CHAPTER 19

*The West and the World: Empire, Trade, and War, 1650-1850*

**CHAPTER OUTLINE**

I. Introduction

Olaudah Equiano published his autobiography in 1789. In it he gave an account of his capture in Africa and transport in a slave ship to the Caribbean where he was sold to a master. He described the brutal punishments, terror, insufferable heat and stench of the hulls, the degrading experience of purchase and branding and the cruelty of separation of family members. Equiano told his story as well as that of millions of others who shared the experience in the transatlantic slave trade. The slave trade was part of the experience of empire building by Europeans in the period from 1650-1850. The empires, commonly referred to as the metropolis, were desired as sources of raw materials and markets that would benefit the economy of the mother country.

A. European Empires in the Americas and Asia

1. Introduction

   European states of the early modern centuries became more integrated political units. They also sought to form empires, which included other territories in Europe as well as vast expanses of land in the America and Asia. In the Americas, Europeans with superior military technology were able to conquer the peoples. In Asia local peoples and empires possessed technology and organization similar to that of the Europeans. Therefore the Europeans limited themselves to commerce. The Spanish and Portuguese established vast overseas empires in the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, Great Britain, France and the Dutch Republic partly displaced the Spanish and Portuguese as the new imperial powers.

2. The Rise of the British Empire

   The fastest growing European empire of the seventeenth and eighteenth century was the British. It established its first successful colony at Jamestown in Virginia in 1607. By 1700, it had acquired several more colonies in North America as well as several islands in the Caribbean and trade posts in Africa and Asia. In North America the Indian population was quickly pushed westward or died of diseases leaving the land available for English settlers. Several of the colonies in America were founded by people who sought a place to practice their religion without legal restrictions. Other colonies had a greater economic motive. In the Caribbean and in North America several colonies developed a highly profitable commercial economy based on slave
labor. Many English people came to America as indentured servants and gained their freedom later. In India the British presence was limited to a few members of the British East India Company who had established trade posts called factories on a few Indian seaports. From these trade posts the British effectively challenged Dutch and Portuguese control of the spice trade with Indonesia. In 1770, the British explorer Captain James Cook (1728-1779) also laid claim to Australia and New Zealand for the British.

3. The Scattered French Empire

French expansion into Indian and North America paralleled that of the British. They established colonies in the Caribbean, Canada, and the Mississippi Valley, and the French East India Company established trade posts in India. The French Colonists in the Caribbean established sugar plantations based on slave labor. A series of defeats in the eighteenth century reduced the French presence in Asia and the Americas. Their imperial efforts would be revived in the nineteenth century with occupation of North Africa.

4. The Commercial Empire of the Dutch.

The Dutch Republic acquired an overseas empire in the early seventeenth century and became the center of a global economy with colonies and trade posts in Africa, Asia and the Americas. They seized Portuguese trade posts in Asia and West Africa. The Dutch West India Company also seized Northern Brazil. When they were forced out of Brazil in 1654, they acquired two small islands in the Caribbean and a part of Surinam. From there, they carried on trade with the colonies of the other empires in the Americas. They also set up a colony in the Hudson River Valley named New Netherland. In 1664 the English took New Netherland and renamed it New York. In Asia the Dutch East India Company established trade posts in India and Indonesia that allowed them to trade throughout Asia. In the southern tip of Africa, the Dutch established a colony at the Cape of Good Hope. It was designed to provide support for ships on the Asia trade. Dutch farmers, called boers settled there and established agriculture colonies based on slave labor.

5. The Cast Spanish Empire

The Spanish controlled Mexico, Central America, several Caribbean Islands, half of South America, Florida, the area from California to Texas and in Asia, the Philippines. The Spanish crown held stronger control over its territories than the English did. The colonies were ruled by officials appointed by the crown. Colonial trade was funneled through the House of Trade in Seville and shipped through the Port of Cadiz. The Bourbon kings implemented reforms to increase the efficiency of the imperial bureaucracy and increase revenue collection. These Bourbon reforms created tensions with the American-born Spaniards, known as Creoles.
6. The Declining Portuguese Empire

The Portuguese had been the earliest European state to expand overseas, and it established colonies in Brazil and trade posts in Africa and Asia. In the seventeenth century the Portuguese empire began to contract as it lost territory to other Europeans. Brazil remained the most important Portuguese colony because of the wealth from the sugar plantations. The discoveries of gold and diamonds increased its wealth. Brazil remained the major importer of slaves in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Reforms implemented by the Marquis of Pombal increased crown control over Brazil and encouraged the growth of colonial trade.

