.

Attitudes to India changed markedly after the subcontinent had fallen into British hands. Before this, travellers found much to admire in technologies ranging from agriculture to metallurgy. After 1803, however, the arrogance of conquest was reinforced by the rapid development of British industry. This meant that Indian techniques which a few years earlier seemed remarkable could now be equalled at much lower cost by British factories. India was then made to appear rather primitive, and the idea grew that its proper role was to provide raw materials for western industry, including raw cotton and indigo dye, and to function as a market for British goods. This policy was reflected in 1813 by a relaxation of the East India Company’s monopoly of trade so that other British companies could now bring in manufactured goods freely for sale in India. Thus the textile industry, iron production, and shipbuilding were all eroded by cheap imports from Britain, and by handicaps placed on Indian merchants.

By 1830, the situation had become so bad that even some of the British in India began to protest. One exclaimed, “We have destroyed the manufactures of India,” pleading that there should be some protection for silk weaving, “the last of the expiring manufactures of India.” Another observer was alarmed by a “commercial revolution” which produced “so much present suffering to numerous classes in India.”

The question that remains is the speculative one of what might have happened if a strong Mughal government had survived. Fernand Braudel argues that although there was no lack of “capitalism” in India, the economy was not moving in the direction of home-grown industrialization. The historian of technology inevitably notes the lack of development of machines, even though there had been some increase in
the use of water-wheels during the eighteenth century both in the iron industry and at gunpowder mills. However, it is impossible not to be struck by the achievements of the shipbuilding industry, which produced skilled carpenters and a model of large-scale organizations. It also trained up draughtsmen and people with mechanical interests. It is striking that one of the Wadia shipbuilders installed gas lighting in his home in 1834 and built a small foundry in which he made parts for steam engines. Given an independent and more prosperous India, it is difficult not to believe that a response to British industrialization might well have taken the form of a spread of skill and innovation from the shipyards into other industries.

As it was, such developments were delayed until the 1850s and later, when the first mechanized cotton mill opened. It is significant that some of the entrepreneurs who backed the development of this industry were from the same Parsi families as had built ships in Bombay and invested in overseas trade in the eighteenth century.

**Guns and Rails: Asia, Britain, and America**

Asian Stimulus

Britain’s “conquest” of India cannot be attributed to superior armaments. Indian armies were also well equipped. More significant was the prior breakdown of Mughal government and the collaboration of many Indians. Some victories were also the result of good discipline and bold strategy, especially when Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, was in command. Wellesley’s contribution also illustrates the distinctive western approach to the organizational aspect of technology. Indian armies might have had good armament, but because their guns were made in a great variety of different sizes, precise weapons drill was impossible and the supply of shot to the battlefield was unnecessarily complicated. By contrast, Wellesley’s forces standardized on just three sizes of field gun, and the commander himself paid close attention to the design of gun carriages and to the bullocks whichauled them, so that his artillery could move as fast as his infantry, and without delays due to wheel breakages.

Significantly, the one major criticism regularly made of Indian artillery concerned the poor design of gun carriages. Many, particularly before 1760, were little better than four-wheeled trolleys. But the guns themselves were often of excellent design and workmanship. Whilst some were imported and others were made with the assistance of foreign craft-workers, there was many a brass cannon and mortar of Indian design, as well as heavy muskets for camel-mounted troops. Captured field guns were often taken over for use by the British, and after capturing ninety
guns in one crucial battle, Wellesley wrote that seventy were “the finest brass ordnance I have ever seen.” They were probably made in northern India, perhaps at the great Mughal arsenal at Agra.

Whilst Indians had been making guns from brass since the sixteenth century, Europeans could at first only produce this alloy in relatively small quantities because they had no technique for smelting zinc. By the eighteenth century, however, brass was being produced in large quantities in Europe, and brass cannon were being cast at Woolwich Arsenal near London. Several European countries were importing metallic zinc from China for this purpose. However, from 1743 there was a smelter near Bristol in England producing zinc, using coke\(^1\) as fuel, and zinc smelters were also developed in Germany. At the end of the century, Britain’s imports of zinc from the Far East were only about forty tons per year. Nevertheless, a British party which visited China in 1797 took particular note of zinc smelting methods. These were similar to the process used in India, which involved vaporizing the metal and then condensing it. There is a suspicion that the Bristol smelting works of 1743 was based on Indian practice, although the possibility of independent invention cannot be excluded.

A much clearer example of the transfer of technology from India occurred when British armies on the subcontinent encountered rockets, a type of weapon of which they had no previous experience. The basic technology had come from the Ottoman Turks or from Syria before 1500, although the Chinese had invented rockets even earlier. In the 1790s, some Indian armies included very large infantry units equipped with rockets. French mercenaries in Mysore had learned to make them, and the British Ordnance Office was enquiring for somebody with expertise on the subject. In response, William Congreve, whose father was head of the laboratory at Woolwich Arsenal, undertook to design a rocket on Indian lines. After a successful demonstration, about two hundred of his rockets were used by the British in an attack on Boulogne in 1806. Fired from over a kilometre away, they set fire to the town. After this success, rockets were adopted quite widely by European armies, though some commanders, notably the Duke of Wellington, frowned on such imprecise weapons, and they tended to drop out of use later in the century. What happened next, however, was typical of the whole British relationship with India. William Congreve set up a factory to manufacture the weapons in 1817, and part of its output was exported to India to equip rocket troops operating there under British command.

Yet another aspect of Asian technology in which eighteenth-century Europeans were interested was the design of farm implements. Reports on seed drills and ploughs were sent to the British Board of Agriculture from India in 1795. A century earlier the Dutch had found much of

\(^{1}\)Fuel from soft coal. [Ed.]
interest in ploughs and winnowing machines of a Chinese type which they saw in Java. Then a Swedish party visiting Guangzhou (Canton) took a winnowing machine back home with them. Indeed, several of these machines were imported into different parts of Europe, and similar devices for cleaning threshed grain were soon being made there. The inventor of one of them, Jonas Norberg, admitted that he got "the initial idea" from three machines "brought here from China," but had to create a new type because the Chinese machines "do not suit our kinds of grain." Similarly, the Dutch saw that the Chinese plough did not suit their type of soil, but it stimulated them to produce new designs with curved metal mould-boards in contrast to the less efficient flat wooden boards used in Europe hitherto.

In most of these cases, and especially with zinc smelting, rockets, and winnowing machines, we have clear evidence of Europeans studying Asian technology in detail. With rockets and winnowers, though perhaps not with zinc, there was an element of imitation in the European inventions which followed. In other instances, however, the more usual course of technological dialogue between Europe and Asia was that European innovation was challenged by the quality or scale of Asian output, but took a different direction, as we have seen in many aspects of the textile industry. Sometimes, the dialogue was even more limited, and served mainly to give confidence in a technique that was already known. Such was the case with occasional references to China in the writings of engineers designing suspension bridges in Britain. The Chinese had a reputation for bridge construction, and before 1700 Peter the Great had asked for bridge-builders to be sent from China to work in Russia. Later, several books published in Europe described a variety of Chinese bridges, notably a long-span suspension bridge made with iron chains.

Among those who developed the suspension bridge in the West were James Finley in America, beginning in 1801, and Samuel Brown and Thomas Telford in Britain. About 1814, Brown devised a flat, wrought-iron chain link which Telford later used to form the main structural chains in his suspension bridges. But beyond borrowing this specific technique, what Telford needed was evidence that the suspension principle was applicable to the problem he was then tackling. Finley's two longest bridges had spanned seventy-four and ninety-three metres, over the Merrimac and Schuylkill Rivers in the eastern United States. Telford was aiming to span almost twice the larger distance with his 176-metre Menai Bridge. Experiments at a Shropshire ironworks gave confidence in the strength of the chains. But, Telford may have looked for reassurance even further afield. One of his notebooks contains the reminder, "Examine Chinese bridges." It is clear from the wording which follows that he had seen a recent booklet advocating a "bridge of chains," partly based on a Chinese example, to cross the Firth of Forth in Scotland.
ADAM SMITH

From The Wealth of Nations

An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations might justly be called the bible of free-market capitalism. Written in 1776 in the context of the British (and European) debate over the proper role of government in the economy, Smith's work takes aim at mercantilism, or government supervision of the economy. Mercantilists believed that national economies required government assistance and direction to prosper.

Smith argues that free trade will produce greater wealth than mercantilist trade and that free markets allocate resources more efficiently than the government. His notion of laissez-faire (literally "let do") capitalism assumes neither that capitalists are virtuous nor that governments should absent themselves entirely from the economy. However, Smith does believe that the greed of capitalists generally negates itself and produces results that are advantageous to, but unimagined by, the individual. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner," Smith wrote, "but from their regard of their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity, but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities, but of their advantage." Each person seeks to maximize his or her own gain, thereby creating an efficient market in which the cost of goods is instantly adjusted to exploit changes in supply and demand, while the market provides what is needed at the price people are willing to pay "as if by an invisible hand."

What would Smith say to a farmer or manufacturer who wanted to institute tariffs or quotas to limit the number of cheaper imports entering the country and to minimize competition? What would he say to a government official who wanted to protect an important domestic industry? What would he say to a worker who complained about low wages or boring work?

1Book I, chapter 2.

Thinking Historically

The Wealth of Nations was written in defense of free capitalism at a moment when the industrial revolution was just beginning. Some elements of Smith's writing suggest a preindustrial world, as in the quotation about the butcher, brewer, and baker mentioned earlier. Still, Smith was aware how new industrial methods were transforming age-old labor relations and manufacturing processes. In some respects, Smith recognized that capitalism could create wealth, not just redistribute it, because he appreciated the potential of industrial technology.

As you read this selection, note when Smith is discussing capitalism, the economic system, and the power of the new industrial technology. In his discussion of the division of labor, what relationship does Smith see between the development of a capitalistic market and the rise of industrial technology? According to Smith, what is the relationship between money and industry, and which is more important? What would Smith think about a "postindustrial" or "service" economy in which few workers actually make products? What would he think of a prosperous country that imported more than it exported?

Book I: Of the Causes of Improvement in the Productive Powers of Labour, and of the Order According to Which Its Produce Is Naturally Distributed among the Different Ranks of the People

Chapter 1: Of the Division of Labour

The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour, and the greater part of the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which it is anywhere directed, or applied, seem to have been the effects of the division of labour.

The effects of the division of labour, in the general business of society, will be more easily understood by considering in what manner it operates in some particular manufactures....

To take an example, therefore, from a very trifling manufacture; but one in which the division of labour has been very often taken notice of, the trade of the pin-maker; a workman not educated to this business (which the division of labour has rendered a distinct trade), nor acquainted with the use of the machinery employed in it (to the invention of which the same division of labour has probably given occasion), could scarce, perhaps, with his utmost industry, make one pin in a day, and certainly could not make twenty. But in the way in which this business is now carried on, not only the whole work is a peculiar trade, but it is divided into a number of branches, of which the greater part are
likewise peculiar trades. One man draws out the wire, another straights it, a third cuts it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the top for receiving the head; to make the head requires two or three distinct operations; to put it on is a peculiar business, to whiten the pins is another; it is even a trade by itself to put them into the paper; and the important business of making a pin is, in this manner, divided into about eighteen distinct operations, which, in some manufactories, are all performed by distinct hands, though in others the same man will sometimes perform two or three of them. I have seen a small manufactory of this kind where ten men only were employed, and where some of them consequently performed two or three distinct operations. But though they were very poor, and therefore but indifferently accommodated with the necessary machinery, they could, when they exerted themselves, make among them about twelve pounds of pins in a day. There are in a pound upwards of four thousand pins of a middling size. Those ten persons, therefore, could make among them upwards of forty-eight thousand pins in a day. Each person, therefore, making a tenth part of forty-eight thousand pins, might be considered as making four thousand eight hundred pins a day. But if they had all wrought separately and independently, and without any of them having been educated to this peculiar business, they certainly could not each of them have made twenty, perhaps not one pin in a day; that is, certainly, not the two hundred and fortieth, perhaps not the four thousand eight hundredth part of what they are at present capable of performing, in consequence of a proper division and combination of their different operations.

In every other art and manufacture, the effects of the division of labour are similar to what they are in this very trifling one; though, in many of them, the labour can neither be so much subdivided, nor reduced to so great a simplicity of operation. . . .

Chapter 3: That the Division of Labour
Is Limited by the Extent of the Market

As it is the power of exchanging that gives occasion to the division of labour, so the extent of this division must always be limited by the extent of that power, or, in other words, by the extent of the market. When the market is very small, no person can have any encouragement to dedicate himself entirely to one employment, for want of the power to exchange all that surplus part of the produce of his own labour, which is over and above his own consumption, for such parts of the produce of other men’s labour as he has occasion for.

There are some sorts of industry, even of the lowest kind, which can be carried on nowhere but in a great town. A porter, for example, can find employment and subsistence in no other place. A village is by much too narrow a sphere for him. . . .
Chapter 5: Of the Real and Nominal Price of Commodities, or Their Price in Labour, and Their Price in Money

Every man is rich or poor according to the degree in which he can afford to enjoy the necessaries, conveniences, and amusements of human life. But after the division of labour has once thoroughly taken place, it is but a very small part of these with which a man's own labour can supply him. The far greater part of them he must derive from the labour of other people, and he must be rich or poor according to the quantity of that labour which he can command, or which he can afford to purchase. The value of any commodity, therefore, to the person who possesses it, and who means not to use or consume it himself, but to exchange it for other commodities, is equal to the quantity of labour which it enables him to purchase or command. Labour, therefore, is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities.

Chapter 7: Of the Natural and Market Price of Commodities

... When the quantity of any commodity which is brought to market falls short of the effectual demand, all those who are willing to pay the whole value of the rent, wages, and profit, which must be paid in order to bring it thither, cannot be supplied with the quantity which they want. Rather than want it altogether, some of them will be willing to give more. A competition will immediately begin among them, and the market price will rise more or less above the natural price, according as either the greatness of the deficiency, or the wealth and wanton luxury of the competitors, happen to animate more or less the eagerness of the competition. Among competitors of equal wealth and luxury the same deficiency will generally occasion a more or less eager competition, according as the acquisition of the commodity happens to be of more or less importance to them. Hence the exorbitant price of the necessaries of life during the blockade of a town or in a famine.

When the quantity brought to market exceeds the effectual demand, it cannot be all sold to those who are willing to pay the whole value of the rent, wages, and profit, which must be paid in order to bring it thither. Some part must be sold to those who are willing to pay less, and the low price which they give for it must reduce the price of the whole. The market price will sink more or less below the natural price, according as the greatness of the excess increases more or less the competition of the sellers, or according as it happens to be more or less important to them to get immediately rid of the commodity. The same excess in the importation of perishables will occasion a much greater

1 Be without it. [Ed.]
competition than in that of durable commodities; in the importation of
oranges, for example, than in that of old iron.

When the quantity brought to market is just sufficient to supply the
effectual demand, and no more, the market price naturally comes to be
either exactly, or as nearly as can be judged of, the same with the na-
tural price. The whole quantity upon hand can be disposed of for this
price, and cannot be disposed of for more. The competition of the dif-
f erent dealers obliges them all to accept of this price, but does not
oblige them to accept of less.

The quantity of every commodity brought to market naturally suits
itself to the effectual demand. It is the interest of all those who employ
their land, labour, or stock, in bringing any commodity to market, that
the quantity never should exceed the effectual demand; and it is the in-
terest of all other people that it never should fall short of that demand.

