Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.1—There Is No Such Thing as a Free Lunch: Costs of Fulfilling Colonizers' Intentions

The following is part of a speech made by Baron Vander Capellen, a Governor of the Dutch East Indies on his retirement in 1824. He tells the story of his administration.

My motives have been pure: the well-being of Netherlands' India I have always had in view. ... Particularly those revenues which are less dependent upon the price of our produce in other parts of the world, had risen from year to year. ... New prisons have been constructed. ... Opening of the teak forests for the purposes of shipbuilding ... encourages the native trade. The building and maintaining of a number of armed cruizer-prahus [native-style ships] ... supported by the colonial ships of war ... protect ... against the piracies formerly so frequent.

[I always kept in mind] that Netherlands' India is no independent state, but must be considered purely as a possession of the Netherlands, and that its first destination and obligation is to be serviceable to the mother country with all its resources. ...

Everywhere, and by every possible means, vaccine has been introduced, and if it has been established with difficulty and required many sacrifices on the part of government, it has certainly [paid off] in Java.

The housing of troops, ... the pier at Batavia, ... the bridges and embankment of almost all the canals ... the construction and repair of good roads ... cost much, but they were ... urgently necessary. The native officers, those useful servants of the state, who formerly did not enjoy adequate salaries, are now well [paid]. ... The constant care of the government to promote the knowledge of the native languages and that of their manners and customs among officers in constant communication with the natives [produced good results].

The colonial marine which have ... done so many beneficial services but have caused considerable expenses, may be reduced ... as soon as his majesty shall be pleased to listen to my urgent request to send out some armed steam-boats. ... Steam-boats constructed on this island will ... soon improve and shorten communication with different parts of Netherlands' India. ... The desirable object of civilizing the Dayah population has never been lost sight of. ...

Padang and its dependencies during the last years required great sacrifices from us. The war with the fanatical Padries was unavoidable for the preservation of our possessions. ... At last our resident has succeeded in concluding a treaty ... consistent with the dignity of the government.

Source: Speech of Baron Vander Capellen, *Singapore Chronicle*, March 1826, qtd. in J. H. Moor, *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent Countries*, Vol. 1 (Singapore: 1837; New impression: London: Frank Cass, 1968), 140-3.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.2—How Can a Handful of Englishmen Control Multitudes?

Alexander Dalrymple, an official of the Admiralty and of the East India Company, wrote the following in the late 1700s. He was explaining why Liberty and Equality, watchwords of the American, French, and Haitian revolutions, could not apply to British-Indian relations:

> Admit for a moment the possibility of communicating to the Indians the liberty we enjoy. The result of that liberty must be that force and elevation of mind which is so distinctive a part of the British character. ... Would the British with this spirit submit to foreign rulers? Granted his principles, he would not! And therefore making the Indians free, we expel ourselves from India. ... A conquered people ... must still be slaves, however light the yoke; slaves can only be governed with despotic power ... and the Indians left to their own customs will enjoy perhaps all the liberty we can give them.

Macgregor Laird, a Scottish merchant and shipbuilder who wanted to carry the "glad tidings of peace and goodwill towards men into the dark places of the earth" and make a profit besides, wrote as follows in 1837:

> We have the power in our hands, moral, physical, and mechanical; the first, based on the Bible; the second, upon the wonderful adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon race to all climates, situations, and circumstances ... the third, bequeathed to us by the immortal Watts [the steam-engine].