7. The Russian Empire in the Pacific

The Russia empire expanded in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It acquired a large part of Poland and the Crimea during the reign of Catherine II (r. 1762-1796). It also expanded eastward across Siberia to the Pacific. The Russia-American Company was established in 1789 and built a series of trade posts along the Pacific from Alaska to Fort Ross in California.

B. Warfare in Europe, North American, and Asia

1. Introduction

The efforts to expand overseas and the conflicts over control of trade and colonies between the European powers expanded the war theatres to distant parts of the globe. As a result all European powers built large navies.

2. Mercantile Warfare

The theory that inspired the drive for empire was mercantilism, formulated by Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Mercantilism was a protectionist policy based on the idea that the wealth of a state required having colonies to provide it raw materials to avoid importing them from other countries. Colonies would also serve as market for domestic industry. The major motive for war in the seventeenth and eighteenth century was expansion and protection of trade. In the seventeenth century the English and Dutch fought several wars over Dutch access to English ports. There were wars over trade between England and Spain in the eighteenth century.

3. Anglo-French Military Rivalry

The major rivalry in the eighteenth century was between England and France. During the War of Spanish Succession, England opposed the proposed succession of the Spanish crown to the French candidate. By the Treaty of Utrecht, the Spanish crown was allowed to pass to the Bourbon Philip V with the condition that the Spanish and French Empires not be united. In the War of Austrian Succession, Britain entered the war as an ally of Austria to keep France from acquiring the Austrian Netherlands.
The colonial rivalries continued as part of the Seven Years’ War. In what amounted to a “diplomatic revolution” Bourbon France allied with Habsburg, Austria against Prussia and its ally England. In addition to fighting in Europe, France and England fought each other in America where the war was known as the French and Indian War. At war’s end France was forced to surrender all of Canada and the Mississippi Valley to the English as well as its trade posts in Asia.

The French and the English faced each other again in the American War of Independence. The French provided aid to the American colonists seeking independence and fought the English at sea in the Caribbean and in India. Another phase of the confrontation between France and England took place during the French Revolutionary Wars and Napoleonic Wars.

II. The Atlantic World

1. Introduction

The empire building of the European powers moved the center of the west from the European continent to the Atlantic Ocean.

2. The Atlantic Economy

The Atlantic economy was based on a commercial network between the ports of Europe, Africa and the Americas that exchanged goods and slaves. The colonies in the Americas were a source of agricultural products such as tobacco and coffee. Africa was the source for slaves and Europe for manufactured goods. This Atlantic economy was part of the larger global economy, which included trade with Asia.

3. The Atlantic Slave Trade

The slave trade was key to the Atlantic economy because it provided the labor for plantations. Slaves had the advantage of being easily disciplined and were forced to work longer hours in a difficult work environment. Slavery has been present throughout world history, but the Atlantic slave trade was unique in a number of respects. First, in terms of size, it involved the transportation of over 11 million people from Africa to the Americas. Only 4% of these slaves came to the British colonies in North America. Secondly, slaves were a commercial commodity whose trade involved African chiefs, slave traders and the planters in the Americas. The transporting of slaves across the Atlantic was known as “the middle passage.” It was a horribly degrading experience for slaves. Once in the Americas, the survival of the slaves depended on the local economy, climate and population trends. Slaves on sugar plantations died within of a few years from overwork and mistreatment. In places where the ratio of black to white people was high, laws regulating slave life were very harsh. Until the late eighteenth century, most slave traders and owners saw no moral problem between their belief in liberty and the holding of slaves. In the early nineteenth century opposition to slavery began to grow and the transatlantic slave trade was slowly brought to an end. Slavery was
abolished in the Western Hemisphere in the course of the second half of the
nineteenth century.

4. Cultural Encounters in the Atlantic World

The presence of many people from different parts of Africa and Europe in
the Americas and their interaction with each other and with the native
population of the Americas produced very complex societies and cultures. The
dominant position of the European element in the societies of the Americas
fostered notions of white racial supremacy.

