

New Imperialism created global inequality and scarcity in the late 19th century.

The 19th century is known as the era of New Imperialism. Included in this century was the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, which led to many countries competing against one another for resources and markets. This in turn also led to the rise of countries interacting on a global scale. Some examples of this are the colonization of Asia; and the scramble to take over Africa. Technological advances were also very prevalent in this century with inventions like the steam engine, railways, and steamboats. This made traveling and conquering across territories easier and more prevalent. During the late 19th century the rise of New Imperialism created a global inequality and scarcity of resources which led to many events and things we can still see today. Africa played a major role in this matter.

In Davis's Preface, Davis added to the narrative of world history by stating, "By the end of Victoria's reign, however, the inequality of nations was as profound as the inequality of classes. Humanity had been irrevocably divided. And the famed 'prisoners of starvation,' whom the Internationale urges to arise, were as much modern inventions of the late Victorian world as electric lights, Maxim guns and 'scientific' racism" (Davis, Preface 16). In this Davis is talking about the inequalities that arose at the time and how they were affecting the population. Davis discusses the famine occurring at the time and how it is left out of most accounts of global history. This emphasizes the fact that Davis wanted to add the topics of feminine and major inequalities to the record of global history and believes it played a vital role in the history of the globe. Davis approaches the challenges faced in the late nineteenth century by critically examining them and

facing the harsh realities of the problem that occurred. Davis tends to examine the environment, and social and economic conditions of the event he is writing about. Overall, Davis has added quite a bit to the narrative of global history and approached history from a standpoint many would not think to approach it from.

Global inequality was on the rise during this era in history. According to Marks, the United States, Europe, and Japan prospered while the rest of the world suffered. This power and wealth divide between both sides was known as the Gap. This is further visualized through, "Europeans and Americans became wealthier. Moreover, since neither China nor India was industrializing, as we will see, cities there could not accommodate those larger populations, thereby intensifying rural poverty" (Marks 135). This new balance of wealth and power was seen on a geo-political scale and the divide between industries. While the West, Europe, and Japan had their industries booming many countries and nations started to see a decline or fall behind which in turn made a power struggle where the nations whose industry was increasing gained more power and others lost some. This is seen through Mark's words, "part of the immense gap between the wealthiest and poorest parts of our world thus can be explained by industrialization and the escape by some parts of the world" (Marks 149). Overall, the points that speak to me of why the gap between countries started was industrialization and power changing hands. India and China differed from Western Europe in the 1700s in many ways. In this time period, China and India did not go through a full-fledged industrial revolution which started in the 1700s which Western Europe did start to see. Since China and India did not start their industrialization, these countries stayed with traditional agriculture which led to, "ecological poverty - defined as the depletion or loss

of entitlement to the natural resource base of traditional agriculture — constituted a causal triangle with increasing household poverty and state decapacitation in explaining both the emergence of a "third world" and its vulnerability to extreme climate events"(Davis, 9). Since production was not increasing and the population was, these countries started to fall being from Western Europe. This led to India and China falling into a state of famine while Western Europe led with imperialism and prospered. Davis states, "Three points of articulation with larger socio-economic structures were especially decisive for rural subsistence in the late Victorian 'proto-third world'". These three points are global economic structure, militarism, and colonialism & imperialism. All of these were significant in their own ways. To start, the global economic structure was a main point due to the fact that connecting to other markets globally as a "proto-third world" region would have effects because you would be influenced by industrialized nations. Militarism was another key point because any conflict whether wars or colonial conflict would result in affecting the livelihoods of many rural populations. The third key point was colonialism & imperialism. This was important and significant due to the exploitation of resources by colonial rulers and imperial states. These precious resources were taken to help expand the industrialization of many imperialist countries. These three components were important to this period in time and helped describe the events that were occurring. Davis argues that from 1873 to 1896 was described as the 'Great Recession' by historians which threatened the entire system of world trade. However, "starving Indian and Chinese peasantries were wheeled in as unlikely saviors." Davis supports this claim by showing what was happening with the British colonies in Asia at the time. These colonies had an export-based economy due to the