**Book IV: Of Systems of Political Economy**

Chapter 1: Of the Principle of the
Commercial or Mercantile System

I thought it necessary, though at the hazard of being tedious, to exa-
mine at full length this popular notion that wealth consists in money, or
in gold and silver. Money in common language, as I have already ob-
served, frequently signifies wealth, and this ambiguity of expression has
rendered this popular notion so familiar to us that even they who are
convinced of its absurdity are very apt to forget their own principles,
and in the course of their reasonings to take it for granted as a certain
and undeniable truth. Some of the best English writers upon commerce
set out with observing that the wealth of a country consists, not in its
gold and silver only, but in its lands, houses, and consumable goods of
all different kinds. In the course of their reasonings, however, the lands,
houses, and consumable goods seem to slip out of their memory, and
the strain of their argument frequently supposes that all wealth consists
in gold and silver, and that to multiply those metals is the great object
of national industry and commerce. . . .

Chapter 2: Of Restraints upon the Importation
from Foreign Countries of Such Goods
as Can Be Produced at Home

. . . The produce of industry is what it adds to the subject or materials
upon which it is employed. In proportion as the value of this produce is
great or small, so will likewise be the profits of the employer. But it is
only for the sake of profit that any man employs a capital in the sup-
port of industry; and he will always, therefore, endeavour to employ it in the support of that industry of which the produce is likely to be of the greatest value, or to exchange for the greatest quantity either of money or of other goods.

But the annual revenue of every society is always precisely equal to the exchangeable value of the whole annual produce of its industry, or rather is precisely the same thing with that exchangeable value. As every individual, therefore, endeavours as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of domestic industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value; every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can. He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from it.

What is the species of domestic industry which his capital can employ, and of which the produce is likely to be of the greatest value, every individual, it is evident, can, in his local situation, judge much better than any statesman or lawgiver can do for him. The statesman who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capitals would not only load himself with a most unnecessary attention, but assume an authority which could safely be trusted, not only to no single person, but to no council or senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of a man who had folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it.

To give the monopoly of the home market to the produce of domestic industry, in any particular art or manufacture, is in some measure to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capitals, and must, in almost all cases, be either a useless or a hurtful regulation. If the produce of domestic can be brought there as cheap as that of foreign industry, the regulation is evidently useless. If it cannot, it must generally be hurtful. It is the maxim of every prudent master of a family never to attempt to make at home what it will cost him more to make than to buy. The tailor does not attempt to make his own shoes, but buys them of the shoemaker. The shoemaker does not attempt to make
his own clothes, but employs a tailor. The farmer attempts to make neither the one nor the other, but employs those different artificers. All of them find it for their interest to employ their whole industry in a way in which they have some advantage over their neighbours, and to purchase with a part of its produce, or what is the same thing, with the price of a part of it, whatever else they have occasion for.

What is prudence in the conduct of every private family can scarce be folly in that of a great kingdom. If a foreign country can supply us with a commodity cheaper than we ourselves can make it, better buy it of them with some part of the produce of our own industry employed in a way in which we have some advantage. The general industry of the country, being always in proportion to the capital which employs it, will not thereby be diminished, no more than that of the above-mentioned artificers; but only left to find out the way in which it can be employed with the greatest advantage. It is certainly not employed to the greatest advantage when it is thus directed towards an object which it can buy cheaper than it can make. . . .

From The Sadler Report of the House of Commons

Although children were among the ideal workers in the factories of the industrial revolution, according to many factory owners, increasingly their exploitation became a concern of the British Parliament. One important parliamentary investigation, chaired by Michael Sadler, took volumes of testimony from child workers and older people who had worked as children in the mines and factories. The following is a sample of the testimony gathered in the Sadler Report. The report led to child-labor reform in the Factory Act of 1833.

What seem to be the causes of Crabtree's distress? How could they have been alleviated?

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From The Sadler Report: Report from the Committee on the Bill to Regulate the Labour of Children in the Mills and Factories of the United Kingdom (London: The House of Commons, 1832).
Thinking Historically

To what extent are the problems faced by Matthew Crabtree the inevitable results of machine production? To what extent are his problems caused by capitalism? How might the owner of this factory have addressed these issues?

If you asked the owner why he didn't pay more, shorten the workday, provide more time for meals, or provide medical assistance when it was needed, how do you think he would have responded? Do you think Crabtree would have been in favor of reduced hours if it meant reduced wages?

Friday, 18 May 1832 — Michael Thomas Sadler, Esquire, in the Chair

Mr. Matthew Crabtree, called in; and Examined.

What age are you? — Twenty-two.
What is your occupation? — A blanket manufacturer.
Have you ever been employed in a factory? — Yes.
At what age did you first go to work in one? — Eight.
How long did you continue in that occupation? — Four years.
Will you state the hours of labour at the period when you first went to the factory, in ordinary times? — From 6 in the morning to 8 at night.
Fourteen hours? — Yes.
With what intervals for refreshment and rest? — An hour at noon.
Then you had no resting time allowed in which to take your breakfast, or what is in Yorkshire called your “drinking”? — No.
When trade was brisk what were your hours? — From 5 in the morning to 9 in the evening.
Sixteen hours? — Yes.
With what intervals at dinner? — An hour.
How far did you live from the mill? — About two miles.
Was there any time allowed for you to get your breakfast in the mill? — No.
Did you take it before you left your home? — Generally.
During those long hours of labour could you be punctual; how did you awake? — I seldom did awake spontaneously; I was most generally awoke or lifted out of bed, sometimes asleep, by my parents.
Were you always in time? — No.
What was the consequence if you had been too late? — I was most commonly beaten.
In whose factory was this? — Messrs. Hague & Cook's, of Dewsbury.
Will you state the effect that those long hours had upon the state of your health and feelings? — I was, when working those long hours, commonly very much fatigued at night, when I left my work; so much so that I sometimes should have slept as I walked if I had not stumbled and started awake again; and so sick often that I could not eat, and what I did eat I vomited.

Did this labour destroy your appetite? — It did.
In what situation were you in that mill? — I was a piecener.
Will you state to this Committee whether piecening is a very laborious employment for children, or not? — It is a very laborious employment. Pieceners are continually running to and fro, and on their feet the whole day.
The duty of the piecener is to take the cardings from one part of the machinery, and to place them on another? — Yes.
So that the labour is not only continual, but it is unabated to the last? — It is unabated to the last.
Do you not think, from your own experience, that the speed of the machinery is so calculated as to demand the utmost exertions of a child supposing the hours were moderate? — It is as much as they could do at the best; they are always upon the stretch, and it is commonly very difficult to keep up with their work.
State the condition of the children toward the latter part of the day, who have thus to keep up with the machinery. — It is as much as they can do when they are not very much fatigued to keep up with their work, and toward the close of the day, when they come to be more fatigued, they cannot keep up with it very well, and the consequence is that they are beaten to spur them on.
Were you beaten under those circumstances? — Yes.
Frequently? — Very frequently.
And principally at the latter end of the day? — Yes.
And is it your belief that if you had not been so beaten, you should not have got through the work? — I should not if I had not been kept up to it by some means.
Does beating then principally occur at the latter end of the day, when the children are exceedingly fatigued? — It does at the latter end of the day, and in the morning sometimes, when they are very drowsy, and have not got rid of the fatigue of the day before.
What were you beaten with principally? — A strap.
Anything else? — Yes, a stick sometimes; and there is a kind of roller which runs on the top of the machine called a billy, perhaps two or three yards in length, and perhaps an inch and a half, or more in diameter; the circumference would be four or five inches; I cannot speak exactly.
Were you beaten with that instrument? — Yes.
Have you yourself been beaten, and have you seen other children struck severely with that roller? — I have been struck very severely with
it myself, so much so as to knock me down, and I have seen other children have their heads broken with it.

You think that it is a general practice to beat the children with the roller? — It is.

You do not think then that you were worse treated than other children in the mill? — No, I was not, perhaps not so bad as some were.

In those mills is chastisement towards the latter part of the day going on perpetually? — Perpetually.

So that you can hardly be in a mill without hearing constant crying? — Never an hour, I believe.

Do you think that if the overlooker were naturally a humane person it would be still found necessary for him to beat the children, in order to keep up their attention and vigilance at the termination of those extraordinary days of labour? — Yes, the machine turns off a regular quantity of cardings, and of course they must keep as regularly to their work the whole of the day; they must keep with the machine, and therefore however humane the slubber may be, as he must keep up with the machine or be found fault with, he spurs the children to keep up also by various means but that which he commonly resorts to is to strap them when they become drowsy.

At the time when you were beaten for not keeping up with your work, were you anxious to have done it if you possibly could? — Yes; the dread of being beaten if we could not keep up with our work was a sufficient impulse to keep us to it if we could.

When you got home at night after this labour, did you feel much fatigued? — Very much so.

Had you any time to be with your parents, and to receive instruction from them? — No.

What did you do? — All that we did when we got home was to get the little bit of supper that was provided for us and go to bed immediately. If the supper had not been ready directly, we should have gone to sleep while it was preparing.

Did you not, as a child, feel it a very grievous hardship to be roused so soon in the morning? — I did.

Were the rest of the children similarly circumstanced? — Yes, all of them; but they were not all of them so far from their work as I was.

And if you had been too late you were under the apprehension of being cruelly beaten? — I generally was beaten when I happened to be too late; and when I got up in the morning the apprehension of that was so great, that I used to run, and cry all the way as I went to the mill.

That was the way by which your punctual attendance was secured? — Yes.

And you do not think it could have been secured by any other means? — No.
Then it is your impression from what you have seen, and from your own experience, that those long hours of labour have the effect of rendering young persons who are subject to them exceedingly unhappy? — Yes.

You have already said it had a considerable effect upon your health? — Yes.

Do you conceive that it diminished your growth? — I did not pay much attention to that; but I have been examined by some persons who said they thought I was rather stunted, and that I should have been taller if I had not worked at the mill.

What were your wages at that time? — Three shillings (per week).

And how much a day had you for overwork when you were worked so exceedingly long? — A halfpenny a day.

Did you frequently forfeit that if you were not always there to a moment? — Yes; I most frequently forfeited what was allowed for those long hours.

You took your food to the mill; was it in your mill, as is the case in cotton mills, much spoiled by being laid aside? — It was very frequently covered by flues from the wool; and in that case they had to be blown off with the mouth, and picked off with the fingers before it could be eaten.

So that not giving you a little leisure for eating your food, but obliging you to take it at the mill, spoiled your food when you did get it? — Yes, very commonly.

And that at the same time that this over-labour injured your appetite? — Yes.

Could you eat when you got home? — Not always.

What is the effect of this piecening upon the hands? — It makes them bleed; the skin is completely rubbed off, and in that case they bleed in perhaps a dozen parts.

The prominent parts of the hand? — Yes, all the prominent parts of the hand are rubbed down till they bleed; every day they are rubbed in that way.

All the time you continue at work? — All the time we are working. The hands never can be hardened in that work, for the grease keeps them soft in the first instance, and long and continual rubbing is always wearing them down, so that if they were hard they would be sure to bleed.

It is attended with much pain? — Very much.

Do they allow you to make use of the back of the hand? — No; the work cannot be so well done with the back of the hand, or I should have made use of that.
KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS

From The Communist Manifesto

The Communist Manifesto was written in 1848 in the midst of European upheaval, a time when capitalist industrialization had spread from England to France and Germany. Marx and Engels were Germans who studied and worked in France and England. In the Manifesto, they imagine a revolution that will transform all of Europe. What do they see as the inevitable causes of this revolution? How, according to their analysis, is the crisis of “modern” society different from previous crises? Were Marx and Engels correct?

Thinking Historically

Notice how Marx and Engels describe the notions of capitalism and industrialization without using those words. The term capitalism developed later from Marx’s classic Das Kapital (1859), but the term bourgeoisie, as Engels notes in this selection, stands for the capitalist class. For Marx and Engels, the industrial revolution (another later phrase) is the product of a particular stage of capitalist development. Thus, if Marx and Engels were asked whether capitalism or industry was the principal force that created the modern world, what would their answer be?

The Communist Manifesto is widely known as the classic critique of capitalism, but a careful reading reveals a list of achievements of capitalist or “bourgeois civilization.” What are these achievements? Did Marx and Engels consider them to be achievements? How could Marx and Engels both praise and criticize capitalism?

Bourgeois and Proletarians

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

*bohr zhwah ZEE

1In French bourgeoisie means a town-dweller. Proletarian comes from the Latin, proletarius, which meant a person whose sole wealth was his offspring (prole). [Ed.]

[Note by Engels] By “bourgeoisie” is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labor; by “proletariat,” the class of modern wage-laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guildmasters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society, has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into the two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — bourgeoisie and proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burghes the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolized by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guildmasters were pushed aside by the manufacturing middle class; division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture\(^2\) no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machin-
ery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, modern industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires—the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, it became an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general—the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie has played a most revolutionary role in history.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefensible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-laborers.
The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigor in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders for surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former migrations of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguished the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionaries, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all
nations, even the most barbarian, into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred for foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeoisie, the East on the West.

More and more the bourgeoisie keeps doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralization. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier and one customs tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground — what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?

We see then that the means of production and of exchange, which served as the foundation for the growth of the bourgeoisie, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organization of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in a word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of
property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of overproduction. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed. And why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and no sooner do they overcome these fetters than they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piece-meal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and con-
sequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeos class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class — the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants — all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by the new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.
PETER N. STEARNS

The Industrial Revolution Outside the West

Stearns, a modern historian, discusses the export of industrial machinery and techniques outside the West (Europe and North America) in the nineteenth century. Again and again, he finds that initial attempts at industrialization—in Russia, India, Egypt, and South America—led to increased production of export crops and resources but failed to stimulate true industrial revolutions. Consequently, as producers of raw materials, these countries became more deeply dependent on Western markets for their products, while at the same time importing from the West more valuable manufactured products like machinery. What common reasons can you find for these failures?

Thinking Historically

Did nineteenth-century efforts to ignite industrial revolutions outside the West fail because these societies neglected to develop capitalism, or did they fail because their local needs were subordinated to those of Western capitalists? Explain.

Before the 1870s no industrial revolution occurred outside Western society. The spread of industrialization within Western Europe, while by no means automatic, followed from a host of shared economic, cultural, and political features. The quick ascension of the United States was somewhat more surprising—the area was not European and had been far less developed economically during the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, extensive commercial experience in the northern states and the close mercantile and cultural ties with Britain gave the new nation advantages for its rapid imitation of the British lead. Abundant natural resources and extensive investments from Europe kept the process going, joining the United States to the wider dynamic of industrialization in the nineteenth-century West.

Elsewhere, conditions did not permit an industrial revolution, an issue that must be explored in dealing with the international context for this first phase of the world’s industrial experience. Yet the West’s in-

Industrial revolution did have substantial impact. It led to a number of pilot projects whereby initial machinery and factories were established under Western guidance. More important, it led to new Western demands on the world’s economies that instigated significant change without industrialization; indeed, these demands in several cases made industrialization more difficult.

Pilot Projects

Russia’s contact with the West’s industrial revolution before the 1870s offers an important case study that explains why many societies could not follow the lead of nations like France or the United States in imitating Britain. Yet Russia did introduce some new equipment for economic and military-political reasons, and these initiatives did generate change — they were not mere window dressing.

More than most societies not directly part of Western civilization, Russia had special advantages in reacting to the West’s industrial lead and special motivation for paying attention to this lead. Russia had been part of Europe’s diplomatic network since about 1700. It saw itself as one of Europe’s great powers, a participant in international conferences and military alliances. The country also had close cultural ties with western Europe, sharing in artistic styles and scientific developments — though Russian leadership had stepped back from cultural alignment because of the shock of the French Revolution in 1789 and subsequent political disorders in the West. Russian aristocrats and intellectuals routinely visited western Europe. Finally, Russia had prior experience in imitating Western technology and manufacturing: importation of Western metallurgy and shipbuilding had formed a major part of Peter the Great’s reform program in the early eighteenth century.

