History, Power, Technology and Narrative II

Switch class [HIS 143]

The Plan

Openings/Review 10

Lecture 40-50
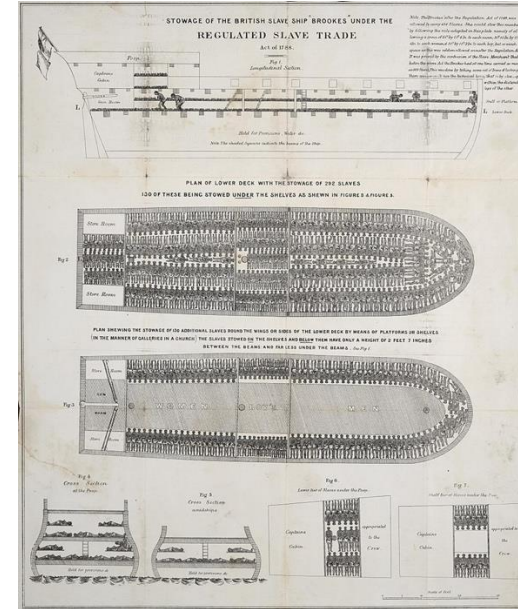
Group activity 10

Discussion 10

Review

Writing as a technology of power

Race as a technology of power

How might you begin to approach global inequality differently?

Technology of power : maritime technologies

- Sea power was the key to empire building.
  - Maritime innovations drove the age of European discovery. 15th c

  - Competition for overseas trade drove innovation. 16th-18thc

- Netherlands dominated the seas and broke Spanish/Portuguese stronghold. 16th -17th c
  - Dutch East India co. 1602-1796

- Meanwhile, 1588 British defeat of the Spanish armada was a key to the British rise.
  - British East India Co. 1600-1874

