Lecture 3:1: “Imperialism and the Great War”

Source 1

**The White Man’s Burden (1899)**

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--
Have done with childish days--
The lightly proferred 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!

*Rudyard Kipling*
**Context:**

The author Rudyard Kipling came to be known as the poet laureate of British imperialism. Justification for Europe’s binge of late nineteenth century imperial expansion took many forms - economic opportunity, national pride, military necessity, and social obligation. By the time of the outbreak of World War I Europe’s “Scramble for Africa” left the continent with only three percent of its population living in its two independent states - Liberia and Abyssinia.

Source: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/Kipling.html

**Questions:**

1. What motivated European states to expand or to acquire colonial territories in the late nineteenth century?
2. How did competition for imperial acquisitions and the maintenance of those colonies contribute to the onset of World War I?

**Assignment:**

Late nineteenth century European possessions in Asia and Africa experienced a sudden influx of foreign influence and those “mother countries” received a reciprocal impact from their colonies. Compile parallel lists with separate headings of “Imperial Impact” and “Domestic Influence” to demonstrate the reciprocal effects of European expansionism.

**Bibliography:**