Contacts of this sort explain why Russia began to receive an industrial outreach from the West within a few decades of the advent of the industrial revolution. British textile machinery was imported beginning in 1843. Ernst Knoop, a German immigrant to Britain who had clerked in a Manchester cotton factory, set himself up as export agent to the Russians. He also sponsored British workers who installed the machinery in Russia and told any Russian entrepreneur brash enough to ask not simply for British models but for alterations or adaptations: “That is not your affair; in England they know better than you.” Despite the snobbism, a number of Russian entrepreneurs set up small factories to produce cotton, aware that even in Russia’s small urban market they could make a substantial profit by underselling traditional manufactured cloth. Other factories were established directly by Britons.

Europeans and Americans were particularly active in responding to calls by the tsar’s government for assistance in establishing railway and
steamship lines. The first steamship appeared in Russia in 1815, and by 1820 a regular service ran on the Volga River. The first public railroad, joining St. Petersburg to the imperial residence in the suburbs, opened in 1837. In 1851 the first major line connected St. Petersburg and Moscow, along a remarkably straight route desired by Tsar Nicholas I himself. American engineers were brought in, again by the government, to set up a railroad industry so that Russians could build their own locomotives and cars. George Whistler, the father of the painter James McNeill Whistler (and thus husband of Whistler’s mother), played an important role in the effort. He and some American workers helped train Russians in the needed crafts, frequently complaining about their slovenly habits but appreciating their willingness to learn.

Russian imports of machinery increased rapidly; they were over thirty times as great in 1860 as they had been in 1825. While in 1851 the nation manufactured only about half as many machines as it imported, by 1860 the equation was reversed, and the number of machine-building factories had quintupled (from nineteen to ninety-nine). The new cotton industry surged forward with most production organized in factories using wage labor.

These were important changes. They revealed that some Russians were alert to the business advantages of Western methods and that some Westerners saw the great profits to be made by setting up shop in a huge but largely agricultural country. The role of the government was vital. The tsars used tax money to offer substantial premiums to Western entrepreneurs, who liked the adventure of dealing with the Russians but liked their superior profit margins even more.

But Russia did not then industrialize. Modern industrial operations did not sufficiently dent established economic practices. The nation remained overwhelmingly agricultural. High percentage increases in manufacturing proceeded from such a low base that they had little general impact. Several structural barriers impeded a genuine industrial revolution. Russia’s cities had never boasted a manufacturing tradition; there were few artisans skilled even in preindustrial methods. Only by the 1860s and 1870s had cities grown enough for an artisan core to take shape—in printing, for example—and even then large numbers of foreigners (particularly Germans) had to be imported. Even more serious was the system of serfdom that kept most Russians bound to agricultural estates. While some free laborers could be found, most rural Russians could not legally leave their land, and their obligation to devote extensive work service to their lords’ estates reduced their incentive even for agricultural production. Peter the Great had managed to adapt serfdom to a preindustrial metallurgical industry by allowing landlords to sell villages and the labor therein for expansion of ironworks. But this mongrel system was not suitable for change on a grander scale, which is precisely what the industrial revolution entailed.
Furthermore, the West's industrial revolution, while it provided tangible examples for Russia to imitate, also produced pressures to develop more traditional sectors in lieu of structural change. The West's growing cities and rising prosperity claimed rising levels of Russian timber, hemp, tallow, and, increasingly, grain. These were export goods that could be produced without new technology and without altering the existing labor system. Indeed, many landlords boosted the work-service obligations of the serfs in order to generate more grain production for sale to the West. The obvious temptation was to lock in an older economy—to respond to new opportunity by incremental changes within the traditional system and to maintain serfdom and the rural preponderance rather than to risk fundamental internal transformation.

The proof of Russia's lag showed in foreign trade. It rose but rather modestly, posting a threefold increase between 1800 and 1860. Exports of raw materials approximately paid for the imports of some machinery, factory-made goods from abroad, and a substantial volume of luxury products for the aristocracy. And the regions that participated most in the growing trade were not the tiny industrial enclaves (in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and the iron-rich Urals) but the wheat-growing areas of southern Russia where even industrial pilot projects had yet to surface. Russian manufacturing exported nothing at all to the West, though it did find a few customers in Turkey, central Asia, and China.

The proof of Russia's lag showed even more dramatically in Russia's new military disadvantage. Peter the Great's main goal had been to keep Russian military production near enough to Western levels to remain competitive, with the huge Russian population added into the equation. This strategy now failed, for the West's industrial revolution changed the rules of the game. A war in 1854 pitting Russia against Britain and France led to Russia's defeat in its own backyard. The British and French objected to new Russian territorial gains (won at the expense of Turkey's Ottoman Empire) that brought Russia greater access to the Black Sea. The battleground was the Crimea. Yet British and French steamships connected their armies more reliably with supplies and reinforcements from home than did Russia's ground transportation system with its few railroads and mere three thousand miles of first-class roads. And British and French industry could pour out more and higher-quality uniforms, guns, and munitions than traditional Russian manufacturing could hope to match. The Russians lost the Crimean War, surrendering their gains and swallowing their pride in 1856. Patchwork change had clearly proved insufficient to match the military, much less the economic, power the industrial revolution had generated in the West.

After a brief interlude, the Russians digested the implications of their defeat and launched a period of basic structural reforms. The
linchpin was the abolition of serfdom in 1861. Peasants were not entirely freed, and rural discontent persisted, but many workers could now leave the land; the basis for a wage labor force was established. Other reforms focused on improving basic education and health, and while change in these areas was slow, it too set the basis for a genuine commitment to industrialization. A real industrial revolution lay in the future, however. By the 1870s Russia’s contact with industrialization had deepened its economic gap vis-à-vis the West but had yielded a few interesting experiments with new methods and a growing realization of the need for further change.

Societies elsewhere in the world — those more removed from traditional ties to the West or more severely disadvantaged in the ties that did exist — saw even more tentative industrial pilot projects during the West’s industrialization period. The Middle East and India tried some industrial imitation early on but largely failed — though not without generating some important economic change. Latin America also launched some revealingly limited technological change. Only eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa were largely untouched by any explicit industrial imitations until the late 1860s or beyond; they were too distant from European culture to venture a response so quickly.

Prior links with the West formed the key variable, as Russia’s experience abundantly demonstrated. Societies that had some familiarity with Western merchants and some preindustrial awareness of the West’s steady commercial gains mounted some early experiments in industrialization. Whether they benefited as a result compared with areas that did nothing before the late nineteenth century might be debated.

One industrial initiative in India developed around Calcutta, where British colonial rule had centered since the East India Company founded the city in 1690. A Hindu Brahman family, the Tagores, established close ties with many British administrators. Without becoming British, they sponsored a number of efforts to revivify India, including new colleges and research centers. Dwarkanath Tagore controlled tax collection in part of Bengal, and early in the nineteenth century he used part of his profit to found a bank. He also bought up a variety of commercial landholdings and traditional manufacturing operations. In 1834 he joined with British capitalists to establish a diversified company that boasted holdings in mines (including the first Indian coal mine), sugar refineries, and some new textile factories; the equipment was imported from Britain. Tagore’s dominant idea was a British-Indian economic and cultural collaboration that would revitalize his country. He enjoyed a high reputation in Europe and for a short time made a success of his economic initiatives. Tagore died on a trip abroad, and his financial empire declined soon after.

This first taste of Indian industrialization was significant, but it brought few immediate results. The big news in India, even as Tagore
launched his companies, was the rapid decline of traditional textiles under the bombardment of British factory competition; millions of Indian villagers were thrown out of work. Furthermore, relations between Britain and the Indian elite worsened after the mid-1830s as British officials sought a more active economic role and became more intolerant of Indian culture. One British official, admitting no knowledge of Indian scholarship, wrote that “all the historical information” and science available in Sanskrit was “less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England.” With these attitudes, the kind of collaboration that might have aided Indian appropriation of British industry became impossible.

The next step in India’s contact with the industrial revolution did not occur until the 1850s when the colonial government began to build a significant railroad network. The first passenger line opened in 1853. Some officials feared that Hindus might object to traveling on such smoke-filled monsters, but trains proved very popular and there ensued a period of rapid economic and social change. The principal result, however, was not industrial development but further extension of commercial agriculture (production of cotton and other goods for export) and intensification of British sales to India’s interior. Coal mining did expand, but manufacturing continued to shrink. There was no hint of an industrial revolution in India.

Imitation in the Middle East was somewhat more elaborate, in part because most of this region, including parts of North Africa, retained independence from European colonialism. Muslims had long disdained Western culture and Christianity, and Muslim leaders, including the rulers of the great Ottoman Empire, had been very slow to recognize the West’s growing dynamism after the fifteenth century. Some Western medicine was imported, but technology was ignored. Only in the eighteenth century did this attitude begin, haltingly, to change. The Ottoman government imported a printing press from Europe and began discussing Western-style technical training, primarily in relationship to the military.

In 1798 a French force briefly seized Egypt, providing a vivid symbol of Europe’s growing technical superiority. Later an Ottoman governor, Muhammed Ali, seized Egypt from the imperial government and pursued an ambitious agenda of expansionism and modernization. Muhammed Ali sponsored many changes in Egyptian society in imitation of Western patterns, including a new tax system and new kinds of schooling. He also destroyed the traditional Egyptian elite. The government encouraged agricultural production by sponsoring major irrigation projects and began to import elements of the industrial revolution from the West in the 1830s. English machinery and technicians were brought in to build textile factories, sugar refineries, paper mills, and weapons shops. Muhammed Ali clearly contemplated a sweeping
reform program in which industrialization would play a central role in making Egypt a powerhouse in the Middle East and an equal to the European powers. Many of his plans worked well, but the industrialization effort failed. Egyptian factories could not in the main compete with European imports, and the initial experiments either failed or stagnated. More durable changes involved the encouragement to the production of cash crops like sugar and cotton, which the government required in order to earn tax revenues to support its armies and its industrial imports. Growing concentration on cash crops also enriched a new group of Egyptian landlords and merchants. But the shift actually formalized Egypt's dependent position in the world economy, as European businesses and governments increasingly interfered with the internal economy. The Egyptian reaction to the West's industrial revolution, even more than the Russian response, was to generate massive economic redefinition without industrialization, a strategy that locked peasants into landlord control and made a manufacturing transformation at best a remote prospect.

Spurred by the West's example and by Muhammed Ali, the Ottoman government itself set up some factories after 1839, importing equipment from Europe to manufacture textiles, paper, and guns. Coal and iron mining were encouraged. The government established a postal system in 1834, a telegraph system in 1855, and steamships and the beginning of railway construction from 1866 onward. These changes increased the role of European traders and investors in the Ottoman economy and produced no overall industrial revolution. Again, the clearest result of improved transport and communication was a growing emphasis on the export of cash crops and minerals to pay for necessary manufactured imports from Europe. An industrial example had been set, and, as in Egypt, a growing though still tiny minority of Middle Easterners gained some factory experience, but no fundamental transformation occurred.

Developments of preliminary industrial trappings—a few factories, a few railroads—nowhere outside Europe converted whole economies to an industrialization process until late in the nineteenth century, though they provided some relevant experience on which later (mainly after 1870) and more intensive efforts could build. A few workers became factory hands and experienced some of the same upheaval as their Western counterparts in terms of new routines and pressures on work pace. Many sought to limit their factory experience, leaving for other work or for the countryside after a short time; transience was a problem for much the same reasons as in the West: the clash with traditional work and leisure values. Some technical and business expertise also developed. Governments took the lead in most attempts to imitate the West, which was another portent for the future; with some exceptions, local merchant groups had neither the capital
nor the motivation to undertake such ambitious and uncertain projects. By the 1850s a number of governments were clearly beginning to realize that some policy response to the industrial revolution was absolutely essential, lest Western influence become still more overwhelming. On balance, however, the principal results of very limited imitation tended to heighten the economic imbalance with western Europe, a disparity that made it easier to focus on nonindustrial exports. This too was a heritage for the future.

JOHN H. COATSWORTH

Economic Trajectories in Latin America

In this selection, John Coatsworth, a modern economic historian of Latin America, looks at the long-term economic histories of a number of Latin American countries and compares them to those of the United States. What are the main differences between the economic histories of Latin America and the United States? How were Latin American economic histories different, one from the other? What is the significance of these differences?

Thinking Historically

The author is a proponent of two recent trends in economic history. One is called neoclassical and the other is statistical. You can see the importance of statistics in this selection. Coatsworth maintained that an earlier generation of Latin American economic historians made some mistaken assumptions because they lacked the basic data that was necessary to understand the broad changes or trajectories (pathways) of Latin American economic history. How do the statistics presented here change or reinforce any of your assumptions about Latin American history? The neoclassical economic historians used data to measure the kinds of forces that Adam Smith and classical economists had emphasized. How does this essay support Smith’s argument about

the "wealth of nations"? Notice that Coatsworth says nothing about the industrial revolution and very little about technology. How can an economic history of Latin America ignore the industrial revolution?

Latin America fell into relative backwardness between roughly 1700 and 1900. At the beginning of this period, the economies of the Iberian colonies in the New World were roughly as productive as those of the British. For most of the ensuing 200 years, the Latin American economies stagnated while those of the North Atlantic achieved sustained increases in productivity. As early as 1800, most of the Latin American economies had already fallen well behind the United States. A century later, most had fallen far enough behind to qualify as "less" (or "under-") developed by contemporary standards.

In the twentieth century, the Latin American economies have achieved respectable rates of economic growth, equal on average to that of the United States. Thus, the relative gap between Latin America and the United States has not changed at all in the past 100 years, though the relative positions of individual countries have shifted. To understand how the Latin American economies fell into relative backwardness, therefore, it is crucial to look at the region's pre-1900 economic history.

Latin America stagnated for most of two crucial centuries because economic institutions distorted incentives and high transport costs left most of the region's abundant natural resources beyond the frontier of profitable exploitation. Early in the colonial era, comparatively high levels of productivity were achieved in economies that managed, despite these constraints, to specialize in export production. The successful cases were those that combined relatively scarce supplies of free or slave labor with accessible natural resources and a favorable policy environment. In contrast, colonial economies that relied on relatively cheap indigenous or slave labor to produce exportables in less accessible regions with high tax and regulatory burdens tended to have smaller export sectors and to be less productive. Cycles of export growth and decline, linked to market fluctuations or to freshly discovered and subsequently depleted natural resources, produced variations on these patterns well into the twentieth century in some areas.

Once the opportunities created by more (or less) favorable initial conditions were seized and exploited in a given colony, further economic growth usually depended on some combination of institutional modernization and transport innovation. Not until the late nineteenth century did liberalism (or, in some cases, modernizing conservative regimes) and railroads remove the two fundamental obstacles to growth in Latin America and push most of the region's economies onto new trajectories. . . .
Colonial and Nineteenth-Century Trends

As the first permanent English settlers in North America set about chopping down trees to make crude cabins in December of 1620, the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the New World had already passed their first century. It would take the English more than 200 years to catch up to the most prosperous of Spain’s possessions. In 1650, Cuba had a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of roughly $60; the British North American colonies did not reach that level until more than a century later. By 1800, Cuba’s GDP per capita was near $90, whereas that of the United States had barely reached $80. The United States did not close the gap with Cuba until the 1830s.