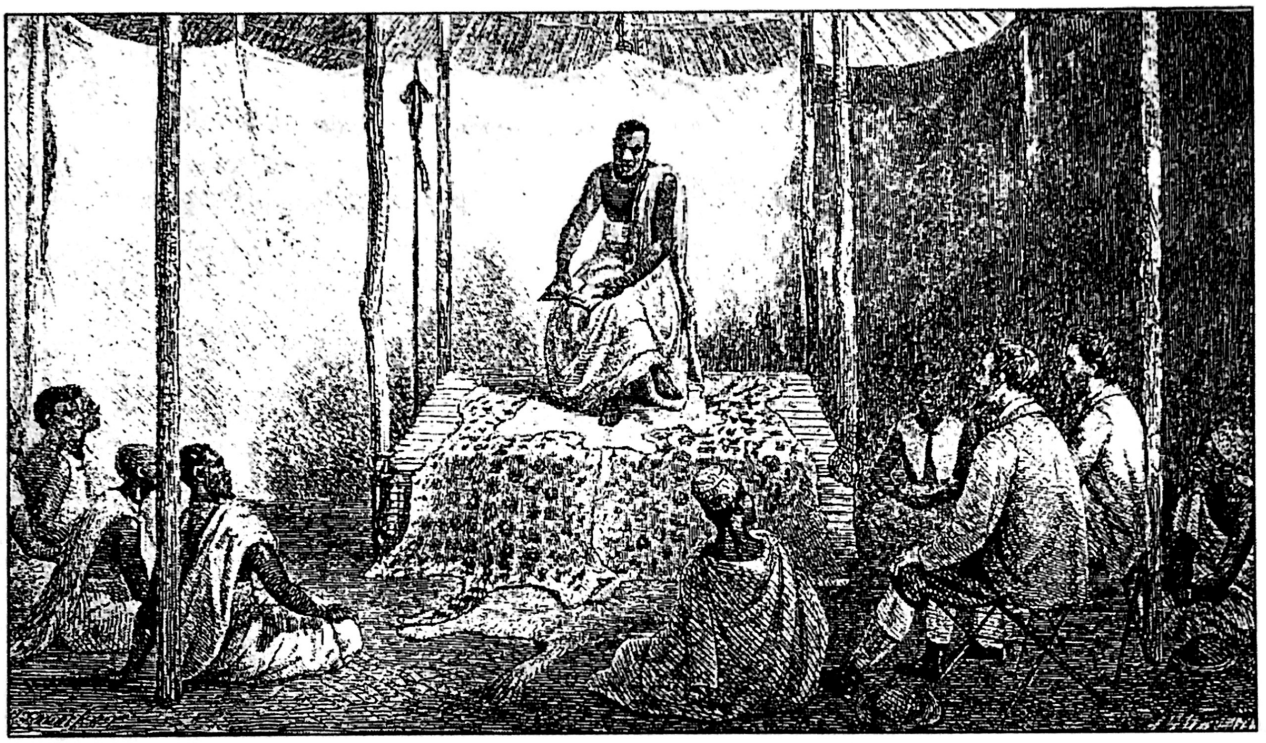
The following statement by Sir James Caird, British Member of Parliament and Privy Counsellor, shows that by 1878 the basics of Indian-British relations had changed little:

> We have introduced a system the first object of which ... is necessarily the subjugation of the people. This is [made] possible by the religious differences between the Hindus and the Mohammedans which prevent their union against us. ... A handful of Englishmen could not hold these multitudes on any other principle. The strength we wield is a powerful army, now by the aid of the railway and the telegraph capable of rapid concentration at any threatened point. ...
>
> We govern through British officers stationed in every district of the country, who ... administer the law, command the police, and superintend the collection of the revenue [taxes]. Native officers are employed under them ... to whom the drudgery of government is committed. The number of such officers, not reckoning the native army or police, is not more than one in ten thousand of the people. The English officers are not one in two hundred thousand, strangers in language, religion, and color, with feelings and ideas quite different from theirs. ...