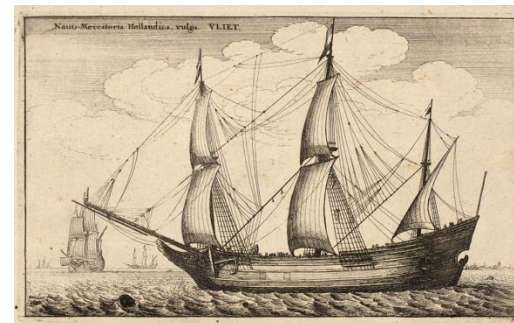- British overtake the Dutch by 1800

British Slaver Brooks. 1781

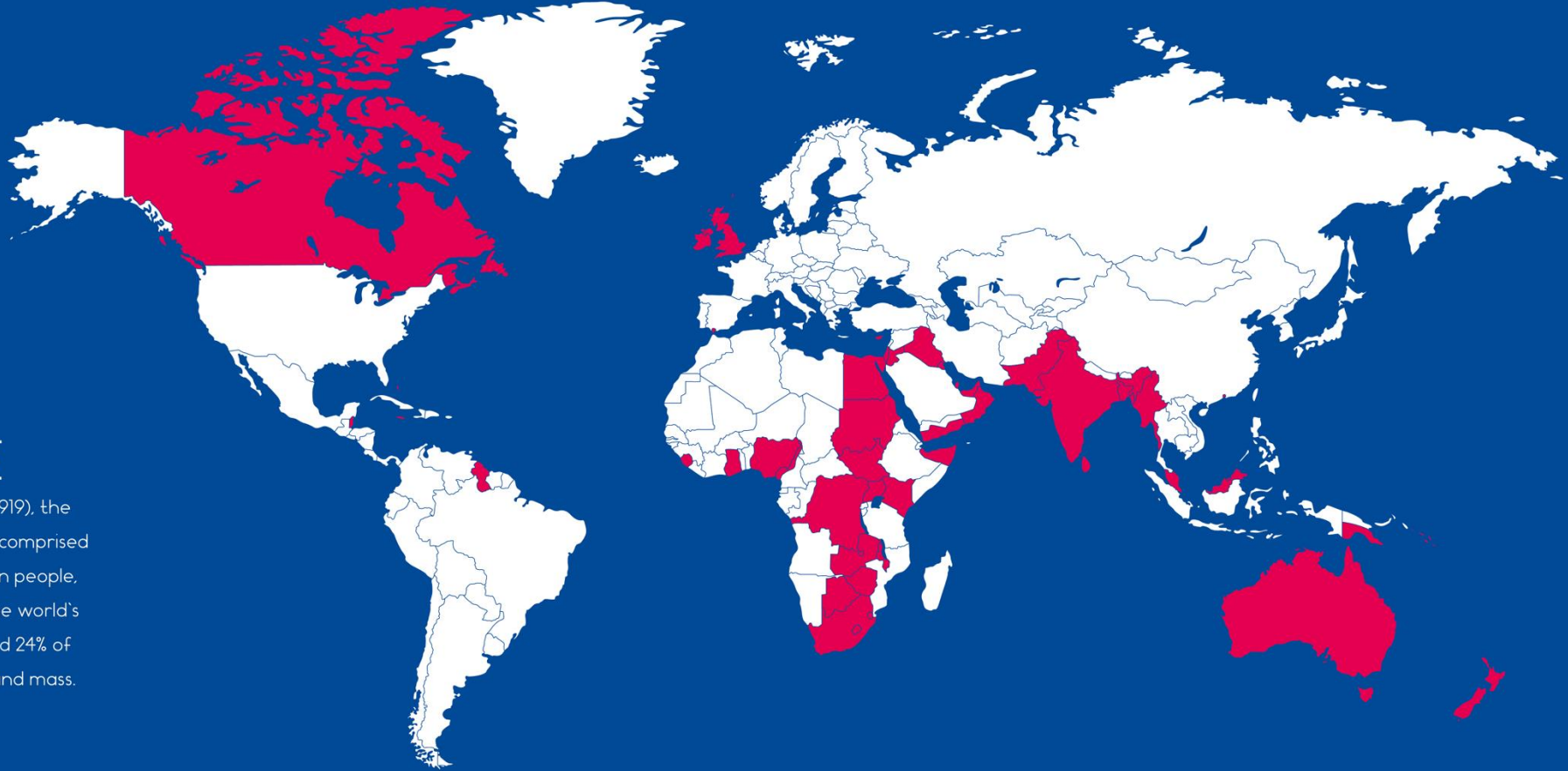ship carried between 500 and 7 captives.

11 voyages

1'by 6' personal space

Dutch Fluyt. Max cargo space, small crew size, cheap to build. 16th.

The Apex
of Empire

At its height (1919), the
British empire comprised
some 412 million people,
then 23% of the world's
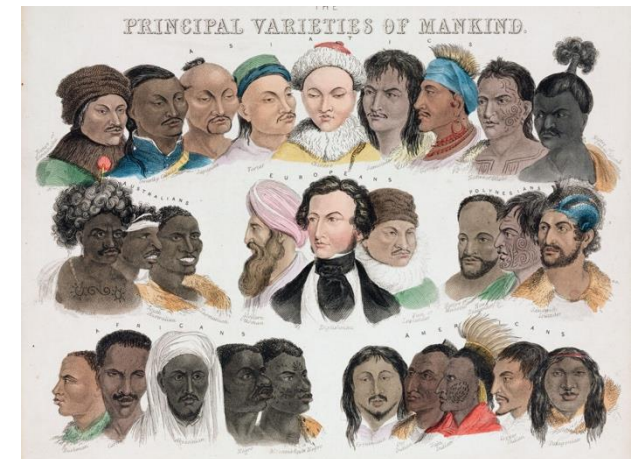population, and 24% of
Earth's total land mass.

Transitions

- British lose North America
  - 1776

- British Caribbean colonies decline
  - 1807 abolition of slave trade.

- Shift to focus on Asia and Africa. 1750-1950
  - Colonies [raw materials]
  - Industry
  - Free trade

- India's share of world GDP plumets from 25-35% to 4.2 % during British rule. British removed the equivalent of 45 trillion dollars.