The U.S. performance looks much better in comparison with Spain’s mainland colonies. The 13 British colonies probably caught up to Mexico before 1700. Over the eighteenth century, Mexico stagnated as the U.S. economy grew at perhaps a half a percent a year. In 1800, Mexico’s per capita GDP of $40 stood at half that of the United States. Brazil, recovering finally from the collapse of its short-lived gold boom (1750–1780), had fallen well behind.

The race ended long before the nineteenth century was over. By 1900, the United States had become a formidable economic power with a GDP per capita, adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP), nearly four times higher than the mean of Latin America’s eight largest economies. Even Argentina, slightly ahead of the United States in 1800 and growing rapidly by the 1870s, had fallen far behind, with a GDP per capita not much more than half that of the United States. . . .

The estimates in Table 7.1 show a consistent pattern of failure from as early as 1700 until at least the end of the nineteenth century. Every Latin American country for which we have estimates grew more slowly on average than the United States for the two centuries up to 1900. Most simply stagnated; some, like Mexico, experienced prolonged periods of economic decline. There is no reason to believe that this record would look any less dismal with more data. The twentieth-century pattern, however, is more mixed. While Argentina declined toward the regional mean of about 27 percent of U.S. GDP per capita in 1994, Brazil and Venezuela rose to meet or surpass it. . . .

In summary, the available quantitative evidence shows that Latin America became an underdeveloped region between the early eighteenth and the late nineteenth centuries. Although all of the Latin American economies fell further behind in this period, the Argentine performance was consistently better than the rest until the twentieth century, that of Brazil almost as consistently the worst. In the twentieth century, these two economies reversed positions, with Brazil consistently outperforming the rest of the region and Argentina far behind. Cuba, with the highest GDP per capita in relation to the United States
Table 7.1  GDP per Capita as Percentage of the U.S. Level, 1700–1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1700</th>
<th>1800</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1913</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The last row reports the arithmetic mean of the countries for which there are data for each year. If each country were assigned a weight equal to its share of population, the mean for each year would be lower, since the high-income cases (Argentina and Cuba, for example) had smaller populations. In 1800, the unweighted mean in the table is 66 but the population-weighted mean of the six reported cases would be 51.

in 1700, fell furthest in relative terms over this period, though the lack of GDP estimates for the rest of Latin America (except Mexico) for 1700 makes this conclusion more tentative.

**Factor Endowments**

The New World factor endowments encountered by the first European entrepreneurs did not matter much. Most of Latin America’s potentially exploitable natural resources lay dormant and remained inaccessible throughout the colonial era. Most of the New World’s indigenous population died.

Europeans transformed the natural and human resource base of the entire New World, including vast areas they never conquered or even visited. They did so by bringing in pathogens, people, plants, animals, technologies, and institutions hitherto unknown to the Western Hemisphere. The pathogens destroyed most of the New World’s inhabitants by the end of the sixteenth century, so the Europeans repopulated the hemisphere with African slaves. Old World plants and animals displaced indigenous species in many areas and in doing so transformed entire landscapes. European technologies and organizational forms, from transoceanic navigation and deep-shaft mining to metal coinage and commercial credit, transformed production and commerce. The Europeans adopted and adapted Amerindian organization, products, and technologies as well, pushing them toward patterns that facilitated money-making in all its forms.

The Europeans did not distribute themselves evenly over the landscape. “Spanish society in the Indies,” James Lockhart reminds us, “was import-export oriented at the very base and in every aspect.” So, too,
was the great Portuguese adventure in Brazil. Publicly licensed but privately financed, the Iberian entrepreneurs who set out to conquer the New World mainly wanted to get rich. Officials and priests in both empires followed them about, careful not to miss any reasonable opportunity to collect a tax, impose a fee, or save a soul. Any exploitable resource, natural or human, that could profitably be turned into silver or gold attracted both private greed and official attention. But vast areas of these New World empires remained unexploited and ungoverned by Europeans or their descendants until long after independence. The "empty spaces" (that is, empty of Europeans) where little or no money could be made added up to more territory than Spain and Portugal actually managed to control or govern in the three centuries after the conquest.

Location determined which of the New World's people and resources the invaders rushed to exploit. The cost of overland transportation proved to be prohibitive for most commodities, even in the relatively easy terrain of plateaus and pampas. Thus, the Europeans and the slaves they brought in from Africa hardly ever settled far from navigable rivers or the seacoast. Since navigable rivers were few (and the few there were, like the Amazon, did not run past much tradable wealth), they eventually settled mainly on islands in the Caribbean and along coastlines. There they produced a variety of plantation products for European markets, including sugar, cacao, tobacco, rice, cotton, and, later in the nineteenth century, coffee, henequen, and bananas. Not until the advent of the railroad did agricultural production for export shift from seacoasts to the interior of the continent.

When Europeans settled further inland during the colonial era, as in central Mexico and parts of the Andes, it was generally to exploit opportunities to profit from the production of commodities with high value-to-bulk ratios or to supply the producers of these commodities with inputs and consumption goods. High transport costs limited the interior regions of the continent to exporting precious metals, gems (like emeralds and diamonds), and dyestuffs such as cochineal and indigo. Local markets took nearly everything else. Where export production generated market demand for food and other inputs and yielded taxes to support the royal bureaucracy, Europeans specialized in these ancillary activities. In the rest of the Americas, they had to make do with whatever they could extort from indigenous populations whose productivity was too low to generate much surplus.

At the time of the Columbus voyages, as many as 50 million Amerindians lived in the vast territories that became Latin America. By the end of the colonial era, more than half of Latin America's population of perhaps 15 million people consisted of Europeans, Africans, and the descendants of Europeans and Africans. Amerindians and mestizos, most of whom lived in Mexico, constituted less than half of the Latin American population in 1820.
The demographic and economic reorganization of New World spaces caused by Latin America's integration into the two Iberian empires with their links to the developing world market can be glimpsed from the data in Table 7.2 on population densities and productivity in 1800. Argentina, a settlement colony with a huge territory and tiny population, was the most thinly populated. Mexico and Cuba were the most densely populated. In Mexico, as in the Andes, the population figures reflect the partial recovery of the indigenous populations, though at comparatively low levels of per capita GDP. In Cuba, the high population density reflects the importation of large numbers of slaves toward the end of the eighteenth century, spurred by the island's high export-based GDP per capita.

As the table suggests, African slaves did not always end up where the marginal product of their labor was highest. Backward Brazil, with a low per capita GDP, imported nearly a third of all slaves that came to the New World, whereas the more productive Spanish islands like Cuba imported far fewer until the end of the eighteenth century. This difference was due in part to Portuguese commercial access to slave-exporting regions of Africa and Spanish restrictions on imports (including slaves) from outside the empire. Slaves were far more costly in the Spanish colonies than anywhere else until the crown relaxed restrictions on slave imports beginning in the late 1760s. In the seventeenth century, the Portuguese brought slaves to Brazil and set them to work in activities where their productivity was low, because slaves cost so little. When slave prices rose in response to Caribbean demand in the eighteenth century, Brazilian production declined. In Cuba, where slaves cost two to three times as much as in Jamaica, Europeans purchased them only when certain that they would be productive enough to compensate for their high price.

Europeans migrated to the New World in much smaller numbers than the Africans they forced to come. Migration to the Spanish colonies from Spain reached a peak at the end of the sixteenth century, but revived somewhat in the eighteenth. Throughout the colonial era, Spain tried to control and limit immigration to the New World and re-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>Area (1000s sq km)</th>
<th>Population (1000s)</th>
<th>Density (Pop. per 1000 sq km)</th>
<th>Total GDP (1000s)</th>
<th>GDP per Capita (1998 dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>2,777</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>26,978</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>8,457</td>
<td>3,250</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>94,250</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>19,795</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>2,365</td>
<td>24,480</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>3,050</td>
<td>240,340</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fused permission for the citizens of other countries (except for naturalized Irish Catholics) to settle in its possessions. By the eighteenth century, low wages on the Spanish American mainland and rising slave imports to the islands kept the flow of Europeans low and made Spain's efforts at controlling immigration fairly easy. Portuguese emigration to Brazil followed a somewhat different trajectory. Like Spanish emigration, that of the Portuguese fell during the seventeenth-century depression, but revived more strongly in the eighteenth century due to the pull of high earnings in the gold and diamond booms in the interior.

In the nineteenth century, slaves continued to arrive in large numbers only in Brazil and Cuba. British pressure initially helped to end the slave trade in the 1850s. Meanwhile, European immigration to Latin America slowed after 1800, reversed during the independence wars from 1810 to the 1820s, and in some cases virtually ceased for up to half a century after independence despite the end of Spanish and Portuguese restrictions. The persistence of slavery tended to discourage European migration to Brazil and Cuba. Low wages compounded by political instability and international war kept numbers down everywhere else. When the slave trade ended, Cuba (for sugar) and Peru (for guano mining as well as sugar) imported large numbers of indentured Chinese laborers. Mass European migration did not begin until the 1870s and 1880s and when it did, most of the immigrants went to Argentina and the southern half of Brazil.

Paradoxically, the most productive economies in Latin America at the beginning of the nineteenth century were the two, Cuba and Argentina, where labor was most costly. No free person would go to Argentina without some assurance of gain; the few that went were not disappointed (especially in high-wage Buenos Aires). In Cuba, no one bought slaves at the high prices prevailing for most of the colonial era without some highly productive use to make of them. The high cost of labor in these two colonies resembled the pattern established in British North America. Most of Latin America, however, consisted of far less productive, low-wage territories with limited access to the sea. None of the Iberian colonies or the nation states that succeeded them, not even the most prosperous in 1800 like Cuba and Argentina, managed to achieve rates of growth comparable to the United States until the nineteenth century had nearly ended.

Access to Trade

Great debates once raged over the impact of trade on the colonial economies. Recent scholarship has tended to reverse the once widely held notion that external trade is necessarily (or even often) harmful to backward economies. Of course, colonial restrictions on trade, such as
the commercial monopolies that prohibited direct trade with foreign countries, did impose costs on colonies throughout the New World, but did so precisely because they reduced the gains such regions would otherwise have enjoyed from external trade.

The Latin American case suggests that the static gains from trade can be large, even in economies that experience little or no sustained economic growth. The cross-section data in Table 7.3 compare the export performance of the six major colonial economies in 1800. Note that the colonies are listed in the table in rank order of GDP per capita. The data demonstrate that the Latin American colonial economies with the largest export sectors tended to have the highest GDP per capita. This is because productivity was higher in export industries than in other sectors of the colonial economies, though the gap between export and domestic-use agriculture and industry must have varied considerably. The colonial economies that managed to specialize more did better.

Cuba and Argentina were the most successful exporters in per capita terms by 1800. Argentina also had the largest export sector in relation to GDP, followed by Brazil and Cuba. The mainland economies that produced mainly silver for export (or, in the case of Chile, foodstuffs for export to mining colonies) had much smaller export sectors both in per capita terms and in relation to total output.

Mexico's relative failure as an exporter is perhaps the most surprising. For most of the eighteenth century, Mexico served as the cash cow of the Spanish American empire, regularly exporting huge quantities of silver along with substantial amounts of cochineal and other products. In per capita terms, however, only Chile had a smaller export sector. Although the income generated by the mining industries in Mexico and Peru was substantial, the productivity effect was limited by the relatively small proportion of the labor force employed in mining and the relatively slow growth of silver production even during boom periods.

Throughout the Caribbean, by contrast, exports accounted for a relatively high proportion of GDP. Brazil's export sector was also quite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>Total Exports (current dollars)</th>
<th>Exports per Capita</th>
<th>Exports as % of GDP</th>
<th>GDP per Capita (current dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>18.35</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>3,300,000</td>
<td>10.03</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>12,640,800</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>874,072</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2,998,000</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>15,526,750</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
large, despite its regional concentration in the northeast (except during the gold and diamond export booms further south). The most striking aspect of Brazil's performance, however, is the low level of per capita exports and GDP per capita in comparison with Cuba. This may be explained in part, as mentioned above, by lower slave prices that may have encouraged more marginal producers to enter the market. By the early nineteenth century, Brazil's sugar plantations were notoriously inefficient producers in comparison with those in the Caribbean. In addition, Brazilian sugar was excluded from the markets of the European countries with sugar islands of their own.

Perhaps most surprising is the relative success of Argentina. Table 7.3 includes exports from Buenos Aires that were produced within what became the national territory. They consisted chiefly of cattle hides and salted beef, derived mainly from exploiting the wild herds of the pampas...

In sum, Argentina and Cuba managed to prosper in the colonial era, despite high labor costs, in part because their well-located natural resources allowed them to specialize in export production. The less successful agricultural economies like Brazil managed to substitute cheaper labor for location, pushing export production further from the sea by using low-cost labor to compensate for higher transport costs. The remaining colonies produced small quantities (in relation to GDP) of high-value metals in primitive surroundings, especially in the Andes. Even in ostensibly opulent Mexico, at least 80 percent of the population in 1800 worked in domestic-use agriculture at low levels of productivity.
IWASAKI YATARO

Mitsubishi Letter to Employees

Japan was the first country outside the West to undergo an industrial revolution. After 1854 when American Commodore Perry forced Japan to open its ports to the West, Japanese society underwent a wide range of changes. In 1868, the Meiji (Enlightened) Restoration government proceeded to mobilize the population to learn Western methods of industrial production and many other facets of Western culture and society. Many Japanese were educated in the United States and Europe, especially in Germany. Japanese industry was organized along the German model, with considerable government direction and power vested in leading families. Politics was not democratic, and the economy was not capitalist. In 1870, for example, the Meiji government launched a major railroad construction plan. It hoped to raise capital from private sources, but when none was offered, the government went ahead on its own. Gradually, with the help of foreign loans and Japanese capitalists, a mixed public and private economy developed.

One of the entrepreneurs who directed Japanese industrialization was Iwasaki Yataro* (1835–1885), a clerk for a feudal lord, who used his ability and connections to create a steamship company that in 1873 took the name Mitsubishi. In 1876, the British Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company challenged Mitsubishi’s growing dominance in Japanese coastal trade. Mitsubishi responded by halving its coastal fares and cutting employee wages by one-third. In this letter to his employees, Iwasaki asks for their support.

Notice Iwasaki’s appeal to national security and pride. Does the appeal strike you as genuine or contrived? What would Adam Smith or Karl Marx have said about this appeal?

* Thinking Historically

Iwasaki Yataro was both a capitalist and an industrialist. While Japanese industrialization enjoyed greater state sponsorship than did British or American industrialization, entrepreneurs like Iwasaki played a crucial role. In this letter, does Iwasaki speak more as a capi-

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*ee wah SAH kee yah TAH roh

Colonized and Colonizers

Europeans in Africa and Asia, 1850–1930

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The first stage of European colonialism, beginning with Columbus, was a period in which Europeans — led by the Spanish and Portuguese — settled in the Western Hemisphere and created plantations with African labor. From 1492 to 1776, European settlement in Asia was limited to a few coastal port cities where merchants and missionaries operated. The second stage — the years between 1776, when Britain lost most of its American colonies, and 1880, when the European scramble for African territory began — has sometimes been called a period of free-trade imperialism. This term refers to the desire by European countries in general and by Britain in particular to expand their zones of free trade. It also refers to a widespread opposition to the expense of colonization, a conviction held especially among the British, who garnered all of the advantages of political empire without the costs of occupation and outright ownership.

The British used to quip that their second global empire was created in the nineteenth century “in a fit of absentmindedness.” But colonial policy in Britain and the rest of Europe was more planned and continuous than that comment might suggest. British control of India (including Burma) increased throughout the nineteenth century, as did British control of South Africa, Australia, the Pacific, and parts of the Americas. At the same time, France, having lost most of India to the British, began building an empire that included parts of North Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.