Sources: Sudipta Sen, *Distant Sovereignty* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 15; Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire* (New York: Oxford UP, 1981), 17; Gorham D. Sanderson, *India and British Imperialism* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951), 176-7.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.3—Power Relationships: Version One



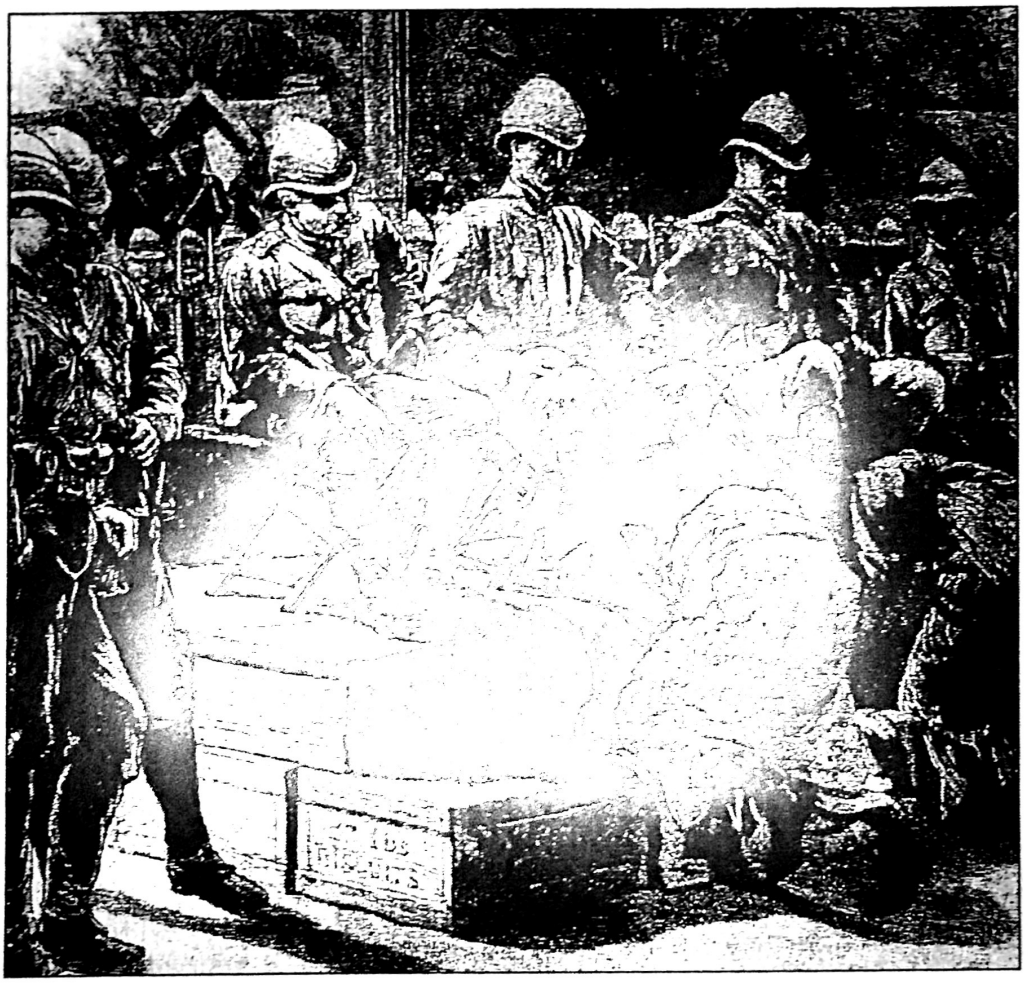
King Kamrasi of Bunyoro, Uganda, leafs through a Bible given him by his guests, the British explorers James Augustus Grant and John Hanning Speke. The date is 1862.

European travelers, explorers, and missionaries were often the forerunners of colonization. European governments sometimes justified colonial conquest and occupation by citing the need to protect their citizens who were living or traveling in an African or Asian land. What conclusions might be drawn about the power-relationships between the people shown?

Source: British Museum. Reproduced in D. K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1965). between 210 and 211.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.4—Power Relationships: Version Two



King Prempeh, ruler of the large West African Asante (Ashanti) state, formally submits to British officers in 1896. The Queen Mother (on the right) also makes submission.

The British army occupied the Asante capital of Kumasi (in modern Ghana) in 1896. They forced King Prempeh to formally submit and then exiled him. What conclusions might be drawn about the power-relationships between the people shown? Comparing this image with the one in Student Handout 3.3, what symbolic ways of expressing and reinforcing power relations can be seen?