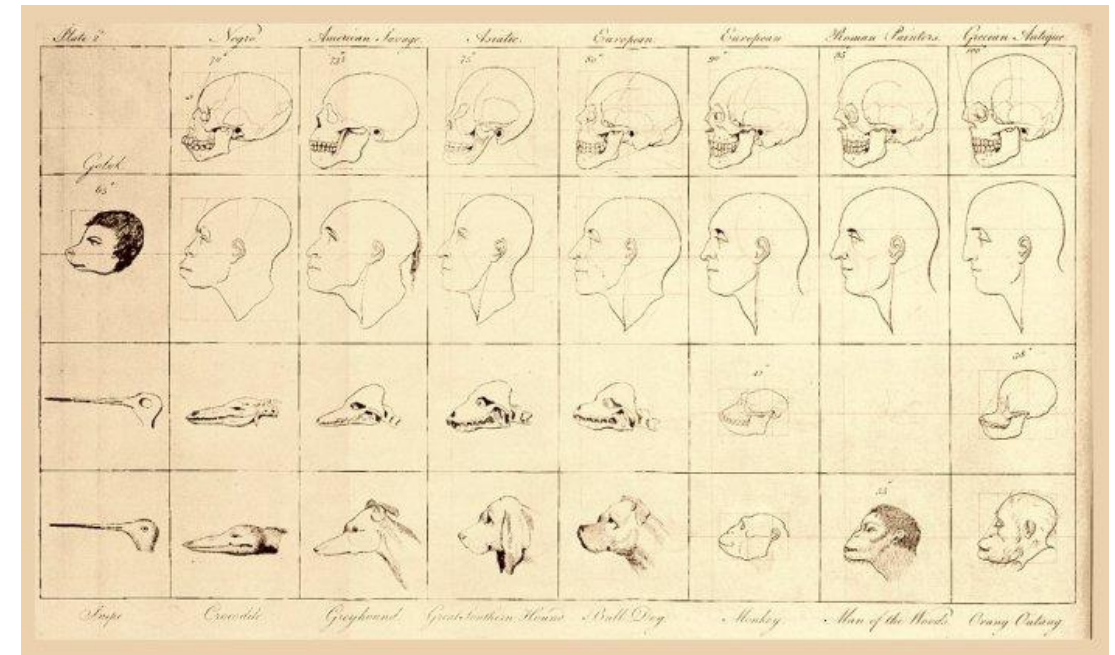# Technology of power: Science, knowledge and industry

- Justification for colonialism
  - Science replaces religion.
- Science of race
  - Social Darwinism
- Social Darwinism used to
  - Explain Anglo-European Industrial advancement.
    - Europeans won because they were superior, and they were superior because they won. [circular jogic]

Science of surveillance and control.

Nazi Germany, 1941

" [whiteness is] in many ways, a fantasy produced by the European imagination, one that the West has worked hard to naturalize and universalize" Achille Mbembe

A plate from Charles White's "An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man and in Different Animals and Vegetables; and from the Former to the Latter," 1799. White's work was critical in spreading scientific racism.
Source: Public domain.