Thus, a third stage of colonialism, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, reached a fever pitch with the partition of Africa after 1880. The period between 1888 and 1914 spawned renewed settlement and massive population transfers, with most European migrants settling in
Map 8.1  European Colonialism in Africa and Asia, 1880–1914.
the older colonies of the Americas (as well as in South Africa and Australia), where indigenous populations had been reduced. Even where settlement remained light, however, Europeans took political control of large areas of the Earth’s surface (see Map 8.1).

In the first reading in this chapter, a historian offers a brief history of this second stage of European colonialism and describes what the renewed era of colonization meant, both for the colonizers and the colonized. Subsequent readings examine aspects of colonial society across the globe.

**THINKING HISTORICALLY**

*Using Literature in History*

This chapter also explores whether literature can and should be used in the quest to better understand history. Beginning with some basic questions about the differences between literary and historical approaches, we examine a number of fictional accounts of colonialism, some written by the colonizers, others by the colonized or their descendants. How do these literary accounts add to, or detract from, a historical understanding of colonialism? The rich, evocative literature of the colonial period aids us in determining how we separate fact from fiction, construct historical knowledge, and appreciate the past in all its dimensions.

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**JURGEN OSTERHAMMEL**

*From Colonialism*

In this selection, modern historian Jurgen Osterhammel provides us with an overview of European colonialism. In the first part, “Colonial Epochs,” the author discusses ways in which European colonialism changed from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. In the second section, “Colonial Societies,” he discusses the special character of the colonial social order throughout this period.

How, according to Osterhammel, did colonialism change between 1760 and 1930? How were these changes reflected in the evolution of “colonial society”?

**Thinking Historically**

Unlike philosophy, which tends to deal with general principles, history studies specific details. Yet as this general overview of colonialism shows, history can include summaries of long-term change and generalizations about different parts of the world over entire centuries as well as specific names and dates. What sorts of generalizations are made in this excerpt?

History, like fiction, is a form of storytelling. Fictional storytelling tends to be far more specific than history, usually documenting minutes or hours in the amount of space that it takes many historians to cover years and Osterhammel to cover centuries. Does this selection tell you a story in any sense, or is it too general to do that?

**Colonial Epochs**

The most important colonial advance of the period [1760–1830] was the extension of the British position in India. The British East India Company (EIC) originally conducted trade from port cities. Later on, it becomes increasingly involved in Indian domestic politics, which were determined by the antagonisms of regional powers in the declining phase of the Mughal empire. Unlike the Spanish in Central America, the British in India at first pursued no plans to conquer and certainly no plans to proselytize. They were far from possessing military advantages over the Indian states until about the middle of the century. In Bengal, where British trade interests were increasingly concentrated, a mutually advantageous agreement was reached with the regional prince, the Nabob. Only when a collapse of this “collaboration” was brought about by a concatenation of causes did the idea of territorial rule originate. In 1755, Robert Clive, the future conqueror of Bengal, expressed a hitherto unthinkable idea: “We must indeed become the Nabobs ourselves.” From then on the British pursued a strategy of subjugation within a polycentric Indian state system, interrupted repeatedly by phases of deadlock and consolidation. Until the end of the colonial period in 1947, hundreds of seemingly autonomous principalities continued to exist, but after 1818 the British could consider themselves the “paramount power” on the subcontinent.

The East India Company continued to play its double role as business enterprise and state organization. Under constant supervision of the government in London it accompanied the military expansion of its sphere of power with the gradual establishment of colonial structures,
which, in rough schematic terms, passed through a characteristic sequence of steps: (1) securing an effective trade monopoly, (2) securing military dominance and disarmament of any subjugated indigenous powers, (3) achieving a tax collection system, (4) stabilizing government by comprehensive legal regulations and the establishment of a bureaucratic administration, and (5) intervening in the indigenous society for purposes of social and humanitarian reform. This fifth stage was reached in the early 1830s. Not only did the age of European rule over highly civilized Asian societies begin in India, but India also became the prototype of an exploitation colony without settlers, a model for British expansion in other parts of Asia and Africa.

The period between 1830 and 1880 was certainly not a calm interlude in the history of European expansion. Only the Caribbean, once so rich, became a “forgotten derelict corner of the world.” In an age of “free trade imperialism,” China, Japan, Siam (Thailand) and, to a greater extent than was previously the case, the Ottoman Empire as well as Egypt, now de facto independent from it, were forced to open their economies. Sovereignty limitations characteristic of “informal empires” were imposed on them. Latin America, which was no longer colonial, and West Africa, which was rid of the slave trade but not yet colonized, were integrated into the world economy more closely than ever. On Java, the major island of the Netherlands East Indies, direct colonial intervention in the utilization of land began after 1830; the outer Indonesian islands were gradually subjugated in the period to follow. Foreign encroachment on continental Southeast Asia began after about 1820. First the lowlands near the coast fell into foreign hands: in 1852–1853 Lower Burma, and in 1857 Cochin China. By 1870, the later colonial borders could be distinguished clearly. During the entire period, the Tsarist Empire advanced in the Caucasus and Central Asia with military force, and shortly thereafter in the Far East with somewhat more diplomatic means, thereby intensifying the so-called “Great Game,” a sustained cold war between the two Asiatic Great Powers Russia and Great Britain.

Despite these continuities of European world conquest and of ties between classic European diplomacy and “high imperialism,” there is something to be said for marking a new epoch around 1870–1880. Most of the reasons can be found in the broader imperialist environment of colonialism, that is, in the structural changes of the world economy and international system. In terms of colonial history, the chief development over the last two decades of the nineteenth century was the European occupation of Africa, a singularly condensed expropriation of an entire continent termed the “partition of Africa.” On the eve of this process, only South Africa and Algeria had been regions of European colonization, South Africa since 1652 and Algeria since
1830. Elsewhere the Portuguese (Angola, Mozambique), French (Senegal), and British (Sierra Leone, Lagos) made their presence felt in a more limited way. After all, by 1870 over 270,000 white people were already living in Algeria and about 245,000 in South Africa (including the two Boer Republics). The further expansion of these early cores of colonization was also an impetus for the occupation of Africa in the last quarter of the century. The discovery of diamond deposits in 1867 and of gold in 1886 unleashed a development that changed South Africa into a capitalist center of growth and a magnet for international capital. At the same time, it strengthened white supremacy. In Algeria the same result was achieved simultaneously under almost purely agrarian conditions by extensive land transfers from the Arabs to a rapidly growing settlement population.

The actual “partition” of Africa in the years between the occupation of Tunis by the French in 1881 and of Egypt by the British in 1882 on the one hand and the Boer War of the years 1899–1902 on the other was initially a somewhat symbolic process. With treaties amongst themselves, the European Great Powers committed themselves to mutual recognition of colonies, protectorates, and spheres of influence. “Paper partition” was only slowly and incompletely transformed into effective occupation, “partition on the ground.” However, the borders that were drawn endured with the later establishment of independent African national states. For Africans, the so-called partition of their continent often meant the brutal disruption of bonds and established ways of life. However, partition could also result in the exact opposite: “a ruthless act of political amalgamation, whereby something of the order of ten thousand units was reduced to a mere forty.” Particularly in Islamic North Africa (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria) as well as in parts of Asia (Vietnam, Korea, and Burma), colonialism encountered fairly complex proto-nation-states. Colonial rule in these countries was considered even less legitimate than elsewhere.

Colonial Societies

... Characteristic of the social and cultural history of modern colonialism, especially in Asia, was the increasing alienation between two societies that had shared the bond of a colonial relationship since the late eighteenth century. While the status scale in Iberian America was rapidly refined, thereby placing renewed emphasis on racial criteria, the dualization of the colonial social landscape intensified in Asia and Africa. Only in Portuguese Asia was there significant progress in societal interaction, especially where native clergy were concerned, owing to the enlightened politics of the crown under the Marquis de Pombal in the 1760s and 1770s. The sealing off of the European communities
from the indigenous environment had many causes, which were manifested in varying combinations: (1) Although Portugal and the Netherlands in particular had officially encouraged marriage between European men and Asian women at first, and the other colonial powers had tolerated it tacitly, immigration of European women raised the sexual autarky of the colonial societies. (2) The transition from trade to rule and often to direct production with dependent workers transformed the “age of partnership” into an age of subordination. (3) Violent resistance by the natives, such as the Native American massacre of colonists in Virginia in 1622 and the Indian rebellion of 1857–1858, strengthened the resolve of white minorities to shield themselves for self-protection. (4) A European attitude of superiority over the rest of the world, stemming from the Christian Eurocentricism of early encounters, made it appear increasingly “unreasonable” to Europeans to maintain close egalitarian relationships with non-Europeans and to make cultural accommodations to them. (5) After the gradual abolition of slave trade and slavery, racist thought lived in the less blatant, but now “scientifically” legitimated forms. It bears pointing out, however, that racism is often not the cause of segregation, but the effect. Racism has often been used to justify segregation after the fact.

Ethnosocial distancing was an outgrowth of societal interaction and was not always based on discriminatory laws. A telling example was Batavia, the most populous and resplendent city in Asia that was governed by Europe. In the first half of the seventeenth century, a mixed society was formed based on house slavery and the expansion of “Creole” family and patronage networks with relatively high tolerance for interracial family relationships. This society resembled its counterpart in Mexico and was even more akin to Portuguese colonization in Asia (Gos). In the manner of living of its upper class, the mixed society of Batavia conformed almost as closely to its Javanese surroundings as it did to Holland. A distinct demarcation between the European and Asian spheres commenced with the British interregnum of 1811–1816. In the eyes of the British, the Batavian Dutch were appallingly infected by their contact with Asians. Cultural decontamination was decreed. The whites in the city and their mestizo relatives were told to develop an identity as civilized Europeans and clearly display it in their appearances before the Javanese public.

The English in India had always been somewhat more detached from the indigenous environment than the Dutch in Indonesia. After the 1780s, their isolation gradually intensified and became obvious with the decline in status of Eurasian Anglo-Indians, even though some influential Indian politicians in 1830 were still dreaming of a racially mixed India modelled on Mexico. The club became the center of British social life in India and the other Asian colonies during the Victorian era. In clubs, one could feel like a gentleman among other gentlemen
while being served by a native staff. In Kuala Lumpur, very few non-
Europeans were admitted before 1940; in Singapore no non-Europeans
were allowed in at all. The large clubs of Calcutta remained closed to
Indians until 1946. This type of color bar was especially disturbing be-
cause it excluded from social recognition the very people who had car-
ried their self-Anglicizing the furthest and loyally supported British
rule. Even Indian members of the Indian Civil Service were excluded.

In most regions of Africa, the colonial period began at a time when
exclusionist thought and action were most pronounced. In Africa there
was virtually no history of intercultural proximity and therefore no
need for policies enforcing detachment. The Europeans saw themselves
as foreign rulers separated from the African cultures by an abyss. This
absolute aloofness extended even to Islam, which they certainly did not
consider “primitive,” but rather historically obsolete. Color bars in
Africa varied in height; they were lowest in West Africa and highest in
the settlement colonies of the far north and the deep south. A process
of great symptomatic significance was the rejection of the highly edu-
cated West Africans who had worked with the early mission. They had
envisioned the colonial takeover as an opportunity for a joint European-
African effort to modernize and civilize Africa. Instead, they were now,
as “white Negroes,” despised by all.

GEORGE ORWELL

From Burmese Days

This selection, from one of the great novels on colonialism, captures
the life of the British colonial class in a remote “upcountry” town in
Burma in the 1920s. The chapter is set in the European club. Flory,
the principal character, is the only Englishman at all sympathetic to
the Burmese. Though he has befriended the Indian physician, Dr. Ve-
raswami, Flory is too weak to propose him as the first “native” mem-
ber of the club. The other main characters are Westfield, District Su-
perintendent of Police; Ellis, local company manager and the most
racist of the group; Lackersteen, local manager of a timber company

who is usually drunk; Maxwell, a forest officer; and Macgregor, Deputy Commissioner and secretary of the club.

Why does the club loom so large in the lives of these Englishmen? If they complain so much, why are they in Burma? How do you account for the virulent racism of these men? Why does Ellis “correct” the butler’s English? What does this story suggest about women in the colonial world?

Thinking Historically

As different as this selection is from Osterhammel’s historical overview, both touch on the subjects of dual society, the European club, and colonial racism. How does this selection from Orwell support some of Osterhammel’s generalizations? How does it deepen your understanding of these subjects?

The structure of a novel like this one bears certain similarities to history—a description of a place, proper names and biographies, descriptions of human interactions, an accounting of change, and a story. There are also structural differences in a novel—a lot of dialogue, greater attention to physical appearance and character, and a more prominent narrative. Do the fictional constructs in this selection detract from our historical understanding? Can such elements add to our understanding of what actually happened?

Of course, the problem with structural elements such as dialogue and story is that they are fiction. The author of a novel makes no pretense of telling the truth. Nevertheless, an author draws on what he or she knows to create a plausible scenario that is recognizable and consistent. Interestingly, Orwell knew Burma quite well. He was born in India in 1903. His father worked in the Opium Department of the Indian Civil Service. After attending school at Eton in England, Orwell returned to Burma, where he spent five years as a member of the Indian Imperial Police. Orwell, therefore, had a broad knowledge of Burma on which to base his story. Is there any way to determine what Orwell invented and what he merely described in this account?

Orwell was politically engaged throughout his life. Would political ideas make him better or worse as a historian or novelist? How so?

Flory’s house was at the top of the maidan,⁠¹ close to the edge of the jungle. From the gate the maidan sloped sharply down, scorched and khaki-coloured, with half a dozen dazzling white bungalows scattered round it. All quaked, shivered in the hot air. There was an English

⁠¹Parade-ground. [Ed.]
cemetery within a white wall half-way down the hill, and nearby a tiny
tin-roofed church. Beyond that was the European Club, and when one
looked at the Club—a dumpy one-storey wooden building—one
looked at the real centre of the town. In any town in India the Euro-
pean Club is the spiritual citadel, the real seat of the British power, the
Nirvana for which native officials and millionaires pine in vain. It was
doubly so in this case, for it was the proud boast of Kyauktada Club
that, almost alone of Clubs in Burma, it had never admitted an Oriental
to membership. Beyond the Club, the Irrawaddy flowed huge and
ochreous, glittering like diamonds in the patches that caught the sun;
and beyond the river stretched great wastes of paddy fields, ending at
the horizon in a range of blackish hills.

The native town, and the courts and the jail, were over to the right,
mostly hidden in green groves of peepul trees. The spire of the pagoda
rose from the trees like a slender spear tipped with gold. Kyauktada
was a fairly typical Upper Burma town, that had not changed greatly
between the days of Marco Polo and 1910, and might have slept in the
Middle Ages for a century more if it had not proved a convenient spot
for a railway terminus. In 1910 the Government made it the headquar-
ters of a district and a seat of Progress—interpretable as a block of law
courts, with their army of fat but ravenous pleaders, a hospital, a
school, and one of those huge, durable jails which the English have
built everywhere between Gibraltar and Hong Kong. The population
was about four thousand, including a couple of hundred Indians, a few
score Chinese and seven Europeans. There were also two Eurasians
named Mr. Francis and Mr. Samuel, the sons of an American Baptist
missionary and a Roman Catholic missionary respectively. The town
contained no curiosities of any kind, except an Indian fakir who had
lived for twenty years in a tree near the bazaar, drawing his food up in
a basket every morning.