5. The Transmission of Ideas

The Atlantic Ocean became a path for the transmission of many different
political and religious ideas. European political ideas of liberty, the rights of
man and republican government as the best form of government became part
of the political beliefs of the colonists in the Americas. Religious ideas from
Catholic and Calvinist theology also became part of the mental world of the
colonists. These theologies when combined with African religious beliefs
produced new religious ideas.

B. Encounters Between Europeans and Asians

1. Introduction

Between 1650 and 1850 European empires in Asia developed along a
pattern very different from that of the empires in the Americas. At first the
Europeans did not attempt to conquer territory and rule Asian peoples. When
eventually Europeans did attempt conquest, they discovered that conquering
Asian peoples was far more difficult because their military technology was
better than that of the peoples of the Americas.

2. Political Control of India

The Europeans first attempts to take over India came in the late eighteenth
century. The Europeans had established trade posts in India and competed
with each other to build alliances with the provincial governors (nawabs). In
1756 a conflict erupted in Calcutta because the local nawab was determined
not to be dominated by any European’s power. He attacked the British East
India Company’s Fort William and forced the company’s high officials to flee
while most of those Englishmen taken prisoners died in prison. The following
year the British under Robert Clive retook Calcutta with a force of British
troops and Indian sepoys. Within a few years the British East India Company
dominated the southern provinces of India and was introducing western
technology, culture, education and legal system. In 1857 resentment over
British dominance fueled a large rebellion against British rule. After its defeat,
the British government abolished the British East India Company and began
to rule India directly.
3. Changing European Attitudes toward Asian Cultures

Europeans had historically displayed a negative view of Middle Eastern culture, but not of Asian culture. Enlightenment writers praised Asian culture in contrast to the negative elements in Western culture. For example, Voltaire saw the Chinese empire as an enlightened monarchy, and in Britain there was more respect for Indian princes than the British East India Company bureaucrats who were known as nabobs. Asian arts were also praised by Europeans, who prized Chinese porcelain and silks and began to incorporate Chinese motifs called chinoiserie into decorating. By the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this positive attitude disappeared. Chinese philosophy and religion came to be viewed as irrational. Europeans also began to see themselves as racially superior and to refer to the Chinese as yellow.

C. The Crisis of Empire and the Atlantic Revolution

1. Introduction

Between 1780 and 1825 European empires in the Atlantic World experienced a crisis over their ability to maintain the loyalty of their colonists. The Europeans born in the Americas developed their own identity and pushed for independence.

2. The American Revolution, 1775-1783

The first Atlantic Revolution took place in the thirteen British colonies in North America. These colonies had developed their own political institutions and enjoyed a large measure of self-government. When the French and Indian War ended, the British government had to station troops on the frontier to maintain the peace and expected the colonists to pay a share of their defense. When the government attempted to collect revenue by passing the Stamp Act, opposition erupted throughout the colonies forcing the government to repeal it. The opposition was renewed by the imposition of taxes on tea in 1773. When several colonists threw the tea into the Boston harbor, the government closed the harbor. Within a year military conflict broke out in Massachusetts. On July 4, 1776 the American colonists declared independence. To justify their actions, the colonists drew on the ideas of John Locke and other enlightenment writers. After several years of war the British accepted American independence in the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

3. The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804

The second successful Atlantic Revolution was in the French colony of Saint Domingue now known as Haiti. The planters or colons of Haiti had little desire for independence, as they feared that a revolution would undermine
their control of the slave population. In 1789 the free coloreds revolted under the leadership of Vicent Ogé because the planters refused to allow them representation in the local assemblies. In 1791, the revolt turned into a massive slave rebellion led by Toussaint L’Ouverture that destroyed the white population. Attempts to subdue Haiti by the British, Spanish and French failed. In 1804 France recognized the independence of Haiti. With the plantation system destroyed and unable to agree on a form of government, Haiti was plagued by civil wars for many years after independence.

4. The Irish Rebellion

The British had conquered Ireland in the seventeenth century and settled English and Scottish Protestants there. British exploitation of Ireland served to build some common interest between Catholic and Protestant residents of Ireland. In 1798 they rebelled against the British. The British put down the rebellion and abolished the political institutions of Ireland, fully uniting Ireland with the United Kingdom.