Industrial Revolution

- **Atlantic trade→ raw materials, markets and labor**
- **First Industrial Revolution 1760-1840**
  - Hand production→ machines
  - Rise of the mechanized factory
  - Britain = major role as the premier commercial power
- **Second Industrial Revolution 1870**
  - Mass production
    - Assembly lines
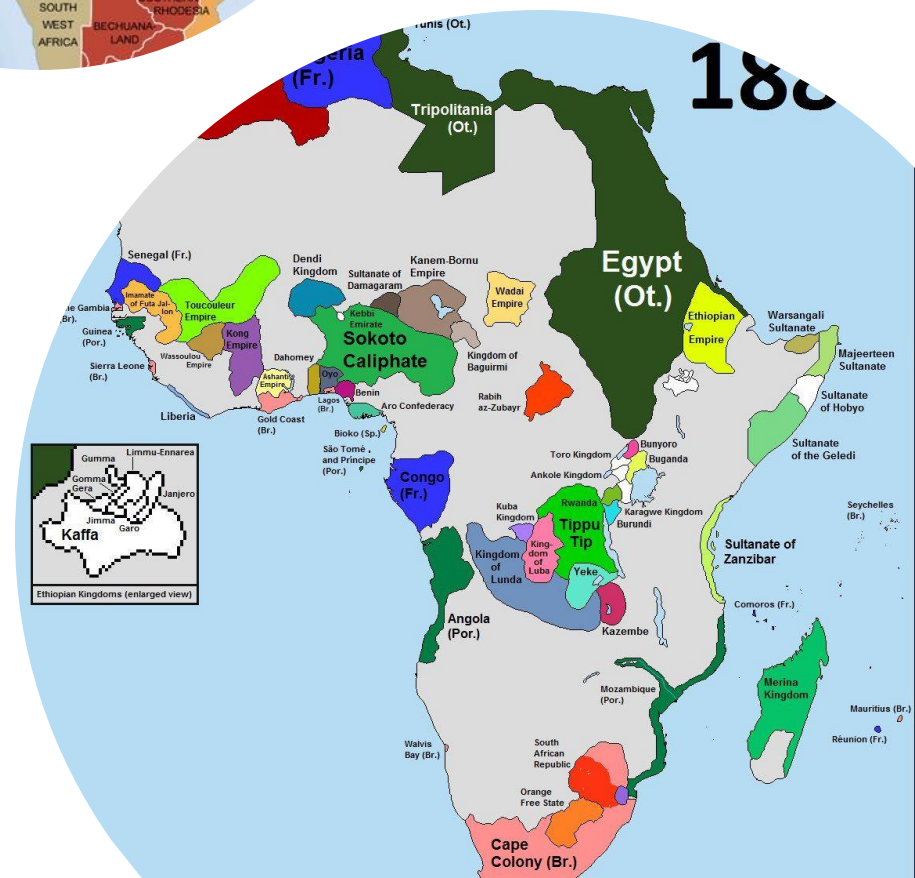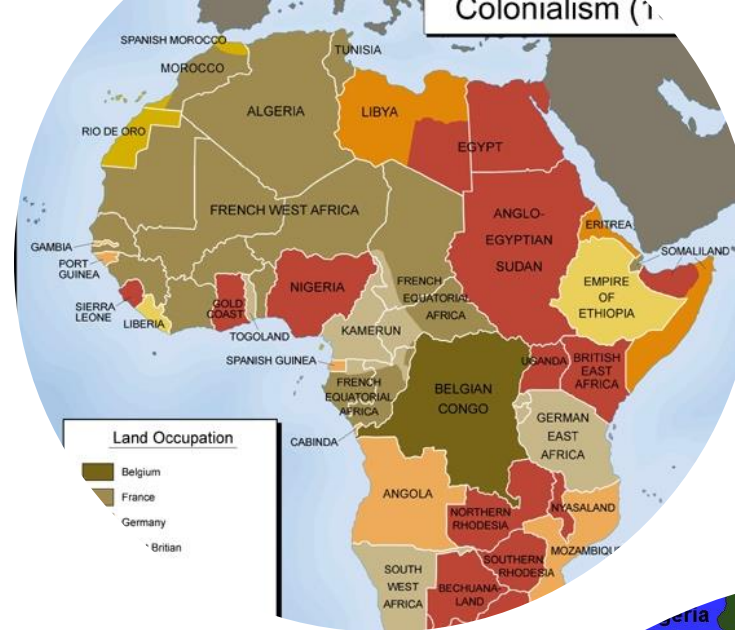 - Electrification
  - Railroads/steam power

The Scramble for Africa

- **What made it possible?**
  - coastal exploration →interior colonization.
    - Treatment for malaria
    - Steamships, railways, telegraphs
- **Why was it desirable?**
  - Raw materials for industry and luxury goods: rubber, oil, tin, cotton, coal, diamonds, gold, ivory.
- **How did it happen?**
  - **Berlin Conference [1884]**
    - European power agreed to share Africa.
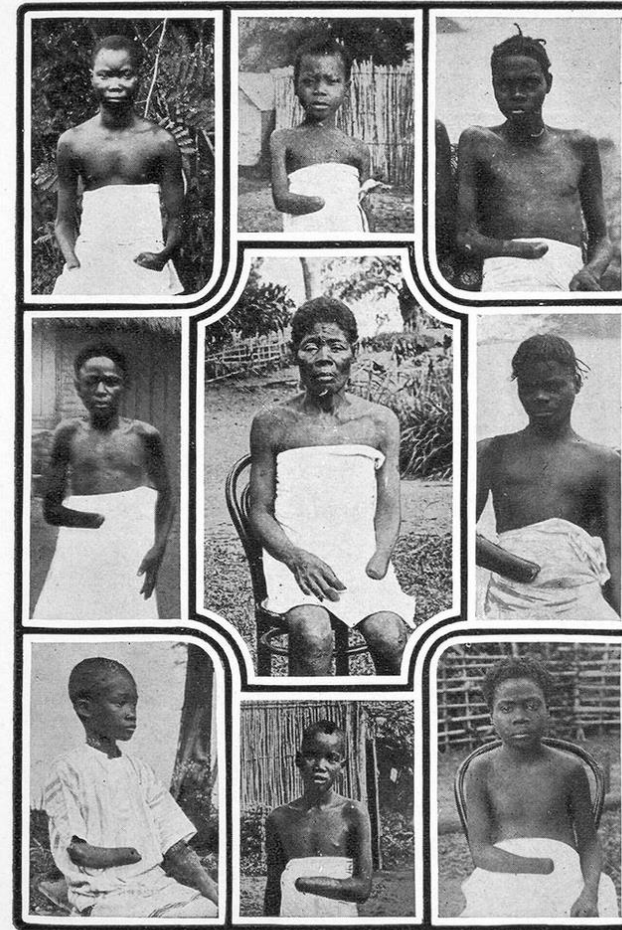   - principal of effective occupation.