Source: Alvin E. Josephy, *The Horizon History of Africa* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1971), 446.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.5—To Be or Not To Be an Expansionist Colonial Power

Jules Ferry served as both Premier of France (1880–81, 1883–85) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1882–83). He strongly supported French colonial expansion ever since Germany defeated his country in 1870. The arguments he makes in favor of colonialism are those often made by people in imperialist countries in the late nineteenth century. He spoke in 1885 in the French Chamber of Deputies.

Ferry: ... For a country such as ours, which is obliged by the very nature of its industry to devote itself to exports on a large scale, the colonial question is a matter of finding outlets for those exports. ... Provided the colonial link is maintained between the mother country, which is the producer country, and the colonies it has founded, economic dominance will ... be subject to political dominance.

There is another matter ... with which I must also deal. ... This is the humanitarian and civilizing aspect of the matter. Monsieur Pelletan ... condemns it and says: "What sort of civilization is this which is imposed by gunfire? ... Are the rights of these inferior races less than ours? ... You enter their countries against their will, you do violence to them, but you do not civilize them." That is his argument. I challenge you, Monsieur Pelletan ... to carry your argument to its logical conclusion, your argument which is based on equality, liberty and independence for inferior races. You will not carry it to its logical conclusion for ... you are in favor of colonial expansion when it takes the form of trade.

Pelletan: Yes.

Ferry: But who can say that the day may not come in settlements ... subject to France ... when the black populations in some cases corrupted and perverted by adventurers and other travelers ... may attack our settlements? What will you do then? ... For the sake of your security, you will be obliged to impose your protectorate over these rebel peoples. Let us speak clearer and more frankly. It must be openly said that the superior races have rights over the inferior races.

Maigne: You dare to say this in the country where the rights of man were proclaimed?

Ferry: If Monsieur Maigne is right: if the rights of man were intended to cover the black people of equatorial Africa, by what right do you go and impose exchanges and trade on them? They do not ask you to go there.

[Moreover,] our navy and merchant shipping in their business on the high seas must have safe harbors, defense positions and supply points. ... In Europe as it now exists, in this competitive continent where we can see so many rivals increasing in stature around us—some by perfecting their armed forces or navies, and others through the enormous development produced by their

ever-increasing population ... in a world which is so constructed, ... to [refuse] any expansion towards Africa and the Far East ... would mean that we should cease to be a first-rate power and become a third or fourth-rate power instead.

Source: H. Brunschwig, *French Colonialism 1871-1919*, qtd. in R.C. Bridges, *et al.*, eds., *Nations and Empires* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 174-8.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.6—If You Worked for Them, They Paid You for It

The Hausa-speaking people live in northern Nigeria. In precolonial times Hausaland included several powerful city-states. People used slave labor in agriculture, and many Hausa engaged in long-distance trade. In 1810, they were conquered by the Fulani, herders who fought on horseback with sword and lance and who became the ruling aristocratic caste among those they conquered. The following account about conditions in the late nineteenth century comes from Baba, an old woman when she told her story to an anthropologist in 1950.

At that time Yusufu was the king. He did not like the Europeans, he did not wish them, he did not sign their treaty. Then he saw that perforce he would have to agree, so he did. We Hausa wanted them to come, it was the Fulani who did not like it. When the Europeans came, the Hausa saw that if you worked for them they paid you for it, they didn't say like the Fulani "Commoner, give me this! Commoner, bring me that!" ...

They were building their big road to Kano [the capital] city. They called out the people and said they were to come and make the road, if there were trees in the way they cut them down. ... Money was not much use to them, so the Europeans paid them with food and other things.

The Europeans said that there were to be no more slaves; if someone said "Slave" you could complain to the alkali [judge] who would punish the master who said it. ... When slavery was stopped ... some slaves whom we had bought in the market ran away. Our own father went to his farm and worked, he and his son took up their large hoes; they loaned out their spare farms. ... Before this, they had supervised the slaves' work—now they did their own.

