Colonial Encounters
1750 - 1914

Strayer: *Ways of the World*
Chapter 20
A Second Wave of European Conquests

- The British, French, Germans, Italians, Belgians, Portuguese, Russians, and Americans all had colonies.
  - Colonial policy varied depending on time and country involved
  - The actions and reactions of the colonized people also shaped the colonial experience
A Second Wave of European Conquests

The period 1750–1900 saw a second, distinct phase of European colonial conquest.

- focused on Asia and Africa
- several new players (Germany, Italy, Belgium, U.S., Japan)
- was not demographically catastrophic like the first phase
- was affected by the Industrial Revolution
- in general, Europeans preferred informal control (e.g., Latin America, China, the Ottoman Empire)
A Second Wave of European Conquests

The establishment of the second-wave European empires was based on military force or on the threat of using it.

- original European military advantage lay in organization, drill, and command structure
- over the nineteenth century, Europeans developed an enormous firepower advantage (repeating rifles and machine guns)
- numerous wars of conquest: the Westerners almost always won
Becoming a colony happened in a variety of ways.

- India and Indonesia: grew from interaction with European trading firms
- most of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific islands: deliberate conquest
- decentralized societies without a formal state structure were the hardest to conquer
- Australia and New Zealand: more like the colonization of North America (with massive European settlement and diseases killing off most of the native population)
A Second Wave of European Conquests

- Becoming a colony happened in a variety of ways.
  - Taiwan and Korea: Japanese takeover was done European-style
  - United States and Russia continued to expand
  - Liberia: settled by freed U.S. slaves
  - Ethiopia and Siam (Thailand) avoided colonization skillfully

- Asian and African societies generated a wide range of responses to the European threat.
Under European Rule

- European takeover was often traumatic for the colonized peoples; the loss of life and property could be devastating.

- Cooperation and Rebellion
  - some groups and individuals cooperated willingly with their new masters
    - employment in the armed forces
    - elite often kept much of their status and privileges
Under European Rule

- Cooperation and Rebellion
  - governments and missionaries promoted European education
    - growth of a small class with Western education
    - governments relied on them increasingly over time
  - periodic rebellions
    - e.g., the Indian Rebellion of 1857–1858, based on a series of grievances
    - rebellion began as a mutiny among Indian troops
    - rebel leaders advocated revival of the Mughal Empire
    - widened India’s racial divide; the British were less tolerant of natives
    - led the British government to assume direct control over India
Colonial Empires with a Difference

- in the new colonial empires, race was a prominent point distinguishing rulers from the ruled
  - education for colonial subjects was limited and emphasized practical matters, suitable for “primitive minds”
  - even the best-educated natives rarely made it into the upper ranks of the civil service
- racism was especially pronounced in areas with a large number of European settlers (e.g., South Africa)
- colonial states imposed deep changes in people’s daily lives
Colonial Empires with a Difference

- colonizers were fascinated with counting and classifying their new subjects
  - in India, appropriated an idealized caste system
  - in Africa, identified or invented distinct “tribes”

- colonial policies contradicted European core values and practices at home
  - colonies were essentially dictatorships
  - colonies were the antithesis of “national independence”
  - racial classifications were against Christian and Enlightenment ideas of human equality
  - many colonizers were against spreading “modernization” to the colonies
  - in time, the visible contradictions in European behavior helped undermine the foundations of colonial rule