Flory yawned as he came out of the gate. He had been half drunk
the night before, and the glare made him feel liverish. “Bloody, bloody
hole!” he thought, looking down the hill. And, no one except the dog
being near, he began to sing aloud, “Bloody, bloody, bloody, oh, how
thou art bloody” to the tune of “Holy, holy, holy, oh how Thou art
holy,” as he walked down the hot red road, switching at the dried-up
grasses with his stick. It was nearly nine o’clock and the sun was fiercer
every minute. The heat throbbed down on one’s head with a steady,
rhythmic thumping, like blows from an enormous bolster. Flory
stopped at the Club gate, wondering whether to go in or to go farther
down the road and see Dr. Veraswami. Then he remembered that it
was “English mail day” and the newspapers would have arrived. He
went in, past the big tennis screen, which was overgrown by a creeper
with starlike mauve flowers.
In the borders beside the path swathes of English flowers, phlox and larkspur, hollyhock and petunia, not yet slain by the sun, rioted in vast size and richness. The petunias were huge, like trees almost. There was no lawn, but instead a shrubbery of native trees and bushes — gold mohur trees like vast umbrellas of blood-red bloom, frangipanis with creamy, stalkless flowers, purple bougainvillea, scarlet hibiscus, and the pink, Chinese rose, bilious-green crotons, feathery fronds of tamarind. The clash of colours hurt one's eyes in the glare. A nearly naked mali, watering-can in hand, was moving in the jungle of flowers like some large nectar-sucking bird.

On the Club steps a sandy-haired Englishman, with a prickly moustache, pale grey eyes too far apart, and abnormally thin calves to his legs, was standing with his hands in the pockets of his shorts. This was Mr. Westfield, the District Superintendent of Police. With a very bored air he was rocking himself backwards and forwards on his heels and pouting his upper lip so that his moustache tickled his nose. He greeted Flory with a slight sideways movement of his head. His way of speaking was clipped and soldierly, missing out every word that well could be missed out. Nearly everything he said was intended for a joke, but the tone of his voice was hollow and melancholy.

"Hullo, Flory me lad. Bloody awful morning, what?"

"We must expect it at this time of year, I suppose," Flory said. He had turned himself a little sideways, so that his birthmarked cheek was away from Westfield.

"Yes, dammit. Couple of months of this coming. Last year we didn't have a spot of rain till June. Look at that bloody sky, not a cloud in it. Like one of those damned great blue enamel saucepans. God! What'd you give to be in Piccadilly now, eh?"

"Have the English papers come?"

"Yes. Dear old Punch, Pink'un, and Vie Parisienne. Makes you homesick to read 'em, what? Let's come in and have a drink before the ice all goes. Old Lackersteen's been fairly bathing in it. Half pickled already."

They went in, Westfield remarking in his gloomy voice, "Lead on, Macduff." Inside, the Club was a teak-walled place smelling of earth-oil, and consisting of only four rooms, one of which contained a forlorn "library" of five hundred mildewed novels, and another an old and mangy billiard-table — this, however, seldom used, for during most of the year hordes of flying beetles came buzzing round the lamps and littered themselves over the cloth. There were also a card-room and a "lounge" which looked towards the river, over a wide veranda; but at

\[2\] Gardener, [Ed.]

this time of day all the verandas were curtained with green bamboo
chicks. The lounge was an unhomelike room, with coco-nut matting on
the floor, and wicker chairs and tables which were littered with shiny
illustrated papers. For ornament there were a number of “Bonzo” pic-
tures, and the dusty skulls of sambhur. A punkah,3 lazily flapping,
shook dust into the tepid air.

There were three men in the room. Under the punkah a florid, fine-
looking, slightly bloated man of forty was sprawling across the table
with his head in his hands, groaning in pain. This was Mr. Lacker-
steen, the local manager of a timber firm. He had been badly drunk the
night before, and he was suffering for it. Ellis, local manager of yet another
company, was standing before the notice board studying some notice
with a look of bitter concentration. He was a tiny wiry-haired fellow
with a pale, sharp-featured face and restless movements. Maxwell, the
acting Divisional Forest Officer, was lying in one of the long chairs
reading the Field, and invisible except for two large-boned legs and
thick downy forearms.

“Look at this naughty old man,” said Westfield, taking Mr. Lacker-
steen half affectionately by the shoulders and shaking him. “Example
to the young, what? There, but for the grace of God and all that. Gives
you an idea what you’ll be like at forty.”

Mr. Lackersteen gave a groan which sounded like “brandy.”

“Poor old chap,” said Westfield; “regular martyr to booze, eh?
Look at it oozing out of his pores. Reminds me of the old colonel who
used to sleep without a mosquito net. They asked his servant why and
the servant said: ‘At night, master too drunk to notice mosquitoes; in
the morning, mosquitoes too drunk to notice master.’ Look at him —
boozed last night and then asking for more. Got a little niece coming to
stay with him, too. Due tonight, isn’t she, Lackersteen?”

“Oh, leave that drunken sot alone,” said Ellis without turning
round. He had a spiteful cockney voice. Mr. Lackersteen groaned
again, “— the niece! Get me some brandy, for Christ’s sake.”

“Good education for the niece, eh? Seeing uncle under the table
seven times a week. — Hey, butler! Bringing brandy for Lackersteen
master!”

The butler, a dark, stout Dravidian4 with liquid, yellow-irised eyes
like those of a dog, brought the brandy on a brass tray. Flory and
Westfield ordered gin. Mr. Lackersteen swallowed a few spoonfuls of
brandy and sat back in his chair, groaning in a more resigned way. He
had a beefy, ingenuous face, with a toothbrush moustache. He was re-

3Large cloth panel fan hanging from the ceiling, usually pulled by a rope to move the air.
[Ed.]
4Dated racial term used to refer to darker skinned inhabitants of southern India. [Ed.]
ally a very simple-minded man, with no ambitions beyond having what he called "a good time." His wife governed him by the only possible method, namely, by never letting him out of her sight for more than an hour or two. Only once, a year after they were married, she had left him for a fortnight, and had returned unexpectedly a day before her time, to find Mr. Lackersteen, drunk, supported on either side by a naked Burmese girl, while a third up-ended a whisky bottle into his mouth. Since then she had watched him, as he used to complain, "like a cat over a bloody mousehole." However, he managed to enjoy quite a number of "good times," though they were usually rather hurried ones.

"My Christ, what a head I've got on me this morning," he said. "Call that butler again, Westfield. I've got to have another brandy before my missus gets here. She says she's going to cut my booze down to four pegs a day when our niece gets here. God rot them both!" he added gloomily.

"Stop playing the fool, all of you, and listen to this," said Ellis sourly. He had a queer wounding way of speaking, hardly ever opening his mouth without insulting somebody. He deliberately exaggerated his cockney accent, because of the sardonic tone it gave to his words. "Have you seen this notice of old Macgregor's? A little nosegay for everyone. Maxwell, wake up and listen!"

Maxwell lowered the Field. He was a fresh-coloured blond youth of not more than twenty-five or six — very young for the post he held. With his heavy limbs and thick white eyelashes he reminded one of a carthorse colt. Ellis nipped the notice from the board with a neat, spiteful little movement and began reading it aloud. It had been posted by Mr. Macgregor, who, besides being Deputy Commissioner, was secretary of the Club.

"Just listen to this. 'It has been suggested that as there are as yet no Oriental members of this club, and as it is now usual to admit officials of gazetted rank, whether native or European, to membership of most European Clubs, we should consider the question of following this practice in Kyauktada. The matter will be open for discussion at the next general meeting. On the one hand it may be pointed out' — oh, well, no need to wade through the rest of it. He can't even write out a notice without an attack of literary diarrhoea. Anyway, the point's this. He's asking us to break all our rules and take a dear little nigger-boy into this Club. Dear Dr. Veraswami, for instance. Dr. Very-slimy, I call him. That would be a treat, wouldn't it? Little pot-bellied niggers breathing garlic in your face over the bridge-table. Christ, to think of it! We've got to hang together and put our foot down on this at once. What do you say, Westfield? Flory?"

Westfield shrugged his thin shoulders philosophically. He had sat down at the table and lighted a black, stinking Burma cheroot.
“Got to put up with it, I suppose,” he said. “Both of natives are getting into all the Clubs nowadays. Even the Pegu Club, I’m told. Way this country’s going, you know. We’re about the last Club in Burma to hold out against ’em.”

“We are; and what’s more, we’re damn well going to go on holding out. I’ll die in the ditch before I’ll see a nigger in here.” Ellis had produced a stump of pencil. With the curious air of spite that some men can put into their tiniest action, he re-pinned the notice on the board and pencilled a tiny, neat “B. F.” against Mr. Macgregor’s signature — “There, that’s what I think of his idea. I’ll tell him so when he comes down. What do you say, Flory?”

Flory had not spoken all this time. Though by nature anything but a silent man, he seldom found much to say in Club conversations. He had sat down at the table and was reading G. K. Chesterton’s article in the London News, at the same time caressing Flo’s [his dog] head with his left hand. Ellis, however, was one of those people who constantly nag others to echo their own opinions. He repeated his question, and Flory looked up, and their eyes met. The skin round Ellis’s nose suddenly turned so pale that it was almost grey. In him it was a sign of anger. Without any prelude he burst into a stream of abuse that would have been startling, if the others had not been used to hearing something like it every morning.

“My God, I should have thought in a case like this, when it’s a question of keeping those black, stinking swine out of the only place where we can enjoy ourselves, you’d have the decency to back me up. Even if that pot-bellied, greasy little sod of a nigger doctor is your best pal. I don’t care if you choose to pal up with the scum of the bazaar. If it pleases you to go to Veraswami’s house and drink whisky with all his nigger pals, that’s your look-out. Do what you like outside the Club. But, by God, it’s a different matter when you talk of bringing niggers in here. I suppose you’d like little Veraswami for a Club member, eh? Chipping into our conversation and pawing everyone with his sweaty hands and breathing his filthy garlic breath in our faces. By God, he’d go out with my boot behind him if ever I saw his black snout inside that door. Greasy, pot-bellied little —— !” etc.

This went on for several minutes. It was curiously impressive, because it was so completely sincere. Ellis really did hate Orientals — hated them with a bitter, restless loathing as of something evil or unclean. Living and working, as the assistant of a timber firm must, in perpetual contact with the Burmese, he had never grown used to the sight of a black face. Any hint of friendly feeling towards an Oriental seemed to him a horrible perversity. He was an intelligent man and an able servant of his firm, but he was one of those Englishmen — common, unfortunately — who should never be allowed to set foot in the East.
Flory sat nursing Flo's head in his lap, unable to meet Ellis's eyes. At the best of times his birthmark made it difficult for him to look people straight in the face. And when he made ready to speak, he could feel his voice trembling — for it had a way of trembling when it should have been firm; his features, too, sometimes twitched uncontrollably.

"Steady on," he said at last, sullenly and rather feebly. "Steady on. There's no need to get so excited. I never suggested having any native members in here."

"Oh, didn't you? We all know bloody well you'd like to, though. Why else do you go to that oily little babu's house every morning, then? Sitting down at table with him as though he was a white man, and drinking out of glasses his filthy black lips have slobbered over — it makes me spew to think of it."


"My God," said Ellis a little more calmly, taking a pace or two up and down, "my God, I don't understand you chaps. I simply don't. Here's that old fool Macgregor wanting to bring a nigger into this Club for no reason whatever, and you all sit down under it without a word. Good God, what are we supposed to be doing in this country? If we aren't going to rule, why the devil don't we clear out? Here we are, supposed to be governing a set of damn black swine who've been slaves since the beginning of history, and instead of ruling them in the only way they understand, we go and treat them as equals. And all you silly b——s take it for granted. There's Flory, makes his best pal of a black babu who calls himself a doctor because he's done two years at an Indian so-called university. And you, Westfield, proud as Punch of your knock-kneed, bribe-taking cowards of policemen. And there's Maxwell, spends his time running after Eurasian tarts. Yes, you do, Maxwell; I heard about your goings-on in Mandalay with some smelly little bitch called Molly Pereira. I supposed you'd have gone and married her if they hadn't transferred you up here? You all seem to like the dirty black brutes. Christ, I don't know what's come over us all. I really don't."

"Come on, have another drink," said Westfield. "Hey, butler! Spot of beer before the ice goes, eh? Beer, butler?"

The butler brought some bottles of Munich beer. Ellis presently sat down at the table with the others, and he nursed one of the cool bottles between his small hands. His forehead was sweating. He was sulky, but not in a rage any longer. At all times he was spitful and perverse, but his violent fits of rage were soon over, and were never apologised for. Quarrels were a regular part of the routine of Club life. Mr. Lackensteen was feeling better and was studying the illustrations in *La Vie Parisienne*. It was after nine now, and the room, scented with the acrid smoke of Westfield's cheroot, was stifling hot. Everyone's shirt stuck to his
back with the first sweat of the day. The invisible *chokra* who pulled the punkah rope outside was falling asleep in the glare.

"Butler!" yelled Ellis, and as the butler appeared, "go and wake that bloody *chokra* up!"

"Yes, master."

"And butler!"

"Yes, master?"

"How much ice have we got left?"

"Bout twenty pounds, master. Will only last to-day, I think. I find it very difficult to keep ice cool now."

"Don't talk like that, damn you — I find it very difficult! Have you swallowed a dictionary? 'Please, master, can't keeping ice cool' — that's how you ought to talk. We shall have to sack this fellow if he gets to talk English too well. I can't stick servants who talk English. D'you hear, butler?"

"Yes, master," said the butler, and retired.

"God! No ice till Monday," Westfield said. "You going back to the jungle, Flory?"

"Yes. I ought to be there now. I only came in because of the English mail."

"Go on tour myself, I think. Knock up a spot of Travelling Allowance. I can't stick my bloody office at this time of year. Sitting there under the damned punkah, signing one chit after another. Paper-chewing. God, how I wish the war was on again!"

"I'm going out the day after to-morrow," Ellis said. "Isn't that damned padre coming to hold his service this Sunday? I'll take care not to be in for that, anyway. Bloody knee-drill."

"Next Sunday," said Westfield. "Promised to be in for it myself. So's Macgregor. Bit hard on the poor devil of a padre, I must say. Only gets here once in six weeks. Might as well get up a congregation when he does come."

"Oh, hell! I'd snivel psalms to oblige the padre, but I can't stick the way these damned native Christians come shoving into our church. A pack of Madrassi servants and Karen school-teachers. And then those two yellow-bellies, Francis and Samuel — they call themselves Christians too. Last time the padre was here they had the nerve to come up and sit on the front pews with the white men. Someone ought to speak to the padre about that. What bloody fools we were ever to let those missionaries loose in this country! Teaching bazaar sweepers they're as good as we are. 'Please, sir, me Christian same like master.' Damned cheek."

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5Person who pulls the punkah rope that moves a large panel to let in a breeze. [Ed.]
DAVID CANNADINE

From Ornamentalism

In the following selection from his work Ornamentalism, David Cannadine, a modern historian, challenges a traditional interpretation of the British Empire. What is that traditional interpretation? What view does the author propose instead? Do you find his new interpretation convincing?

Thinking Historically

Does your reading of Burnese Days support or contradict Cannadine's interpretation of British imperialism? What evidence do you see in Burnese Days that social distinctions were more important than racial ones? What literary evidence does Cannadine present to support his thesis?