About a year later Mai Sudan's [a Fulani ruler] men kidnapped Kadiri's mother, our father's wife Rabi and our father's sister ... was also caught and sold into slavery. In Kano, they had stopped slavery then, but in Katsina it still continued. Later the Europeans conquered Katsina and stopped it. When they opened the big road all was quiet [and there was no more raiding or kidnapping.].

In the old days if a chief liked the look of your daughter he would take her and put her in his house; you could do nothing about it. Now they don't do that.

Source: Mary F. Smith, *Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Muslim Hausa* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 66-8.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.7—The Arrogance of Conquerors, and Some Good Things

Instructions to English civil servants in India in the 1830s:

> Our power in India rests on the general opinion of the natives of our comparative superiority in good faith, wisdom and strength, to their own rulers. This important impression will be improved by the consideration we show to their habits, institutions, and religion … and injured by every act that offends their belief or superstition, that shows disregard or neglect of individuals or communities, or that evidences our having ... the arrogance of conquerors. ...

English magistrate in India in the 1850s:

> If an old woman takes vegetables to market and sells them at the corner of the street, she is assessed [a tax] for selling vegetables. ... But no tax is levied upon English traders.

An Ndebele warrior in Zimbabwe in the 1890s:

> Well, the white men have brought some good things: ... European implements—plows; we can buy European clothes, which are an advance. The Government has arranged for education, and through that, when our children grow up, they may rise in status. ... But ... all the best land has been taken by the white people. ... We find it hard to meet our money obligations. When we have plenty of grain the prices are very low, but the moment we are short of grain and we have to buy from the Europeans at once the price is high.

Rubber worker in the Belgian Congo in the 1890s:

> The pay was a fathom of cloth and a little salt for every basket full, but it was given to the Chief, never to the men. Our Chief ate up the cloth; the workers got nothing. It used to take ten days to get the twenty baskets of rubber—we were always in the forest to find the rubber vines ... and our women had to give up cultivating the fields and gardens. Then we starved. ... We begged the white men to leave us alone, saying we could get no more rubber, but the white men and their soldiers said: "Go. You are only beasts yourselves, you are only nyama [meat]." We tried, always further into the forest, and when we failed and our rubber was short, the soldiers came to our town and killed us.

German economist, South Africa in 1910:

> Once tribal ties were broken completely and a Black proletariat had been created, depending exclusively on wages and unable to rise to skilled positions on account of the entrenched position of White labor, [both groups] lived in constant fear and resentment, the Whites because they had to ward off native aspirations that were bound to grow as the natives became more efficient, the Blacks because they could not break through the barrier of privilege by which the whites protected themselves.

Sources: Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), 41-2; Reginald Reynolds, *The White Sahibs in India* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1937), 174; Alfred J. Andrea and J. H. Overfield, *The Human Record* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 306-7; Louis L. Snyder, ed., *The Imperialism Reader* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1962), 254; Guy Hunter, ed., *Industrialization and Race Relations* (New York: Oxford UP, 1965), 139.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.8—Colonialism's Upstairs and Downstairs

As the slave trade began to dry up in the mid-nineteenth century, migratory indentured labor, mostly from India and China, came to replace it. This drawing was made by a Chinese laborer in the second half of the century. It shows a sugar estate that produced for export in a European-dominated area. What conclusions can be drawn about the power-relationships between the people shown? What symbolic ways of expressing and reinforcing power relations can be seen?

Source: Boston Athenaeum. Reproduced in R. W. Bulliet, *et al.*, eds., *The Earth and Its Peoples* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 76.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.9—Has the Pink Cheek Brought Good to My People?

Kabongo was a Kikuyu chief from Kenya whose life spanned the period from the 1870s to the 1950s. The following recounts events in his life around 1900:

For some years my eldest son had been going to a school kept by some Pink Cheeks only two hours' journey away. ... [M]any of them were women. They had a medicine house where ... good things were done and sick people were made well. Every day my son would go before the sun was high and would come back before the sun set. Then he would eat and fall asleep, too tired to sit around the fire and be told the stories and history of our people ...