CARTE DE L'AFRIQUE

L'ENTENTE CORDIALE.

Pre-colonial and colonial Africa

- What Europe took form Africa is incalculable:
  - Some estimates = trillions of dollars
  - 200 years of slave trade
  - 100 years of colonization

- BUT, without Africa there would be no Europe [no world] as we know it today...

Belgian Congo

- King Leopold of Belgium
  - Estab. International association of the Congo [a front]
  - Creates the Congo "free state"
    - Privately owned by Leopold 1885-1908
- The story:
  - Civilizing mission in Congo
- The reality:
  - Rubber extracted in horrible conditions [coerced plantation labor]
  - Torture and mutilation.

FROM PHOTOGRAPHS, CONGO STATE

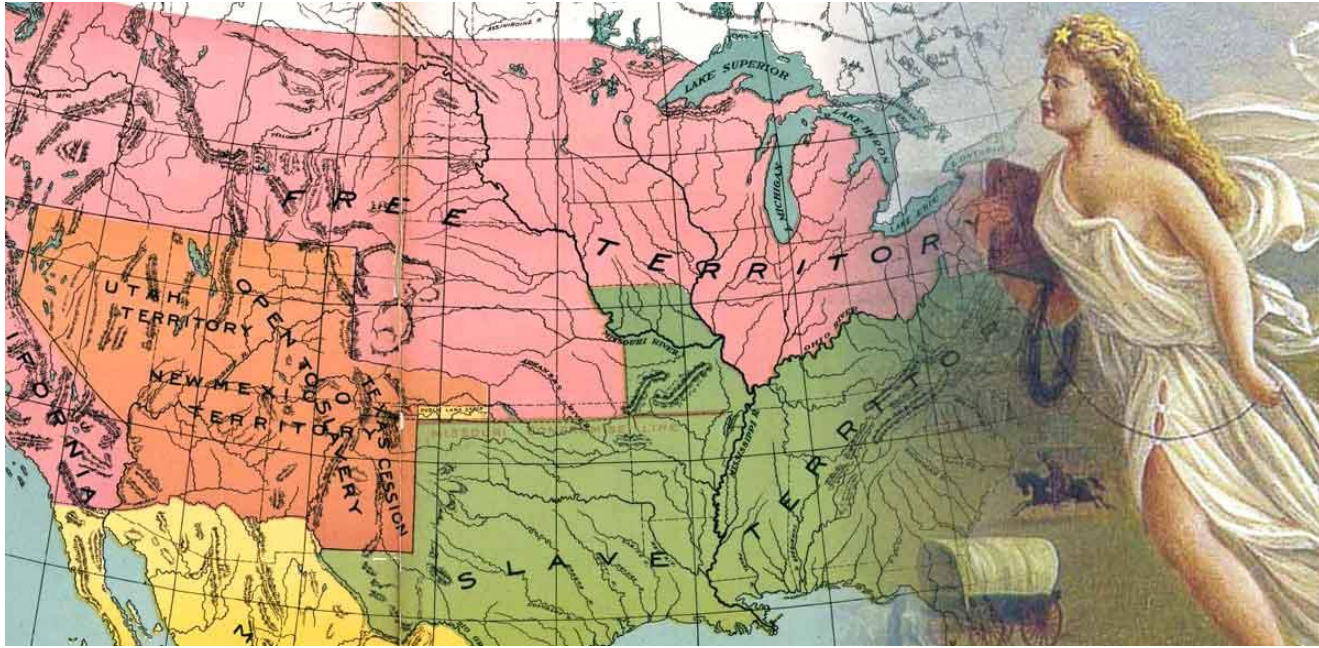"The pictures get sneaked around everywhere."— Page 40.