Nations, it has recently become commonplace to observe, are in part imagined communities, depending for their credibility and identity both on the legitimacy of government and the apparatus of the state, and on invented traditions, manufactured myths, and shared perceptions of the social order that are never more than crude categories and oversimplified stereotypes. If this has been true (as indeed it has) of a relatively compact and contained country like Britain, then how much more true must this have been of the empire that the British conquered and peopled, administered, and ruled? At its territorial zenith, shortly after the end of the First World War, it consisted of naval stations and military bases extending from Gibraltar to Hong Kong, the four great dominions of settlement, the Indian Empire that occupied an entire subcontinent, the crown colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, and the League of Nations Mandates, especially in the Middle East. But, as with all such transoceanic realms, the British Empire was not only a geopolitical entity: it was also a culturally created and imaginatively constructed artifact. How, then, in the heyday of its existence, did Britons imagine and envisage their unprecedentedly vast and varied imperium, not so much geographically as sociologically? How did they try

to organize and to arrange their heterogeneous imperial society, as they settled and conquered, governed and ruled it, and what did they think the resulting social order looked like?

To the extent that they tried to conceive of these diverse colonies and varied populations beyond the seas as “an entire interactive system, one vast interconnected world,” most Britons followed the standard pattern of human behaviour when contemplating and comprehending the unfamiliar. Their “inner predisposition” was to begin with what they knew — or what they thought they knew — namely, the social structure of their own home country. But what sort of a starting point was this, and what were the implications and consequences of British perceptions of their domestic social order for British perceptions of their imperial social order? From Hegel to Marx, and from Engels to Said, it has been commonplace to suggest that Britons saw their own society (and, by extension, that of what became their settler dominions) as dynamic, individualistic, egalitarian, modernizing — and thus superior. By comparison with such a positive and progressive metropolitan perception, this argument continues, Britons saw society in their “tropical” and “oriental” colonies as enervated, hierarchical, corporatist, backward — and thus inferior. But among its many flaws, this appealingly simplistic (and highly influential) contrast is based on a mistaken premise, in that it fundamentally misunderstands most Britons’ perceptions of their domestic social world when their nation was at its zenith as an imperial power.

Far from seeing themselves as atomized individuals with no rooted sense of identity, or as collective classes coming into being and struggling with each other, or as equal citizens whose modernity engendered an unrivalled sense of progressive superiority, Britons generally conceived of themselves as belonging to an unequal society characterized by a seamless web of layered gradations, which were hallowed by time and precedent, which were sanctioned by tradition and religion, and which extended in a great chain of being from the monarch at the top to the humblest subject at the bottom. That was how they saw themselves, and it was from that starting point that they contemplated and tried to comprehend the distant realms and diverse society of their empire. This in turn meant that for the British, their overseas realms were at least as much about sameness as they were about difference. For insofar as they regarded their empire as “one vast interconnected world,” they did not necessarily do so in disadvantaged or critical contrast to the way they perceived their own metropolitan society. Rather, they were at least as likely to envisage the social structure of their empire — as their predecessors had done before them — by analogy to what they knew of “home,” or in replication of it, or in parallel to it, or in extension of it, or (sometimes) in idealization of it, or (even, and increasingly) in nostalgia for it.
This means that we need to be much more attentive to the varied—sometimes, even, contradictory—ways in which the British understood, visualized, and imagined their empire hierarchically. To be sure, one of the ways in which they did so was in racial terms of superiority and inferiority. Like all post-Enlightenment imperial powers, only more so, Britons saw themselves as the lords of all the world and thus of humankind. They placed themselves at the top of the scale of civilization and achievement, they ranked all other races in descending order beneath them, according to their relative merits (and de-merits), and during the period 1780 to 1830 they increasingly embodied these views in imperial institutions and codes. And when it came to the systematic settlement of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, they did not hesitate to banish the indigenous peoples to the margins of the new imperial society. By the end of the nineteenth century these notions of racial hierarchy, supremacy, and stereotyping had become more fully developed, and stridently hardened, as exemplified in Cecil Rhodes's remark that "the British are the finest race in the world, and the more of the world they inhabit, the better it will be for mankind," or in Lord Cromer's belief that the world was divided between those who were British and those who were merely "subject races."

In short, and as Peter Marshall has observed, "Empire reinforced a hierarchical view of the world, in which the British occupied a pre-eminent place among the colonial powers, while those subjected to colonial rule were ranged below them, in varying degrees of supposed inferiority." These facts are familiar and incontrovertible. But this mode of imperial ranking and imaging was not just based on the Enlightenment view of the intrinsic inferiority of dark-skinned peoples: it was also based on notions of metropolitan-peripheral analogy and sameness. For as the British contemplated the unprecedented numbers massed together in their new industrial cities, they tended to compare these great towns at home with the "dark continents" overseas, and thus equate the workers in factories with coloured peoples abroad. The "shock cities" of the 1830s and 1840s were seen as resembling "darkest Africa" in their distant, unknown, and unfathomable menaces; and during the third quarter of the nineteenth century London's newly discovered "residuum" and "dangerous classes" were likened—in their character and their conduct—to the "natives" of empire. And these domestic-imperial analogies were worked and extended in the opposite direction as well: one additional reason why "natives" in the empire were regarded as collectively inferior was that they were seen as the overseas equivalent of the "undeserving poor" in Britain.

To some degree, then, these analogies and comparisons that Britons drew and made between domestic and overseas societies, from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, served to reinforce the prevailing
Enlightenment notions of racial superiority and inferiority. And it is from this premise that the British Empire has been viewed by contemporaries and by historians as an enterprise that was built and maintained on the basis of the collective, institutionalized, and politicized ranking of races. But, as these analogies and comparisons also suggest, this was not the only way in which Britons envisioned their empire, and its imperial society, as an essentially hierarchical organism. For there was another vantage-point from which they regarded the inhabitants of their far-flung realms, which was also built around notions of superiority and inferiority, but which frequently cut across, and sometimes overturned and undermined, the notion that the British Empire was based solely and completely on a hierarchy of race. This alternative approach was, indeed, the conventional way in which the English (and latterly the British) had regarded the inhabitants of other, alien worlds, for it was a perspective that long antedated the Enlightenment.

It has certainly been traced back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for when the English first encountered the native peoples of North America, they did not see them collectively as a race of inferior savages; on the contrary, they viewed them individually as fellow human beings. It was from this pre-Enlightenment perspective that the English concluded that North American society closely resembled their own; a carefully graded hierarchy of status, extending in a seamless web from chiefs and princes at the top to less worthy figures at the bottom. Moreover, these two essentially hierarchical societies were seen as coexisting, not in a relationship of (English) superiority and (North American) inferiority, but in a relationship of equivalence and similarity: princes in one society were the analogues to princes in another, and so on and so on, all the way down these two parallel social ladders. In short, when the English initially contemplated native Americans, they saw them as social equals rather than as social inferiors, and when they came to apply their conventionally hierarchical tools of observation, their prime grid of analysis was individual status rather than collective race.

It is the argument of this book that these attitudes, whereby social ranking was as important as (perhaps more important than?) colour of skin in contemplating the extra-metropolitan world, remained important for the English and, latterly, for the British long after it has been generally supposed they ceased to matter. To be sure, the Enlightenment brought about a new, collective way of looking at peoples, races, and colours, based on distance and separation and otherness. But it did not subvert the earlier, individualistic, analogical way of thinking, based on the observation of status similarities and the cultivation of affinities, that projected domestically originated perceptions of the social order overseas. On the contrary, this essentially pre-racial way of seeing things lasted for as long as the British Empire lasted. Here is one
example. In the summer of 1881 King Kalakaua of Hawaii was visiting England and, in the course of an extensive round of social engagements, he found himself the guest at a party given by Lady Spencer. Also attending were the prince of Wales, who would eventually become King Edward VII, and the German crown prince, who was his brother-in-law and the future kaiser. The prince of Wales insisted that the king should take precedence over the crown prince, and when his brother-in-law objected, he offered the following pithy and trenchant justification: “Either the brute is a king, or he's a common or garden nigger; and if the latter, what's he doing here?”

Read one way, this is, to our modern sensibilities, a deeply insensitive and offensively racist observation; read from another viewpoint, this was, by the conventions of its own time, a very unracist remark. The traditional, pre-Enlightenment freemasonry based on the shared recognition of high social rank—a freemasonry to which Martin Malia has suggestively given the name “aristocratic internationalism”—both trumped and transcended the alternative and more recent freemasonry based on the unifying characteristic of shared skin colour. From this perspective, the hierarchical principle that underlay Britons’ perceptions of their empire was not exclusively based on the collective, colour-coded ranking of social groups, but depended as much on the more venerable colour-blind ranking of individual social prestige. This means there were at least two visions of empire that were essentially (and elaborately) hierarchical: one centred on colour, the other on class. So, in the Raj Quartet, Major Ronald Merrick, whose social background was relatively lowly, believed that “the English were superior to all other races, especially black.” But the Cambridge-educated Guy Perron feels a greater affinity with the Indian Hari Kumar, who went to the same public school as he did, than he does with Merrick, who is very much his social inferior.

The British Empire has been extensively studied as a complex racial hierarchy (and also as a less complex gender hierarchy); but it has received far less attention as an equally complex social hierarchy or, indeed, as a social organism, or construct, of any kind. This constant (and largely unquestioned) privileging of colour over class, of race over rank, of collectivities over individualities, in the scholarly literature has opened up many important new lines of inquiry. But it has also meant that scarcely any attention has been paid to empire as a functioning social structure and as an imagined social entity, in which, as Karen Or- dahl Kupperman puts it, “status is fundamental to all other categories.” Yet throughout its history, the views expressed by the prince of Wales reflected generally held opinions about the social arrangements existing in the empire. These attitudes and perceptions were certainly still in existence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But they were no less important between the 1850s and the 1950s, when the
ideal of social hierarchy was seen as the model towards which the great dominions should approximate, when it formed the basis of the fully elaborated Raj in India, when it provided the key to the doctrine of “indirect rule” in Africa, when it formed the template for the new nations created in the British Middle East, when it was codified and rationalized by the imperial honours system, and when it was legitimated and unified by the imperial monarchy. In all these ways, the theory and the practice of social hierarchy served to eradicate the differences, and to homogenize the heterogeneities, of empire,...

We should never forget that the British Empire was first and foremost a class act, where individual social ordering often took precedence over collective racial othering.

Joseph Conrad

From Heart of Darkness

Although his native tongue was Polish (and French his second language), Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) became one of the leading English novelists of the era of British imperialism. Drawing on his experience as a mariner and ship captain, he secured a post as an officer on river steamboats on the Congo River in 1890. Nine years later he published Heart of Darkness, a novel which has introduced generations since to Africa, the Congo, the era of colonialism, and European ideas of “the other.”

In this selection from the novel, Conrad’s narrator, Marlow, tells of his voyage up the Congo to meet the enigmatic European Kurtz who has secured prodigious amounts of ivory for his Belgian employer but (we learn at the end of the novel) lost his mind in the process.

What impression does Heart of Darkness give of Africa and of European exploration of Africa?

Thinking Historically

Like many novels, Heart of Darkness is based on the actual experiences of the author. Despite the basis in fact, however, it is very different from historical writing. Imagine Conrad writing a history of the events described in this selection. How would it be different? Would one account be truer, or merely reveal different truths?

Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of overshadowed distances. On silvery sandbanks hippos and alligators sunned themselves side by side. The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands. You lost your way on that river as you would in a desert and butted all day long against shoals trying to find the channel till you thought yourself bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once — somewhere — far away — in another existence perhaps. There were moments when one’s past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants and water and silence. And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention. It looked at you with a vengeful aspect. I got used to it afterwards. I did not see it any more. I had no time. I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones; I was learning to clap my teeth smartly before my heart flew out when I shaded by a fluke some infernal sly old snag that would have ripped the life out of the tin-pot steamboat and drowned all the pilgrims; I had to keep a look-out for the signs of dead wood we could cut up in the night for next day’s steaming. When you have to attend to things of that sort, to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality — the reality I tell you — fades. The inner truth is hidden — luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same; I felt often its mysterious stillness watching me at my monkey tricks. . . .

"I managed not to sink that steamboat on my first trip. It’s a wonder to me yet. Imagine a blindfolded man set to drive a van over a bad road. I sweated and shivered over that business considerably, I can tell you. After all, for a seaman, to scrape the bottom of the thing that’s supposed to float all the time under his care is the unpardonable sin.
No one may know of it, but you never forget the thump — eh? A blow on the very heart. You remember it, you dream of it, you wake up at night and think of it — years after — and go hot and cold all over. I don’t pretend to say that steamboat floated all the time. More than once she had to wade for a bit, with twenty cannibals splashing around and pushing. We had enlisted some of these chaps on the way for a crew. Fine fellows — cannibals — in their place. They were men one could work with, and I am grateful to them. And, after all, they did not eat each other before my face: they had brought along a provision of hippo-meat which went rotten and made the mystery of the wilderness stink in my nostrils. Phoo! I can sniff it now. I had the Manager on board and three or four pilgrims with their staves — all complete. Sometimes we came upon a station close by the bank clinging to the skirts of the unknown, and the white men rushing out of a tumble-down hovel with great gestures of joy and surprise and welcome seemed very strange, had the appearance of being held there captive by a spell. The word ‘ivory’ would ring in the air for a while — and on we went again into the silence, along empty reaches, round the still bends, between the high walls of our winding way, reverberating in hollow claps the ponderous beat of the stern-wheel. Trees, trees, millions of trees, massive, immense, running up high, and at their foot, hugging the bank against the stream, crept the little begrimed steamboat like a sluggish beetle crawling on the floor of a lofty portico. It made you feel very small, very lost, and yet it was not altogether depressing, that feeling. After all, if you were small, the grimy beetle crawled on — which was just what you wanted it to do. Where the pilgrims imagined it crawled to I don’t know. To some place where they expected to get something, I bet! For me it crawled towards Kurcz — exclusively; but when the steam-pipes started leaking we crawled very slow. The reaches opened before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads till the first break of day. Whether it meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell. The dawns were heralded by the descent of a chill stillness. The woodcutters slept, their fires burned low, the snapping of a twig would make you start. We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil. But suddenly as we struggled round a bend there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling under the droop of heavy and
motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a
black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing
us, praying to us, welcoming us—who could tell? We were cut off
from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phan-
toms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an
enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because
we were too far and could not remember because we were travelling in
the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign—
and no memories.

"The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the
shackled form of a conquered monster, but there—there you could
look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly and the men
were... No they were not inhuman. Well, you know that was the
worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come
slowly to one. They howled and leaped and spun and made horrid
faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—
like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and
passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough, but if you were man
equal you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the
faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim
suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you—you so remote
from the night of first ages—could comprehend. And why not? The
mind of man is capable of anything—because everything is in it, all the
past as well as all the future. What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow,
devotion, valour, rage—who can tell?—but truth—truth stripped of its cloak of time. Let the fool gape and shudder—the man
knows and can look on without a wink. But he must at least be as
much of a man as these on the shore. He must meet that truth with his
own true stuff—with his own inborn strength. Principles? Principles
won't do. Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags—rags that would fly off at
the first good shake. No. You want a deliberate belief. An appeal to me
in this fiendish row—is there? Very well. I hear, I admit, but I have a
voice too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be sil-
cenced. Of course, a fool, what with sheer fright and fine sentiments,
is always safe. Who's that grunting? You wonder I didn't go ashore for a
howl and a dance? Well, no—I didn't. Fine sentiments, you say? Fine
sentiments be hanged! I had no time. I had to mess about with white
lead and strips of woollen blanket helping to put bandages on those
leaky steam-pipes—tell you. I had to watch the steering and circum-
vent those snags and get the tin-pot along by hook or by crook. There
was surface-truth enough in these things to save a wiser man. And be-
tween whiles I had to look after the savage who was fireman. He was
an improved specimen; he could fire up a vertical boiler. He was there
below me and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing
a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat walking on his hind
legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap. He squinted at the steam-gauge and at the water-gauge with an evident effort of intrepidity — and he had filed teeth too, the poor devil, and the wool of his pate shaved into queer patterns, and three ornamental scars on each of his cheeks. He ought to have been clapping his hands and stamping his feet on the bank, instead of which he was hard at work, a thrill to strange witchcraft, full of improving knowledge. He was useful because he had been instructed; and what he knew was this — that should the water in that transparent thing disappear the evil spirit inside the boiler would get angry through the greatness of his thirst and take a terrible vengeance. So he sweated and fired up and watched the glass fearfully (with an impromptu charm, made of rags, tied to his arm and a piece of polished bone as big as a watch stuck flatways through his lower lip) while the wooded banks slipped past us slowly, the shore noise was left behind, the interminable miles of silence — and we crept on, towards Kurtz.

