

# DBQ: Imperialism

Even as far back as the 1500s, Europeans had been colonizing various continents with the desires of gold, God, and glory leading them. Over the next few centuries the ideas Europeans had about imperialism and the natives varied with the changing ideological revolutions that came to Europe. As time went on the Europeans view and treatment of the native people became worse and worse. In the earliest stages of Imperialism the Enlightenment had a hold of the continent and urged people to see the natives one more equal and not to assume a dominance. The Europeans only duty was to help. Once industrialization really spread the need for raw materials from colonies increased. Nationalism and Darwinism created a group of people who could use these ideas to benefit the gain and dominance they had over natives. A small group did start to challenge the natural order of society and harshly argued against the harshness of Imperialism. The intellectual changes from the Enlightenment to Darwinism and Nationalism made Europeans change from helping natives to dominating them.

Some of the biggest ideas of the Enlightenment revolved around equality and this translated into the helping relationship between Europeans and colonists. One British soldier, Willam Smith, wrote that the Native Americans weren't completely savage. Even though he regarded them as less civilized it wasn't because they were lesser humans. They showed charitable traits such as providing materials and showing empathy towards the captives. Smith wrote that it was the European's duty educate the natives. Despite the obvious differences in culture the Europeans sought to help the native people and

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believed their relationship benefited both sides. One medallion made by Josiah Wedgwood further proved the view early Europeans had of the natives. The medallion

② was created to show a native asking "Am I not a Man and a Brother?" It was used to push the idea of abolishing the slave trade, Wedgwood's desire to free the slaves made a lot of sense for a man living during this time period. Many Enlightenment thinkers opposed slavery because they believed all men were born equal and deserve to be treated so. All of these ideas helped start the idea to end slavery.

③ *Novel* Francois-René de Chateaubriand's fictional novel portrayed a Native American character. While the character showed appreciation for the help and education the Europeans gave him, he longed for his old ways. He is granted his freedom and told to "enjoy this invaluable independence of man!" The idea of helping and letting natives be free was extremely common during the 1700s as a result of the Enlightenment.

These positive relationships with the natives didn't last forever as a strong dominance became evident in many Europeans. The dominance and power control resulted from nationalism, industrialization, and Darwinism.

④ The French prime minister, Jules Ferry, gave a speech in 1885 that urged France to continue colonizing and asserting dominance over the inferior nonwhite races. Towards the end he mentioned that France must be a great country and spread her influence over the entire world. The evident undertones of nationalism are clear and make sense because of the time period. France along with many other European powers were constantly feeling the need to assert the power through nationalism. At the time Germany

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had consolidated into one unified power and defeated the French in a war in order to do this. As a result the French lost and treasured piece of land and in order to make the French still remained a valid power, the prime minister probably needed to push for French control and nationalism even more. The idea of dominance over non-Europeans can also be found in an essay written by Wilhelm

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Schallmayer. The industrial revolution had touched Europe greatly and powerful countries needed supplies to meet high demands. In order to make some of the brutal actions of the Europeans justified they relied on new intellectual ideas to support them.

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Schallmayer wrote that the white races are far superior and how because of this they need to gain the power and it's natural for the lesser races to become extinct, leaving white races to prevail. All of his ideas tie closely to Darwinism which was an intellectual idea that many Europeans used to prove white dominance. Schallmayer's words make sense, as they stemmed from a common belief of many during his time. The harsh treatment and strong feeling of dominance over natives shows that the new ways of Imperialism had changed greatly.

Even though many Europeans negative views of natives were evident in the late 1800s early 1900s many challenged the idea of Imperialism. As society became more ordered many artists and people spoke out against this orderly society to rebel and challenge what was normal. In the painting, *Barbaric Tales*, the artist depicts the white man as a barbarian and not the natives. He was challenging the common belief.

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Gauguin lived in Tahiti so he had a first-hand look at how natives really behaved and the harsh treatment they faced from Europeans. Also as an artist he had no need to support Imperialism. He wasn't a political leader looking for ways to maintain power and harvest goods from the natives, but a man who painted. Many artists at the time began to paint against what was normal. So even in this orderly time of European domination, many challenged the ideas and had strong opinions against them.

The ideas of ways of thinking in Europe had intense effects of how Europeans treated Imperialism. As the Enlightenment flourished so did the helpful nature and treatment towards natives, but once nationalism, industrialization, and Darwinism spread across the continent many Europeans believed in European superiority. They faced people who challenged their ideas, but dominance still prevailed. Imperialism wasn't the only thing to be affected by intellectual trends in Europe. The idea of religious tolerance became prominent during the Reformation and Enlightenment while Realpolitik and strong nations with constitutions arose from nationalism and the fear of revolts. The ways Europeans functioned and changed resulted from the ideas that came around during different time periods.