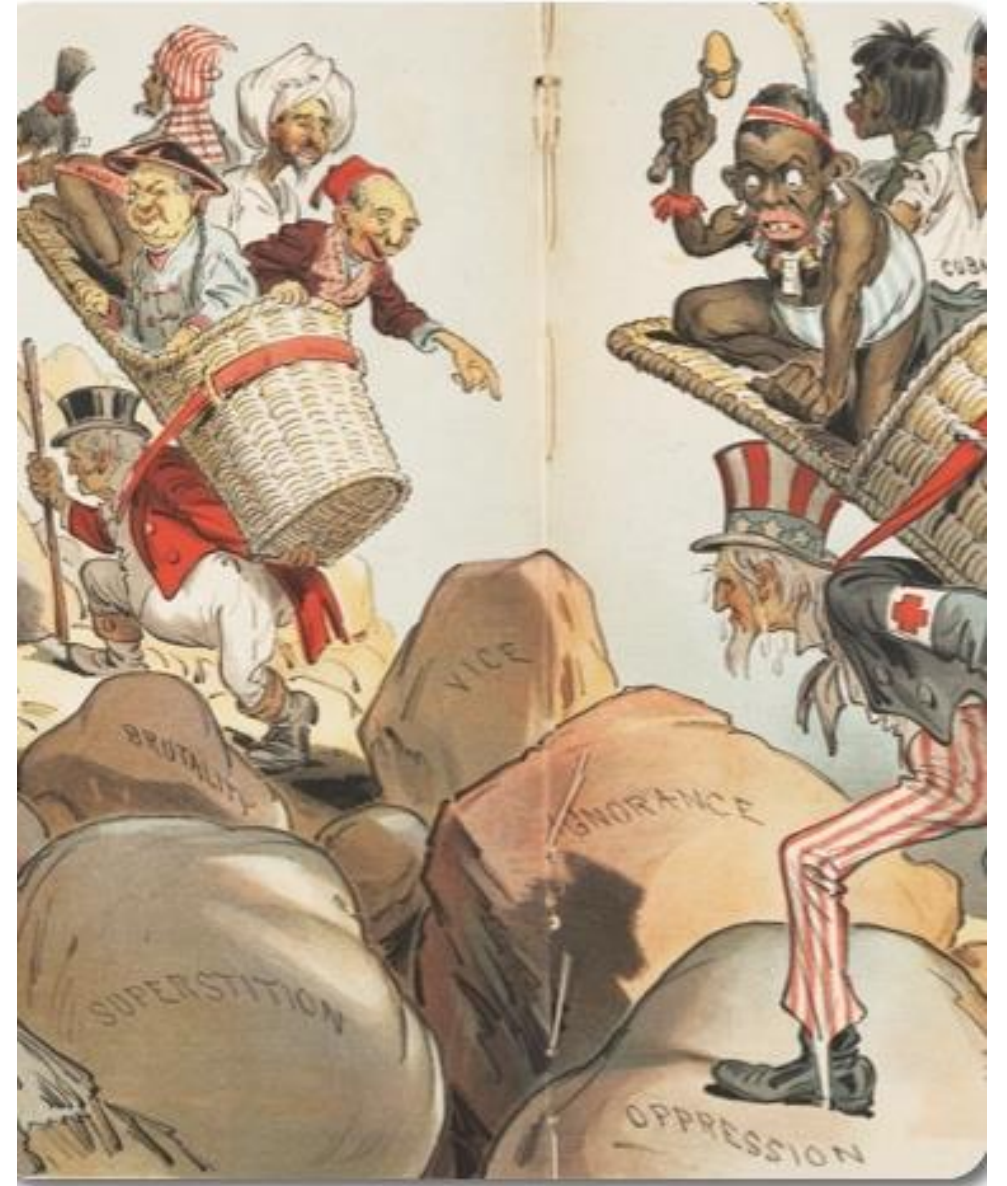# The White Man's burden [Rudyard Kipling]

- **The White Man's Burden**

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….