5. National Revolutions in Spanish America, 1810-1824

Another set of revolutions took place in Spanish America in reaction to the strong political and economic control imposed by the Bourbon reforms. Although Spanish Americans had developed an identity as Americans, they were reluctant to move toward independence because they feared the threat of a rebellion by the non-Spanish populations they dominated. The takeover of Spain by Napoleon required the colonists to reorganize political order in the colonies. When the Spanish monarchy was restored in 1814, the colonists quickly began to demand autonomy. When the crown refused, they revolted. One of the key figures leading the push to independence in South America was Simón Bolívar. Between 1815 and 1825 most of the Spanish colonies in the Americas gained independence. Spain only retained control of Cuba and Puerto Rico.
TIMELINE

Insert the following events into the timeline. This should help you to compare important historical events chronologically.

Robert Clive retakes Calcutta  
Slave revolt in Haiti  
End of Seven Years War  
Russia-America Company Established  
Dutch settle Cape of Good Hope  
James Cook explored east coast of Australia

1652

1757

1763

1770

1789

1791

TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS

The following terms, people, and events are important to your understanding of the chapter. Define each one.

Olaudah Equiano  
empires  
French East India Company  
Charles III  
protectionism  
middle passage  
sepoys  
chinoiserie  
Toussaint L’Ouverture  
metropolis  
factories  
boers  
Russia-American Company  
First Anglo-Dutch War  
nawabs  
Siraj-ud-Daulah  
colons  
United Irishmen  
states  
James Cook  
creoles  
Mercantilism  
Seven Years War  
Robert Clive  
nabobs  
Vicent Ogé  
Simon Bolivar
MAP EXERCISE

The following exercise is intended to clarify the geophysical environment and the spatial relationships among the important objects and places mentioned in the chapter.

1. Locate the following places on the map.

Cape of Good Hope
Calcutta
Mexico
Indonesia
Australia
Madras

Haiti
Portugal
Alaska
Pondicherry
Angola
Ireland
MAKING CONNECTIONS

The following questions are intended to emphasize important ideas within the chapter.

1. Who were the major empires in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Which empires declined in this period?

2. What role did the slave trade play in the Atlantic Economy? What was it like for the slaves crossing the Atlantic?

3. How did Europeans views of Asians change from the mid-eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century?

4. What were the major causes of the Revolts in Saint Domingue? Were these different from those of the Independence Movement in the English and Spanish Colonies?

5. Why were the colons of Saint Domingue and the Creoles of Spanish America reluctant to push for independence?

DOCUMENT QUESTIONS

The following questions test your ability to interpret the primary source documents in the textbook.

1. According to Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, what was the impact of the slave trade on Africa?

2. How were the merchants described in the English comedy The Nabob?

3. How did Thomas Paine view the role of Britain in the colonies?

PUTTING LARGER CONCEPTS TOGETHER

1. How did the composition and organization of European empires change during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? What impact did this have on the development of the West?

2. How did cultural encounters between European and Asian peoples during this period change Western attitudes toward others?
SELF-TEST OF FACTUAL INFORMATION

1. The earliest European empires in the Western Hemisphere were established by the
   a. Aztecs and Incas.
   b. Portuguese and Spanish.
   c. Dutch and Russians.
   d. English and French.

2. Which of the following was a French Trade post in India?
   a. Pondicherry.
   b. Jakarta.
   c. Calcutta.
   d. Ceuta.

3. The Dutch established a colony in North America called
   a. Jakarta.
   b. Guiana.
   c. Australia.
   d. New Netherland.

4. Which Spanish king brought Spanish America under more direct control of Spain?
   a. Charles III
   b. Philip II
   c. Charles I
   d. Catherine

5. The most important Portuguese colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was
   a. Angola.
   b. India.
   c. Brazil.
   d. Saint Domingue.
6. The English fought mercantile wars against all of the following European empires EXCEPT
   a. France.
   b. Dutch.
   c. Spanish.
   d. Portuguese.

7. All the following were important commodities of the Atlantic Economy EXCEPT
   a. tobacco.
   b. coffee.
   c. slaves.
   d. pepper.

8. What percentage of the slaves imported to the Americas went to the English colonies in North America?
   a. 4%
   b. 30%
   c. 38%
   d. 75%

9. Robert Clive restored British control to which of the following British outposts in India?
   a. Pondicherry
   b. Jakarta
   c. Calcutta
   d. Ceuta

10. The Haitian free coloreds revolted because of the
    a. passage of the *Stamp Act* and the *Intolerable Acts*.
    b. support from the Creoles and the Defenders.
    c. refusal of the Creoles to grant them representation in the assemblies.
    d. fall of the Spanish Monarchy.