It was in these days that a Pink Cheek man came one day to our Council. He ... told us of the king of the Pink Cheeks ... in a land over the seas. "This great king is now your king," he said. "And this land is all his land, though he has said you may live on it as you are his people and he is as your father and you are as his sons." This was strange news. For this land was ours. We had bought our land with cattle in the presence of the Elders and had taken the oath and it was our own. ... How then could it belong to this king? ...

For many moons this thing was much talked of by us. ... [B]ut for the most part life was still as it had always been. [Then] the Iron Snake, which I had never seen, had come and had carried men on it, not of our people; then a big path was made through the country half a day from our land. ... It was along this road that came news from other parts; and ... things for the market that the women wanted to have, clothes or beads to wear and pots for cooking. Along this road the young men went when they went to work with the Pink Cheeks ... [My younger brother Munene was one of these.]

By the time that my father, Kimani, died [and I had been chosen Ceremonial Elder], our own land was poor ... [T]here was not enough grown on it for all to eat. Those of our family who worked for the Pink Cheeks sent us food and coins that we could buy food with, for else we could not live. ...

The Pink Cheek called a Council together and ... spoke of Munene; he told us of his learning and of his knowledge of the customs of the Pink Cheeks and of his cleverness at organizing. "Because of this," he said, "... he has been appointed Chief of this district and he will be your mouth and our mouth. ... He has learned our language and our laws and he will help you to understand and keep them." We Elders looked at each other. ... What magic had this son of my father made that he who was not yet an Elder should be made leader over us all who were so much older and wiser in the ways of our people? ... I ponder often ... [h]as the Pink Cheek brought good to my people? Are the new ways he has shown us better than our own ways?

Source: Richard St. Barbé Baker, *Kabongo* (London: George Ronald, 1955), 107-26, qtd. in Leon E. Clark, *Through African Eyes*, Vol. 1 (New York: A CITE Book, 1988), 137-40, 146-7.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.10—Western Learning: A Two-Edged Sword

European learning was sought after by many during this period. Often those who gained it learned, along with language and know-how, European ideas such as liberty, equality, and national pride. As a result, many turned against becoming "Europeanized."

Satire by Hindu woman poet, 1880s:

> The babu's [Hindu clerk] learned English, he swells with conceit
> And goes off in haste to deliver a speech. ...
> Some, sahib-fashion, are hatted and coated. ...
> He longs to be fair, scrubs vigorously with soap ...
> Parts his hair in front in the style of Prince Albert. ...
> One becomes Brahmo [reformer] to emancipate women,
> Drags out of seclusion the ladies of his clan ...
> And launches a struggle to deliver the country.

Indian writer, early twentieth century:

> The India-born Civilian [government official] practically cut himself off from his parent society, and lived and moved and had his being in the atmosphere so beloved of his British colleagues. In mind and manners he was as much of an Englishman as any Englishman. It was no small sacrifice for him, because in this way he completely estranged himself from the society of his own people, and became socially and morally a pariah [outcast] among them. ...

Fante cultural nationalist, West Africa, about 1900:

> [We are] fully convinced that it is better to be called by one's own name than to be known by a foreign one; that it is possible to gain Western learning and be expert in scientific skills without neglecting one's mother tongue; [and] that the African's dress ... should not be thrown aside, even if one wears European dress during business hours. ...

English writer, South Africa, 1904:

> An educated native will try to make himself white; but we should be able to prevent that calamity. After all, the feat is impossible. No man in his senses would suggest that we should give our daughters to black men; no one would wish to have them sit at our tables as a regular thing; no one would care to take a native into partnership. It is a thousand pities we cannot banish all European clothing from native territories, and allow the Kafirs to evolve naturally, and form a society of their own. ...

Sources: Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, *Women Writing in India,* Vol. 1 (New York: Feminist Press, 1991), 219-20; Richard W. Bulliet, *et al.*, *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 811; A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987), 69 (language slightly simplified); Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994), 133.