-Rudyard Kipling-1899

Kipling and the
United States

Technology of power: Narrative

- How you tell the story MATTERS

- Information and misinformation

Technologies of power

Writing to claim Land

Race
To control people

Science to "develop" or improve underdeveloped societies
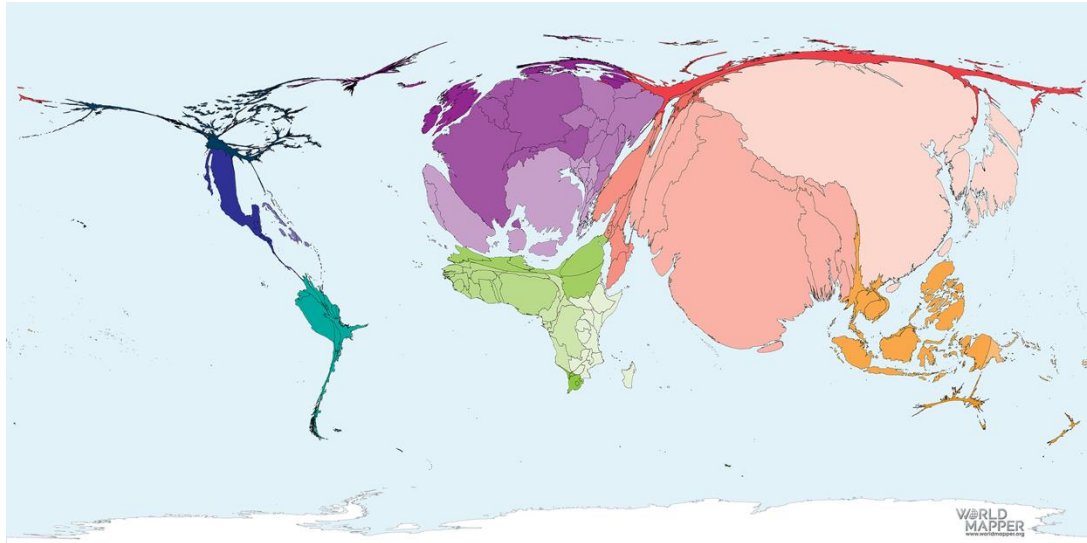
COLONIALISM

Narrative to control the story

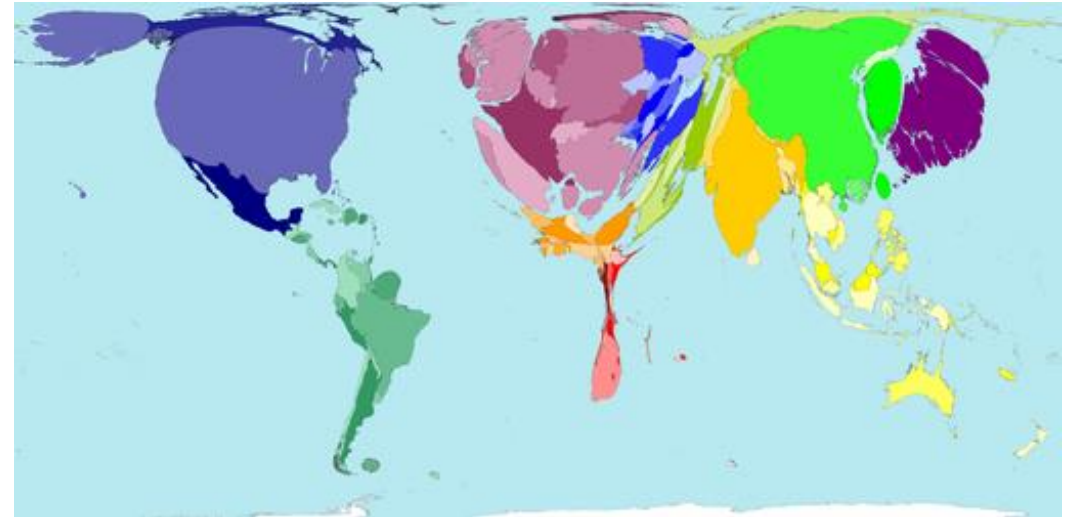**Ships** to extend colonial power

Activity in groups 10 min

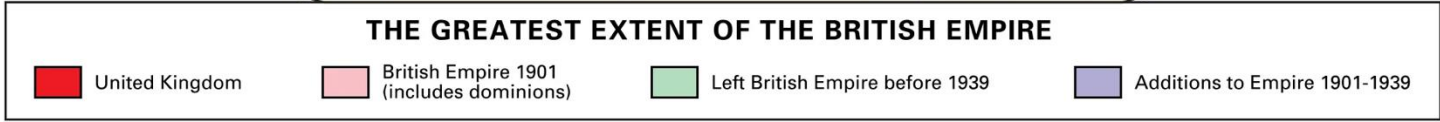Describe the problem of Global Inequality.