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CHINUA ACHEBE

An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*

Chinua Achebe is modern Africa’s most read novelist. His *Things Fall Apart*, about the impact of European missionaries in his native Nigeria at the end of the nineteenth century, is a classic that is as widely read as *Heart of Darkness*. In this selection, which first took form as an address to an American college audience in 1975, Achebe tackles *Heart of Darkness*. What is his argument? Are you persuaded? How, if at all, does this reading change your evaluation of the selection from David Cannadine’s *Ornamentalism*?

*chih NOO ah ah CHEH bay

Thinking Historically

Achebe is a novelist criticizing another novelist for distorting history. What are the responsibilities of a novelist to historical accuracy?

Heart of Darkness projects the image of Africa as “the other world,” the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man’s vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality. The book opens on the River Thames, tranquil, resting peacefully “at the decline of day after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks.” But the actual story will take place on the River Congo, the very antithesis of the Thames. The River Congo is quite decidedly not a River Emeritus. It has rendered no service and enjoys no old-age pension. We are told that “Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world.”

Is Conrad saying then that these two rivers are very different, one good, the other bad? Yes, but that is not the real point. It is not the differentness that worries Conrad but the lurking hint of kinship, of common ancestry. For the Thames too “has been one of the dark places of the earth.” It conquered its darkness, of course, and is now in daylight and at peace. But if it were to visit its primordial relative, the Congo, it would run the terrible risk of hearing grotesque echoes of its own forgotten darkness, and falling victim to an avenging recrudescence of the mindless frenzy of the first beginnings.

These suggestive echoes comprise Conrad’s famed evocation of the African atmosphere in Heart of Darkness. In the final consideration his method amounts to no more than a steady, ponderous, fake-ritualistic repetition of two antithetical sentences, one about silence and the other about frenzy. We can inspect samples of this on pages 36 and 37 of the present edition: a) It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention and b) The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. Of course there is a judicious change of adjective from time to time, so that instead of inscrutable, for example, you might have unspeakable, even plain mysterious, etc., etc.

The eagle-eyed English critic F. R. Leavis drew attention long ago to Conrad’s “adjectival insistence upon inexpressible and incomprehensible mystery.” That insistence must not be dismissed lightly, as many Conrad critics have tended to do, as a mere stylistic flaw; for it raises serious questions of artistic good faith. When a writer while pretending to record scenes, incidents, and their impact is in reality engaged in inducing hypnotic stupor in his readers through a bombardment of emotive words and other forms of trickery much more has to be at stake.
than stylistic felicity. Generally normal readers are well armed to detect and resist such underhand activity. But Conrad chose his subject well — one which was guaranteed not to put him in conflict with the psychological pre-disposition of his readers or raise the need for him to contend with their resistance. He chose the role of purveyor of comforting myths.

The most interesting and revealing passages in *Heart of Darkness* are, however, about people. I must crave the indulgence of my reader to quote almost a whole page from about the middle of the story when representatives of Europe in a steamer going down the Congo encounter the denizens of Africa.

We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil. But suddenly as we struggled round a bend there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us — who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign — and no memories.

The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there — there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly and the men were. . . . No they were not inhuman. Well, you know that was the worst of it — this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped and spun and made horrid faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity — like yours — the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough, but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you — you so remote from the night of first ages — could comprehend.

Herein lies the meaning of *Heart of Darkness* and the fascination it holds over the Western mind: “What thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity — like yours. . . . Ugly.”
Having shown us Africa in the mass, Conrad then zeros in, half a page later, on a specific example, giving us one of his rare descriptions of an African who is not just limbs or rolling eyes:

And between whiles I had to look after the savage who was fireman. He was an improved specimen; he could fire up a vertical boiler. He was there below me and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat walking on his hind legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap. He squinted at the steam-gauge and at the water-gauge with an evident effort of intrepidity — and he had filed his teeth too, the poor devil, and the wool of his pate shaved into queer patterns, and three ornamental scars on each of his cheeks. He ought to have been clapping his hands and stamping his feet on the bank, instead of which he was hard at work, a thrall to strange witchcraft, full of improving knowledge.

As everybody knows, Conrad is a romantic on the side. He might not exactly admire savages clapping their hands and stamping their feet but they have at least the merit of being in their place, unlike this dog in a parody of breeches. For Conrad things being in their place is of the utmost importance.

“Fine fellows — cannibals — in their place,” he tells us pointedly. Tragedy begins when things leave their accustomed place, like Europe leaving its safe stronghold between the policeman and the baker to take a peep into the heart of darkness . . .

The point of my observations should be quite clear by now, namely that Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked. Students of Heart of Darkness will often tell you that Conrad is concerned not so much with Africa as with the deterioration of one European mind caused by solitude and sickness. They will point out to you that Conrad is, if anything, less charitable to the Europeans in the story than he is to the natives, that the point of the story is to ridicule Europe’s civilizing mission in Africa. A Conrad student informed me in Scotland that Africa is merely a setting for the disintegration of the mind of Mr. Kurtz.

Which is partly the point. Africa as setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battle-field devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril. Can nobody see the preposterous and perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind? But that is not even the point. The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which
this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot. I do not doubt Conrad’s great talents. Even *Heart of Darkness* has its memorably good passages and moments:

The reaches opened before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return.

Its exploration of the minds of the European characters is often penetrating and full of insight. But all that has been more than fully discussed in the last fifty years. His obvious racism has, however, not been addressed. And it is high time it was!

Conrad was born in 1857, the very year in which the first Anglican missionaries were arriving among my own people in Nigeria. It was certainly not his fault that he lived his life at a time when the reputation of the black man was at a particularly low level. But even after due allowances have been made for all the influences of contemporary prejudice on his sensibility there remains still in Conrad’s attitude a residue of antipathy to black people which his peculiar psychology alone can explain. His own account of his first encounter with a black man is very revealing:

A certain enormous buck nigger encountered in Haiti fixed my conception of blind, furious, unreasoning rage, as manifested in the human animal to the end of my days. Of the nigger I used to dream for years afterwards.

Certainly Conrad had a problem with niggers. His inordinate love of that word itself should be of interest to psychoanalysts. Sometimes his fixation on blackness is equally interesting as when he gives us this brief description:

A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms. . . .

as though we might expect a black figure striding along on black legs to wave white arms! But so unrelenting is Conrad’s obsession. . . .

Whatever Conrad’s problems were, you might say he is now safely dead. Quite true. Unfortunately his heart of darkness plagues us still. Which is why an offensive and deplorable book can be described by a serious scholar as “among the half dozen greatest short novels in the English language.” And why it is today perhaps the most commonly prescribed novel in twentieth-century literature courses in English Departments of American universities.

There are two probable grounds on which what I have said so far may be contested. The first is that it is no concern of fiction to please
people about whom it is written. I will go along with that. But I am not
talking about pleasing people. I am talking about a book which parades
in the most vulgar fashion prejudices and insults from which a section of
mankind has suffered untold agonies and atrocities in the past and con-
tinues to do so in many ways and many places today. I am talking about
a story in which the very humanity of black people is called in question.

Secondly, I may be challenged on the grounds of actuality. Conrad,
after all, did sail down the Congo in 1890 when my own father was
still a babe in arms. How could I stand up more than fifty years after
his death and purport to contradict him? My answer is that as a sensi-
ble man I will not accept just any traveller’s tales solely on the grounds
that I have not made the journey myself. I will not trust the evidence
even of a man’s very eyes when I suspect them to be as jaundiced as
Conrad’s. And we also happen to know that Conrad was, in the words
of his biographer, Bernard C. Meyer, “notoriously inaccurate in the
rendering of his own history.”

But more important by far is the abundant testimony about Con-
rad’s savages which we could gather if we were so inclined from other
sources and which might lead us to think that these people must have
had other occupations besides merging into the evil forest or materializ-
ing out of it simply to plague Marlow and his dispirited band. For as it
happened, soon after Conrad had written his book an event of far
greater consequence was taking place in the art world of Europe. This
is how Frank Willett, a British art historian, describes it:

Gauguin had gone to Tahiti, the most extravagant individual act of turn-
ing to a non-European culture in the decades immediately before and
after 1900, when European artists were avid for new artistic experi-
tences, but it was only about 1904–5 that African art began to make its
distinctive impact. One piece is still identifiable; it is a mask that had
been given to Maurice Vlaminck in 1905. He records that Derain was
“speechless” and “stunned” when he saw it, bought it from Vlaminck
and in turn showed it to Picasso and Matisse, who were also greatly af-
forded by it. Ambroise Vollard then borrowed it and had it cast in
bronze. . . . The revolution of twentieth century art was under way!

The mask in question was made by other savages living just north of
Conrad’s River Congo. They have a name too: the Fang people, and are
without a doubt among the world’s greatest masters of the sculptured
form. The event Frank Willett is referring to marked the beginning of
cubism and the infusion of new life into European art, which had run
completely out of strength.

The point of all this is to suggest that Conrad’s picture of the
peoples of the Congo seems grossly inadequate even at the height of
their subjection to the ravages of King Leopold’s International Associa-
tion for the Civilization of Central Africa.
RUDYARD KIPLING

The White Man's Burden

This poem, written by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), is often presented as the epitome of colonialist sentiment, though some readers see in it a critical, satirical attitude toward colonialism. Do you find the poem to be for or against colonialism? Can it be both?

Thinking Historically

"The White Man's Burden" is a phrase normally associated with European colonialism in Africa. In fact, however, Kipling wrote the poem in response to the annexation of the Philippines by the United States. How does this historical context change the meaning of the poem for you? Does the meaning of a literary work depend on the motives of the writer, the historical context in which it is written, or both?

Take up the White Man's burden —
Send forth the best ye breed —
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait, in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild —
Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden —
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine,
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
(The end for others sought)
Watch sloth and heathen folly
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—
No iron rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go, make them with your living
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden,
And reap his own reward—
The blame of those ye better
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
"Why brought ye us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloke your weariness.
By all ye will or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent sullen peoples
Shall weigh your God and you.

Take up the White Man's burden!
Have done with childish days—
The lightly-proffered laurel,
The easy ungrudged praise:
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers.
REFLECTIONS

Many of the selections within this chapter as well as its title point to the dual character of colonial society. There are the colonized and the colonizers, the “natives” and the Europeans, and as racial categories hardened in the second half of the nineteenth century, the blacks and the whites. Colonialism centered on the construction of an accepted inequality. The dominant Europeans invested enormous energy in keeping the double standards, dual pay schedules, separate rules and residential areas—the two castes.

One problem with maintaining a neat division between the colonized and the colonizers is that the Europeans were massively outnumbered by the indigenous people. Thus, the colonizers needed a vast class of middle-status people to staff the army, police, and bureaucracy. These people who Osterhammel reminds us were often unkindly seen as “white negroes,” might be educated in Paris or London, raised in European culture, and encouraged to develop a sense of pride in their similarity to the Europeans ("me Christian, same like master") and their differences from the other “natives.” Often, like the Indian Dr. Veraswami, they were chosen for their ethnic or religious differences from the rest of the colonized population.

In short, colonialism created a whole class of people who were neither fully colonized nor colonizers. They were in between. To the extent that the colonial enterprise was an extension of European conceits of social class, as Canndine argues, these in-between people could be British as well as Indian. Orwell’s Flory is only one of the characters in *Burmese Days* caught between two inhospitable worlds. One of the most notorious of this class of Europeans “gone native” is the Mr. Kurtz that Conrad’s crew will meet upriver. Achebe’s point that Africa becomes a setting for the breakup of a European mind might be generalized to apply to the European perception of the colonial experience. It is certainly one of the dominant themes of the European colonial novel. Even the great ones often center on the real or imagined rape, ravishing, or corruption of the European by the seething foreign unknown. This attitude also helps us understand how Kipling could be both anti-imperialist and racist. Imperialism could seem like a thankless act to those who tried to carry civilization to “sullen peoples, half devil and half child.”

All the novels and poetry excerpted in this chapter are well worth reading in their entirety, and many other excellent colonial novels can be chosen from this period as well as from the 1930s and 1940s. E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* and Paul Scott’s *The Raj Quartet* stand out as fictional introductions to British colonialism in India. (Both have also received excellent adaptations to film, the latter as the series for
television called The Jewel in the Crown.) In addition to Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutuola and Wole Soyinka have written extensively on Nigeria; as well, Francis Bebey, Ferdinand Oyono, and Mongo Beti address French colonialism in Africa. On South Africa, the work of Alan Payton, Andre Brink, J. M. Coetzee, Peter Abrams, and James McClure, among many others, stands out.

The advantage of becoming engrossed in a novel is that we feel part of the story and have a sense that we are learning something firsthand. Of course, we are reading a work of fiction, not gaining firsthand experience or reading an accurate historical account of events. A well-made film poses an even greater problem. Its visual and aural impact imparts a psychological reality that becomes part of our experience. If it is about a subject of which we know little, the film quickly becomes our "knowledge" of the subject, and this knowledge may be incomplete or inaccurate.

On the other hand, a well-written novel or film can whet our appetite and inspire us to learn more. Choose and read a novel about colonialism or some other historical subject. Then read a biography of the author or research his or her background to determine how much the author knew about the subject. Next, read a historical account of the subject. How much attention does the historian give to the novelist's subject? How does the novel add depth to the historical account? How does the historical account place the novel in perspective? Finally, how does the author's background place the novel in historical context?
Nationalism and Westernization

Japan, India, and the Americas, 1880–1930

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas adapted to Western colonialism or struggled to free themselves from it, they inevitably faced the issue of Westernization. To become Westernized was to accept and adopt the ways of the powerful colonial powers of the West: Western Europe and its more distant western offshoot, the United States. All colonized peoples were exposed to some degree of Western education, indoctrination, or control. As they sought their independence and worked to create their own national identities, they frequently revived older indigenous traditions, languages, and religions—ideas that had fallen into disuse or had been replaced by Western culture. This rebirth of traditional culture often meant a specific and determined rejection of Western ways.

This chapter explores a number of responses to Westernization at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The first selection gives an overall picture of how these societies came to grips with the West, culturally as well as politically. In every case, a people who sought its own national identity had to determine the degree of Westernization, if any, it desired to retain.

We examine Westernization in Japan, a country that was never colonized but that experienced cultural discord as it strove to “catch up” with the West. Japan’s economic and industrial Westernization was so successful that many other countries were inspired by its example. What was the range of attitudes toward the West in Japan, and how strong was the impact of Westernization on its people?

We then turn to India for comparison. While Japan adopted Western ways in its successful effort to escape Western colonization, India’s