extraction of resources from the colonies and then had them exported back to the main imperialist country. This turned into exploitation during this time period where the colonies would give away their wealth through exports to support the economic power of the imperial power. This in turn helped keep the global trade market afloat during the ‘Great Recession’. This is why the, “starving Indian and Chinese peasantries were wheeled in as unlikely saviors” during the recession. The gold standard and militarism helped aid in the creation of the ‘third world’. The gold standard was very limiting for China and India and was part of the reason they were part of the ‘third world’. The gold standard was very limiting for these countries due to trade imbalances and limitations on monetary value. Trade imbalances were shown in the gold standard because the amount of worth had a tendency to favor imperialist nations due to their currency having a backing. Limitations on ‘third world’ money were shown within the gold standard through fixed exchange rates which limited the flexibility of their money due to their nations' needs. This was also limited due to the amount of money available tied to the gold available. This made countries that were not rich in gold struggle to have their currency traded or accepted. Overall, the gold standard and militarism made a massive mark in creating the ‘third world’.

Davis exposes us to the other side of the vast British empire, India. India serves as a case study for how the gap affected nations. India was tied into the gap through economic disparities, colonial exploitation, and unequal trade. Indian economic disparities were a major player in how India is tied into the gap. These economic disparities were shown in plenty of ways, however the most notable was shown in how the British were prospering from reaping the wealth from India through uneven wealth.

This is shown through the example of “Speaking generally the cultivator who produces and sells the cotton cannot in any way regulate the market price. For this, he is dependent on the home market and many causes which combine to raise and lower the price in Liverpool”(Davis 10). The British made the Indian economy reliant on its own. Colonial exploitation was another major reason for India being part of the gap. Colonial exploitation was done by extracting resources from India to be used and sold in Britain. The British tended to pay little to nothing to the struggling people of India and they would take the product and sell it for a vast markup. The British would only sink capital in to further exploit the Indians. This is shown through, “Although massive sums of capital were sunk into the Association's export infrastructure, including railroad spurs, cotton yards, and metalled feeder roads, none of it percolated to the village level where degraded sanitary conditions, especially the contamination of drinking water by human waste, spread cholera and gastrointestinal disease as well as tuberculosis. Similarly, local food security was eroded by the advance not only of cotton production (which doubled its acreage in the last quarter of the century) but of grain exports as well”(Davis 10). Another way India was part of the gap was through unequal trade. Unequal trade was shown throughout India by all of their completed products being exported for pennies on the dollar; however, the very little that was exported to India was massively marked up.

As described above, the British would export almost everything India produced. This started to and did cause famines throughout India. So while the imperial countries were prospering India was suffering and was barely producing the food needed to support its population. The commercialization of agriculture in India left farmers

susceptible to famine through cash crops and monetary crops. The Indian farmers were basically forced to produce these crops for exportation which in turn left the crops that their society was living off on the back burner. This led to a food shortage. Also with this being stated self-sufficient agriculture was thrown out the window. This is better shown by, "Similarly local food security was eroded by the advance not only of cotton production ...but of grain exports as well"(Davis 10). The British were responsible for the majority of the famine in India through exportation, agriculture policies, pressure to make certain crops, and unfair trade. Also, the exploitation of land hurt the Indian economy which drove prices for necessities higher. Technology was used to further aid in the British exploration of India. Technology such as railroads, boats, and irrigation were used to help increase production and exportation only. Therefore a loss of land was made to further hurt the dire famine issue in India. This also hurt the economy of India by having more of their products shipped away faster. This is better seen in the quote, " Association's export infrastructure, including railroad spurs, cotton yards, and metalled feeder roads, none of it percolated to the village level..." (Davis 10). Overall, The British Empire was responsible for a lot of the issues occurring in India at the time.

In my opinion, I believe that the British official line was not a true statement. The British official line was, "The official line of the British in Victorian England as replicated in every famine commission report and viceregal allocation: millions were killed by extreme weather, not imperialism." I believe that Davis showed enough information to challenge this statement and did so in an amazing manner. I believe that the most significant cause of the late-Victorian famines in places like India was tied to exportation and the abuse of resources in these places.