A history of world GDP
Percentage of total, 1990 $ at PPP*

China | India | Japan | US | France | Germany | Italy | Britain

Sources: Angus Maddison, University of Groningen; The Economist   *Purchasing-power parity

2,000 YEARS OF ECONOMIC HISTORY IN ONE CHART
All major powers compared by GDP from the year 1 AD

SHARE OF GDP (WORLD POWERS)

ANCIENT
Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Iran

CHINA

INDIA

JAPAN

RUSSIA
GERMANY
ITALY
SPAIN
UNITED KINGDOM
FRANCE

UNITED STATES

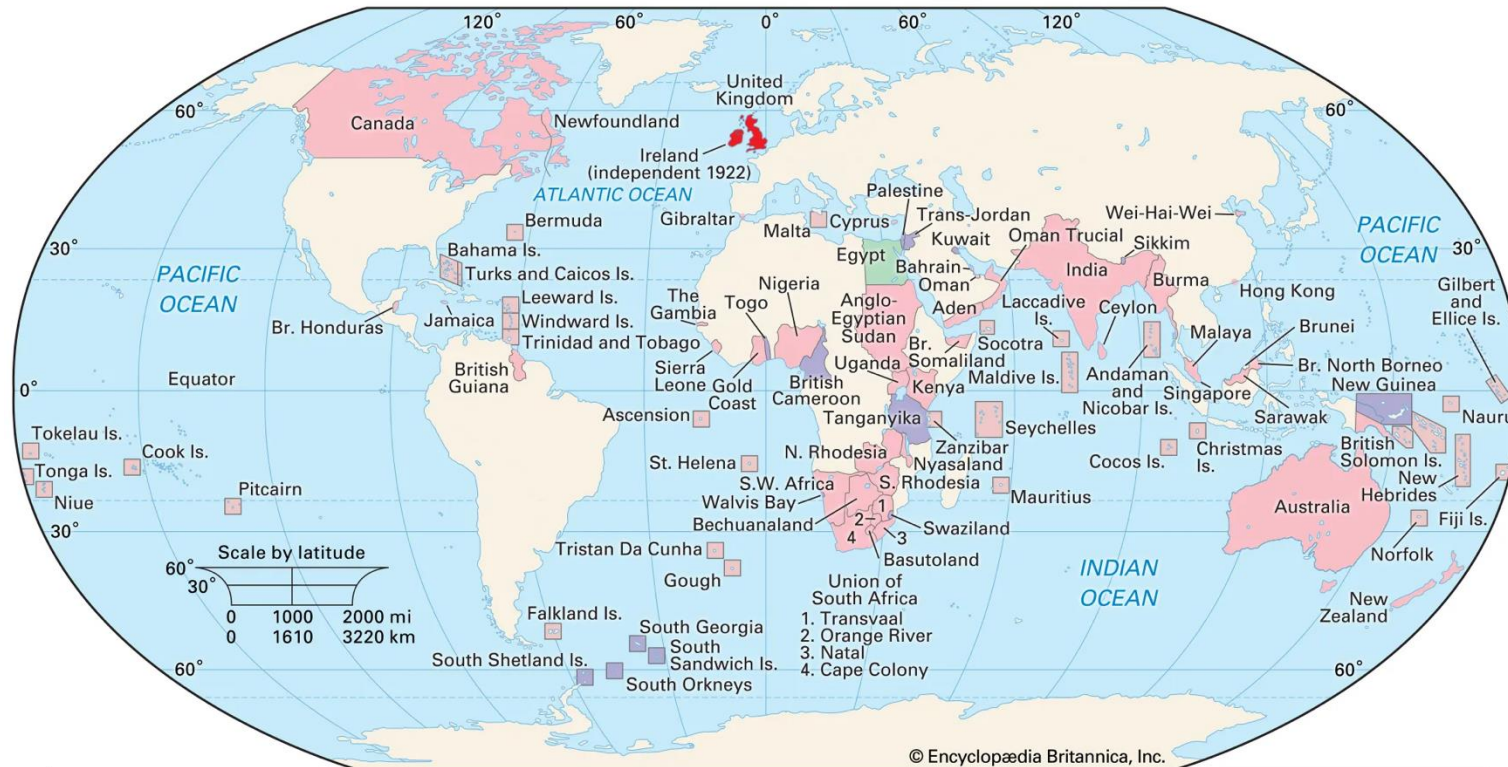# Map by GDP

1500

2000

British Empire

THE GREATEST EXTENT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

USA Empire and influence